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Trust in a student-teacher interaction

Trust is the key of the teaching profession –Without it, there is no meaningful interaction

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Tutkielmassani tutkin peruskoulun luokanopettajien käsityksiä luottamuksesta opettajan ja oppilaan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa. Voimme todeta, että luottamus rakentaa vahvan perustan oppimiselle, jolla yksistään on suuri merkitys lapsen tulevaisuudelle. Kun tarkastellaan luottamusta laajemmasta näkökulmasta, on se hyvin olennainen osa meidän jokapäiväistä elämää: töissä, kotona ja vapaa-aikana. Luottamus on näkymätön tekijä, jota käytämme vaistomaisesti päätöksissä ja määrittääkin siksi paljon tekemiämme valintoja, päätöksiä sekä käytöstämme. Ensisijainen tavoite tälle pro gradu -tutkielmalle on ymmärtää ja avata opettajien käsityksiä luottamuksesta vuorovaikutuksessa sekä syventää näitä teemoja tuomalla esiin asioita, jotka niihin vaikuttavat.

Tutkimuskysymykseni ovat: 1) Kuinka opettajat ymmärtävät luottamuksen oppilaan ja opettajan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa? 2) Minkälaiset asiat vaikuttavat luottamukseen opettajan ja oppilaan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa?

Tutkimusmateriaalini koostuu 23 opettajan antamista vastauksista semistruckturoituun, viiden kohdan kyselylomakkeeseen. Nämä vastaukset analysoitiin osana fenomenografista sisällönanalyysia. Teoreettinen viitekehys esittelee lyhyesti luottamuksen osana sosiaalista pääomaa sosiologisesta näkökulmasta katsottuna. Tutkimuksen teoriaosion ensisijainen tehtävä on määritellä luottamus koulukontekstissa keskittyen opettajan ja oppilaan väliseen vuorovaikutukseen.

Tutkimukset tulokset osoittivat, että opettajat antavat huomattavan paljon arvoa turvan tunteelle, joka toimii lähtökohtana opettajan ja oppilaan toimivalle suhteelle ja joka koostuu asioista kuten opettajan roolista turvallisena aikuisena, aidosta välittämisestä sekä turvallisuudesta. Muita teemoja, joita vastauksista nousi esille, on avoimuus, johdonmukaisuus ja arvostus. Nämä teemat myös sisältävät monia tekijöitä, jotka puolestaan vaikuttavat luottamukseen opettajan ja oppilaan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa ja joita tutkimukseni käsittelee tarkemmin.

Avainsanat: vuorovaikutus, luottamus, opettaja, oppilas

The topic of this research is trust in the student-teacher interaction. We can say that trust lays the foundation for learning that alone has an influence on a child's future. However, when observing trust from a wider spectrum, it is an intrinsic factor in our everyday life - at work, home and free time. It is an invisible factor that we use instinctively when making decisions and therefore it has an influence on our judgments, choices we make, and behavior. The primary purpose of this study is to determine how teachers interpret the concept of trust in a student-teacher interaction, and to study the factors that may have an influence on the trust relationship.

Two research questions are posed: 1) How do teachers interpret trust in a student-teacher interaction? 2) What are teachers' views on the factors impacting the trust in the student-teacher interaction?

The data for this research consists of answers of 23 elementary school teachers that took part in the questionnaire, including 5 open ended questions. These answers are analyzed as a part of phenomenographic content analysis. The theoretical framework of this study briefly introduces trust as a part of social capital, focusing on observing it from a sociological point of view. The preliminary focus of the theoretical framework is to define trust in a school context, putting the main emphasis on the student-teacher interaction.

The results of this research indicated that teachers value the feeling of safety as the main groundwork for the student-teacher relationship, which consists of factors such as teachers being a safe adult, security and genuine care. Other themes that stood out from the comments of the teachers were openness, consistency and respect. These themes also involve multiple different factors that have an impact on the main concepts in the field of trust in an interaction between students and teachers, which will be introduced closer in this study.

Keywords: Interaction, student, teacher, trust, elementary school, social capital, relational trust

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1 Introduction

School plays a central role in a student's life and is a significant part of socialization on the path to adulthood (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 167), and its atmosphere of socialization, according to studies is one of the most significant factors for a student to become attached the school (Raatikainen 2011, 3). The quality of social relationships in particular, is a remarkable actor in determining whether the school has succeeded in using its resources and authority (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, 13). Trust is an element that plays a significant part in these stable social relationships and is one of the fundamental qualities of cooperation in a society (Van Maele, Forsyth & Van Houtte, 2014, 13) while also being an important binder that enables the interaction between individuals. Trust in human interaction creates faith that people can improve and enhance the matters that have an influence on their lives as well as the conditions where cooperation with friends and strangers is possible and worthwhile. Whether it is positive or negative, trust has a strong impact on the decision-making and behavior of people. (Harisalo & Miettinen, 2010, 14.) When a teacher and a student are capable of trusting each other, the environment of the classroom can be perceived as successful. This way school forms a community that is built on trust; it takes already gathered trust and expands it to the wider spectrum and to other sectors of one's life. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 168-169.) Therefore, it can be stated, that through these learned skills to trust, and to be trusted, are essential qualities that will guide and serve students later in their lives in multiple ways.

The need for this study arose from one of the main results of my candidates' thesis (conducted with Mariam Ellisi, in 2018) that examined different forms of social capital and how they affect a child's academic school achievement in comprehensive school. One of the main conclusions of our study is that trust is one of the most important forms of social capital that determines the child's academic school performance. After completing the study, it was clear to me that I want to study further the trust, a concept that may seem a bit "fuzzy" and abstract to many, yet undoubtedly an important element between teacher and student. Furthermore, the interest in this study has been gathered along with my own experiences from school

life as a starting teacher, as I have always looked up to the teachers with a close relationship with their students. I couldn't have helped noticing how the bond between student and teacher affects numerous things that in turn influence the effectiveness and the meaningfulness of the class. I am thrilled to have this opportunity to study about it and hence also consider this paper as a part of a profound learning process for me for my future career as a teacher.

To point out my broader interest towards the concept of trust, it is not limited only to school life but is gathered up from different situations in my ordinary life, such as work life and personal relationships where trust has always been the common core factor to efficiency. This aspect has raised my concern to the prevailing state of communal trust in today's society we live in. One reason could be that our social lives are more and more taking place digitally in social media, lacking the real face to face interaction and changing the nature of the conversations to less empathetic and harsh direction (Alloway, Runac, Qureshi & Kemp, 2014, 152).

In this research, I study trust in a student-teacher interaction. The primary purpose of this research is to determine how elementary school teachers perceive the concept of trust in a student-teacher interaction and to provide useful information for future teachers by creating knowledge of which factors enhance the trust relationship between teachers and students. The theoretical framework briefly introduces trust as a part of social capital, as well as defines the meaning of trust. This part particularly leans on the research by Robert D. Putnam (2002) and J. Coleman (1987), putting the main emphasis on their views of trust in the field of education. It also observes the concept of trust, using multiple theories and viewpoints and applies them in a school context. The theory part also touches the role of trust in the Finnish school system. The main part of this study, trust in student-teacher interaction introduces the central areas of trust. Understanding the student-teacher interaction, I see it meaningful also to study the power relation that comes with it. The voices of the teachers, who took part in this research, are brought up in the results part of this study. The results draw the main interpretations of how teachers understand the concept of the trust that stood out from the open ended questionnaire, followed by the closer focus on the factors that teachers found meaningful in the light of interactions in the student-teacher trust relationship. These findings are first categorized into main themes, then subcategorized, and finally analyzed and discussed.

2 Trust as a part of social capital

Social capital is a relatively young term that first started to get attention among education top leaders. In science, it is more familiar to sociology than psychology (Pulkkinen, 2002, 2). With the understanding of social capital, researchers have explained for example the gaps in well being in societes and as a term it has helped to understand and analyze numerous different phenomenon (Ruuskanen, 2001, 2). Therefore it can be said that the theory of social capital has been a major discovery (Pulkkinen, 2004, 36).

2.1 Definitions of social capital in sociology

Social capital is an intangible capital that means interaction between people, power relationships, and social resources. It can be seen as an asset that can be used as a pathway to certain groups or statuses but also as harmful when used as an exclusive usage of power against other individuals or groups. (Poikela, 2005, 14-15.) Lyda Hudson Hanifan (1916) was the first researcher who applied social capital to the field of education, where she studied the connection between community participation and students academic school performance. However, after her groundbreaking research, social capital was presented relatively little in the following discussions concerning education and upbringing, until sociologists Robert D. Putnam (2000) and James Coleman (1988) brought it up again in their research. (Raatikainen, 2011, 28.) Since the 1960´s, in the field of education economics there has been a separation between human capital and physical capital. Physical capital represents material exchange, that in turn forms the factors that improve production. Human capital stands for so called exchange between individuals that improves skills and abilities to act in different ways according to a situation. Therefore social capital is not concrete, because it is produced in a human interaction.

2.2 Understanding the role of trust in social capital

According to the interesting statement of Coleman, social capital increases productive activity. He states that a group where people trust each other is significantly more productive than a group where the trust does not exist. (Pulkkinen, 2002, 38-39.) Coleman separated three very essential parts of social capital: (1) trustworthiness of an environment where responsibilities are distributed equally, (2) distribution of an information in relationships so that it advances activity, and (3) norms, according to which individuals give away their own interests for the benefit of the interests of others. (Ruuskanen, 2001, 16.)

Norms are a form of social capital that strengthens families, for example, because they can be perceived as unselfish actions for the benefit of the family that get people to work together for the common good (Pulkkinen, 2002, 38). Needless to say, this can also be applied to a school context as a part of successful classroom management when students trust that following the rules and norms will benefit everyone in the class. Coleman points out that a family can have social capital only if the ties between parents and children are strong. This theory forms a figure that demonstrates how children do not benefit from the human capital of the parents (for example an education), if the family does not interact with each other and therefore do not have social capital either. This can mean a situation where parents do not spend time, thus do not share their human capital, with their children. Colemans (1987) interpretation about students who had dropped out from school indicates that social capital has a strong role in an academic school performance. Students who dropped out from the school seemed to have less social capital in their families than in the other students' families. (Pulkkinen, 2004, 39.)

In Finland, the lack of social capital has been connected to child protection cases that indicate that the lack of resources of parents, for example in single parent families, has increased insecurity and disorder which has been manifested in troubled behavior of children. However, it is necessary to point out that single parenthood does not

directly affect a child´s anti-social behavior but lack of care and supervision are the factors that have an impact on the anti-social activity, even if these activities have not been part of the family's traditions before. (Kärkkäinen, 2004, 63.) Coleman also writes about the nature of a social capital as a benefit of an individual. Individuals seek connections that benefit our own interests, for example in job seeking through strategic networking. For most, we tend to get our jobs for who we know, rather than what we know. (Raatikainen, 2011, 33.)

Robert D. Putnam, a professor of Harvard University, was the first researcher who introduced the definition of social capital to the international in his article *Bowling alone: America's Declining Social Capital* (1995), and his book *Bowling alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2002). The central meanings of Putnam´s definition of social capital are civic virtues and actions that are tied to institutions (*civikness).* (Ruuskanen, 2001, 21.) Putnam argued in his well-known research (1993), *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy,* that the activity and the participation in communal affairs impacted the performance of local governments in Italy (Iisakkka, 2004). According to the research, Northern Italy had thriving political institutions because of the diverse network of formal and informal institutions that brought people together, fostered interaction, and advanced collaboration in the community. Putnam contrasted this with the lack of such social organizations in southern Italy, which had significantly poorer political institutions. As a ground breaking finding, it was not the economic development that explained the strong stand of political institutions but it was the quality of civic life, such as voter turnout, membership in associations, and newspaper readership that accomplished the power and effectiveness of political institutions. The common factors in active civic societies are a prevailing high trust towards public officers and that the rules and laws are commonly obeyed. In such societies people trust each other and collaborate for the common good. (Putnam, 1993, 17.)

Putnam's main concern is the declining amount of human interaction and mutual trust in working life, hobbies as well as families and friendships. He is specifically worried about the lacking norms and common values among youngsters. Pulkkinen agrees that these concerns are topical also here in Finland (Pulkkinen, 2004, 37). Putnam bases his findings on the increase of technology and its impact on how we use time. Historically observed, the arrival of the TV changed the way we spend our free time

significantly and secluded people from each other by reducing the time for visiting friends and other families. Nevertheless, to be able to apply this view to the Finnish context today, Putnam´s hypothesis would need some more systematic research. However, in the meanwhile it is paradoxical how his concern prevails in today's societies but in a whole different magnitude.

As stated before, our social lives are more and more taking place digitally in social media, lacking the real face to face interaction and changing the nature of the conversations to less empathetic and harsh direction. (Alloway, Runac, Qureshi & Kemp, 2014, 152.) Furthermore, social media platforms, Facebook to name one, have enabled the abundance of media choices that has resulted in audiences drifting away from mainstream media, which in turn has been studied to play a big role in a functioning democracy and one of the key factors of a public trust. This has a tendency to create a vicious circle, where people with low level of public trust are likely to gravitate even more towards non-mainstream news and rely on sources like social media and blogs. (Turcotte, York, Irving, Schroll & Pingree, 2015, 520.) The increased volume of rather questionable information and misinformation available online, together with the lack of human interaction and discussion, may hinder our capability to agree on what is true and what is not. The current Finnish curriculum (2016) aims to respond to the challenges of these constantly evolving areas of interaction by including *interaction* as one of the main focus areas of the multidisciplinary module.

> Interaction, cooperation and a versatile working approach are factors that promote learning and well-being for all members of the community. A learning community recognizes the diversity of learning and building of knowledge and operates flexibly. It encourages experimentation and gives space for active learning, creative work, physical activity, play and experiences that are characteristic of various ages and different learners. Various working approaches and learning environments are systematically applied in schoolwork, and regular efforts are made to work outside the classroom. Opportunities are created for project type of work outside the classroom. Cooperation and interaction of the adults in the school, both among themselves and with the society around the school, support the pupils' growth into persons capable of effective interaction and cooperation. Doing this together helps the pupils to recognize their own uniqueness and promotes their skills in working constructively with different kinds of people. Information and communication technology is used to promote interaction and use of multiple senses and channels in the work.

According to Putnam, the amount of social capital is declining in American society, which can be wrapped in three different components: (1) Values and norms, (2) the sense of community, and (3) trust. Putnam agrees with Coleman that the lack of social capital is manifested by different social problems (Pulkkinen, 2002, 38). However, the way Putnam approaches the importance of the sense of community, mostly in a positive light, has awakened some criticism among critics of social capital, because Putnam's social networks, values and communal trust easily exclude out the ones who do not belong to those groups. According to critics, Putnam writes quite a little about how different political and economical powers favor some people and groups to the detriment of others. Kankainen (2007) points out that the increase of income difference has a tendency to polarize societies. The increase of the economic margins is especially harmful for the public trust when the marginalized people see the practiced politics contiguously unfair and thus lose its trust to institutions and become passive. (Kankainen, 2007, 52.) In terms of trust, the problem is not that people do not trust the institutions of the society, but when people say that they are not to be trusted. The fact that credit cards, mortgages, and car loans, that are not admitted for the people in financial struggle, is a reminder for them that they are not themselves trusted. The whole process is complex, but eventually damages the solidarity of the society. (Kankainen, 2007, 53.)

Furthermore, it is important to point out that a communal activity does not automatically mean activity that aims for the common good. Putnam warns that despite the networks and mutual norms and values generally advancing the ones inside the community, the effects of social capital can be harmful to the people outside the group to the same extent, and in some cases more. It is the strong social capital that has enabled various atrocities in our history, which would not have been possible to carry out without the strong sense of community through it. Hence, just like any capital, social capital can also be used for harmful activity. Therefore, it is important to consider how the positive effects of social capital could be maximized and how the negative instances, sectarianism, ethnocentrism, and corruption, for instance, could be minimized. (Putnam, 2000, 22-23.)

Regardless of the numerous different definitions of social capital, there is a prevailing consensus that social capital means resources that one can only have through an interaction with other people and is strongly connected to social networks. After taking a look at both Putnam´s and Coleman´s definitions of trust, we can agree that trust is the combining binding element between these different views, which is the term that is used as one of the fundamentals for social capital in their research. However, we can say that Putnam and Coleman are both talking about different meanings of trust. The trust that is formed from common norms could be interpreted as *trustworthiness* whereas expectations and liabilities can be between individuals can be regarded as strategic trust. Putnam (2000) explains this as one type of obligation of trust; if a person does a favor to another, he or she can trust that it will be returned in future. This type of interaction will be transformed into common trust once these individuals do not count the favors anymore and when the both individuals trust that they will receive the favor sometime. The more people decide to trust each other, the more permanent the trust will become. Coleman's definition of social capital is best described as a network that has a closure. Coleman believes that this closure creates trust so that individuals in the network acknowledge that there will be consequences if shutting down rules, a law for instance. This closure ensures that everyone obey the common rules. When this happens often and frequently enough, trust can transfer to trustworthiness in the right circumstances. (Juvonen, 2017, 9-10.)

We are capable of experiencing the feeling of trust as soon as we are born, by getting the basic needs fulfilled, for example through getting fed or put to sleep. Erik H. Erikson (1963) underlines the importance of the balance between trusts and mistrust in people's lives. The very first social achievement in the life of a newborn is to allow the mother or father to go out of sight without a tantrum. This indicates that the child is capable of trusting that one will also return. Pulkkinen (2002) points out that it is also important to teach a child how trusting is not always beneficial in certain situations, because trusting naively can also be taken advantage of a harmful way. The trust of a child should never be betrayed, yet there are plenty of examples found by the Finnish child protection agency of children whose trust has been broken by empty promises. (Pulkkinen, 2002, 46.)

Trusting in people is the result of a successful bond with an adult, which determines how one is capable to act and to make decisions in the future. Already during the first

year, a child gathers experiences on how people treat one another, in what situations and how one can trust in people, and what kind of feelings are involved in these interactions. Later, in adolescence and adulthood, the trustworthiness of the first relationships in life will indicate one´s competency to form long lasting and sustainable relationships and cope with emotional insecurity. (Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2012, 10-13.) Children experience the feelings of trust and mistrust in different measurements and environments because the upbringing customs of each parent varies. This also means that children have different competencies to adopt cultural capital and finally grow one´s social capital. If a child experiences the reality of the world being full of mistrust and struggles in trusting in his or her self and the surrounding people, there is a risk that she or he will struggle in growing a wide and dense social network in future.

To conclude this chapter, social capital does not construct by itself because it is always connected to the actors of the network and the relationships between them (Keskinen & Teräs, 2008, 11). One of the most essential topics regarding social capital is its relation to the trust. The starting point of a discussion is that individuals trust each other on some level. The question is whether trust should be defined as a source of social capital or the result of it.

2.2.1   Types and dimensions of trust

As stated before, whether we are talking about an emotional and an affectionate relationship to another person, or a relationship in a work life, trust is a significant factor in terms of collaboration and cooperation. When thinking about the complexity of trust, it is not surprising that sociologists have been avoiding to define it. It is not an easy term to approach as it can be compared in many ways to the term health. Medical science is not able to define what health is, but instead it has a lot to say what sickness is. Similar to health, trust is also challenging to define substantially. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 85-86.)

However, trust has numerous functions and it can be shown and addressed by very different things and people. When studying trust, it is crucial to divide it analytically to different forms, according to the object and purpose of it (Kankainen, 2007, 43). Before studying trust between a student and a teacher, it is necessary to identify the

trust that is relevant to this context of the research. Therefore, this chapter aims to define trust first from a sociological point of view and then rationalize the type of trust that can be applied to the school context in the student-teacher relationship, more closely.

2.2.2 Trust from the sociological point of view

When observing trust from a sociological point of view, trust is seen as not only a quality of individuals' personal relationship, but also in relation to different social and active organizations and institutions. In these contexts we can talk about trustworthiness or credibility and its relation to the sustainability of society. (Raatikainen, 2011, 44.) Some intellectuals perceive the institutional and personal trust as a separated, yet intertwined concepts (Seligman, 2000) while others question the connection between those two entirely (Harre, 1999). Since this research studies an interpersonal trust relationship between a teacher and student but which also takes a place at a school, an institution, I see it meaningful to observe different views how these two are related to each other. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the trust in institutions, people and their impact on each other.

2.1.2.1 Interpersonal and institutional trust

Adam Seligman (2000) separates the trust in institutions and trust in people from each other. He names the trust towards institutions, and other abstract systems, as confidence that means predictability of things and activities; trusting that things are worked as agreed. When trusting people, we know what to expect in the specific interaction situation. This confidence can be based on familiriality, reliance on the existence of a punishment system, expertise, or other institutional proof of know-how. Seligman emphasizes the significance of the trust between people, the micro levels trust to the modern world. (Seligman, 2000, 18.) In traditional societies communities used to be very connected where the norms and values, and the networks based on familiarity, conducted the activity of the people that also enabled targeting sanctions. Therefore, according to Seligman, it can be said that this was about either systemic

trust or trustworthiness; the structure of the society with its own features made the acts of the surrounding people predictable.

Luhman´s (1979) argument about trust concerns people's freedom of action that it is connected to an individual's whole personality. Freedom itself is a significant part of being a human. Luhman points out that when a person has the right to control someone else's freedom, they can use that to manipulate and control them. In the worst case, this person becomes socially invisible. If a person is incapable of feeling and shows trust towards another, they are challenged to gain trust from others. In this case, trust becomes individual's own self-presentation and the other people's interpretation of it. In other words, it is difficult to gain trust from others if you do not trust others. (Luhman, 2017, 11.)

In the modern world, individualization and urbanization among other things have made trust a topical concern. Trust is needed when one cannot be trustful and when a behavior with its consequences cannot be predicted. (Seligman 2000; Kankainen, 2007, 4.) Trust is needed when the other person is not familiar and when there is not enough information about them. This interpersonal trust that is also intertwined to the institutional trust requires dependence, vulnerability, and optimism about positive results; it is an interactive process where individuals are learning about each other's trustworthiness. (Six, 2005, 4.)

Seligman (1997) addresses his concern that, according to the postmodernists, even friendships nowadays have lost trust and have become more like "talking with a neighbor's dog". Hence, Seligman fears that trust threats to become an empty term with no in-debt definition. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 86.) Seligman, however, suggests also an alternative way to understand the social foundation of trust, basing it on one of the key notions of G. H. Mead (1934), 'taking the role of another', stressing that an ego becomes independent only after one is capable to take distance from the self and reflect that, and others, through objective lenses. This unbiased standpoint, also called as *generalized other*, lays a foundation to the type of moral standard that is not depended on the external collective moral. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 86.) Through this notion, Mead aims to convey the concept of a set of internalized social attitudes: when learning how to take a part of the 'general other', children are capable

of importing these attitudes of the social group into their own selves. Through this, they start to observe themselves from the perspective of the other people in the group. Mead mentions all the collective games or activities as a prelude for social life. By acquiring the skill of taking the attitude of the 'general other' through games, children increasingly gain a social-psychology ability of central importance. (Carreira Da Silva, 2007; 3.)

This being said, it is not difficult to understand why Mead rewards such crucial significance to educational matters. Mead might have discovered the very crucial foundation for universal trust building by introducing how only through a moral that is based on the 'generalized other' can lay a foundation for an autonomous self that uses his or her own independent judgment. If everyone's self and moral code leans on the view of this objective observer, the others are not strangers but instead inserted familiar. This leads to a strong ground, used to trust the relationship between me and the others. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 87.)

Ron Harré (1999) suggests another view on trust by talking about *a priori,* a trust that is existing already before even meeting another person. In such a situation this person can be in some specific profession that is commonly trusted or maybe a member of a certain family that is known. Harré uses the Federal Aviation Administration as an example by demonstrating his trust towards the *experticity* towards this governmental agency that has not influenced in any way by interaction with others. In other words, the trust is then pre-given to someone due to the position she or he is in, unlike on the *posteriori* ground of trust, in which the trust is built on experience. In this case, the trust is earned. (Harré, 1999, 259.) Harré argues that in the modern world, the pre-given trust has declined massively, replaced with the *'posteriori'*, earned trust. However, Jokinen & Ilmonen (2001) point out that there is plenty of pre-given trust that has absorbed the form of trustworthiness (Jokinen & Ilmonen, 2001, 90).

As we can see, there are diversities in conceptualizing trust even after in the field of sociology. However, there is a prevailing agreement among most scholars about some common characteristics of trust*, and *vulnerability* is one of them. A person who trusts another person makes him or herself vulnerable to the other one believing that she or he does not act in a way that could harm the person. Moreover, a person who trusts another one has *a positive expectation* in the intentions of the one who is trusted.

(Coleman 1990; Van Maele et al. 2014, 3.) This vulnerability brings out another commonality in trust that is strongly associated with the vulnerability, which is *risk*. Risk can be explained as a realized probability of a loss.

3   Trust in the school context

This chapter explores the roles and the types that are needed when studying trust in the school context, while exploring its appearance in the studies concerning the Finnish school systems as well. Trust has been increasingly noticed as a fundamental element of high functioning schools and it has been studied increasingly since the mid 80's. (Van Maele, D., Van Houtte M., Forsyth P. 2014, 1.) A recent study (Tschannen-Moran, 2014) shows that there is a strong correlation in terms of trust and its impact on effectiveness, collaboration, collective efficacy at schools, as well as teacher professionalism and organizational citizenship. To put it in other words, without trust, organizational effectiveness is harmed. (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, 57.)

We can agree that schools are very complex objects for studies in terms of effectiveness. Interestingly, as it comes to trust in educational context, there are two levels of implications that are in some means in tension with each other. Referring to Ralf Koerrenz (2017), trust is both a necessity and the aim of learning. Education asks for a certain level of trust in the social arrangements in which its practices and norms are embedded for these to be at least initially understood. Traditionally speaking, parents have to take their children to school, while the children have to be willing to go there, at least on some level (Koerrenz, 2017, 59). In agreement with Koerrenz, Van Maele, et al. (2014) compares this to an arrangement involving the aspect of customer service, where the bond between the customers, students, and parents, is not voluntary; teachers are dependent on the leadership of the school in order to receive the sufficient resources that they need in order to teach the way students benefit the most. Teachers are also dependent on the motivation of the students and their willingness to learn in order for them to internalize their lessons. In the meanwhile, parents are dependent on teachers in terms of teachers motivating their children to learn, whereas teachers are dependent on the parents´ involvement in the school activity. (Van Maele, V. ym. 2014, 3-4.)

The aim for these arrangements, in a meanwhile, is to cultivate a stable, ongoing and strong trust in these children. Koerrenz stresses how trust not only should, but in fact *is* required to be the very fundamental feeling for every learner, while being a necessity for the trust building in later life (Koerranz, 2017, 59). This brings us back

to the social capital and development psychology earlier in this paper, where it was stated that a person who has not ever experienced trust in an early stage of his or her life has a tendency to continue having challenges building an appropriate form of trust later in life. In other words, trust is commonly agreed in observations and descriptions of accustomed pedagogical realities, being a normative value and something, which is also intentionally pursued and cultivated for these realities. (Koerranz, 2017, 60.) Nonetheless, as we develop as humans throughout our lives, it is important to acknowledge that different ages can also bring different challenges to the trust building between a teacher and a student.

In the recent studies of trust in school, Brych and Schneider (2002) have focused their research mainly on the relationships between adults and in organizations because, according to them, a peer influence and the social norms among youngsters are strong, bringing their own difficulties to the studies of the trust relationship between teachers and students. Brych and Shneider state that trust in schools is highly dependent on the peer groups and students' mutual collective norms, especially with young adults. (Brych & Schneider, 2002; Raatikainen, 2011, 55.)

3.1 Relational trust

Because of the complexity of the trust environment of a school, it is difficult to define one specific binding theory of trust into the context of school. After all, there are so many different school cultures that binding them all into the same bunch seem wrong and un-necessary at the same time. On the other hand, when researching the different views and theories, it is easy to find glimbses of many of them and apply them to a wider scope of school context. When talking about trust in the classroom, we are talking about interactions and feelings, the climate of the classroom that enables the trust, its prerequisites in relation to feelings, communication, rationalization, cognitivity, experticity, and different forms of authority. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2011, 168.) Therefore, this chapter focuses on the Bryck and Schneider´s (1996) view on the three theoretical approaches of *relational trust,* that sums up the relevant aspects in the multidimensional relationships and power relations that can be generally speaking, to prevail in the school environment.

3.1.1 Roots of relational trust

Before defining relational trust, it is useful to get back to James Coleman´s (1990) interpretation of social capital that was discussed earlier in this paper. Coleman conceptualizes social capital as a group of relational ties that further action. It is essential to highlight that these sets of relational connections are determined as social networks that represent social systems rather than the qualities of an individual. Social capital is built on exchanges that create shared expectations, norms that in turn develop social networks observed as trustworthy. (Coleman 1990; Schneider et al. 2014.)

Trust can be interpreted as an exchange where the capability to trust between people is defined by an assessment of the advantages and liabilities related to the action. In school, this could mean for example teachers giving homework, and letting pupils know that if it is not returned on time, it will affect negatively on grade. Students can choose to return the homework on giving time, which would probably also come with the cost of reduced time from his or her other activities. The student can also choose not to do the homework, hoping that it would not affect that much on the final grade, or that the teacher won't implement the rule, in which case there are no consequences for not doing the assignment. These kinds of exchanges are built both on the possible consequences of the transaction and other structural positions, for example the power and reputation. (Schneider et al. 2014.)

However, from the sociological point of view, as discussed earlier in this paper, is observed as a tie that has a capability to bind individuals together, and thereby also is capable of separating people from each other. From this instance perceived, trust can be a moral and ethical transaction, for example being motivated to take part in a social exchange and be to act for the benefit of a group, despite this requiring some self-sacrifices. (Schneider et al. 2014.)

3.1.2 Key elements of relational trust

Trust takes different bodies, depending on the prevailing social system. Organic trust is a form of trust that usually prevails in small religious groups, where social

transactions are implied according to the unquestioned beliefs, and subject to moral authority. Contractual trust prevails in business exchanges or similar organizations like different unions where social exchanges are determined by formalized rules. Relational trust in turn is found in schools or hospitals or other social institutions where the interaction is undertaken because of the social value. (Schneider et al. 2014.) According to Schneider et al. (2014), trust in the school context can be observed from three theoretical approaches. The first of these theories is the Bryck and Schneider categorize the trust in schools into three different theoretical key elements. The first approach is the theory of *rational exchange,* when a person estimates the risks whether the other one is worth trusting or not. In this situation, the decision-making is based on the commonalities between parties, shared history, reputation, and the mutual social value. (Raatikainen, 2011; Schneider et al. 2002, 14-18.) In the student-teacher interaction this could be, for example, sharing mutual interests together. The second approach is *the group theory,* where people define themself according to the status one has in the group, for example in the classroom. The third approach gets its influence from shared religion or philosophy, where the mutual values and beliefs become a central indicator of trust. In these situations, people have expectations on how to behave or act in certain situations. (Raatikainen, 2011; Schneider et al. 2002, 14-18.) In the classroom environment, this could be enforced by democratically decided rules of the classroom.

3.1.3 Relational trust and power

Relational trust is built on a very compound network of social interaction, usually involving either unequal or asymmetrical power relationships. This is especially significant because it underlines that in trust relationships people are one way or another dependent on each other, which, in turn, generates vulnerability to both. (Schneider et al. 2002, 37.) In other words, when a person hands something valuable to the custody of "another", it makes one depended on "the other" and exposed to his or her possible power. Therefore, we can assume that the more valuable the shared thing, the more likely it makes us evaluate to what extent the other is worth being trusted. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 106.)

The main purpose of a teacher is being an educator, that involves the asymmetrical power relationship. Ojakangas (2001) argues that there cannot be education between two equals (Ojakangas, 2001, 50-51). According to this, power is one of the fundamental elements as it comes to the relationship between an educator and a student, who is automatically in a more vulnerable position with higher risks than the educator. Ojakangas claims that education is a hierarchical relationship between a higher and a lower power status, but it's purpose usually is to equalize these two statuses to the same hierarchical level by lifting the lower one. (Ojakangas, 2001, 51.) Therefore, teachers should have initiative on building trust relationships with students. As Ilmonen & Jokinen (2002) state, unequal distribution of power is not necessarily a hindering factor in trust building. Trust and power might as well be considered as similar social mechanisms; both of them are tools of communication that allow the parties to modify their expectations and actions. Furthermore, these mechanisms also decrease the feeling of insecurity and challenges in decision-making in everyday life. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 50..)

3.1.4 Trust in the Finnish school system

All this being said, the trust in the context of Finnish school system lays a whole different ground of conversation when discussing the relationship between trust and power. It can be generally said that Finnish teachers command a high level of trust, having full autonomy in decision making, for instance in issues like curriculum and assessment. It is safe to say that teachers today enjoy Harre´s (1999) definition of *priori trust* that leans on the experticity that is generally valued high in Finland. As a matter of fact, Finnish elementary school teachers enjoy the same level of trust in autonomy that professions in fields like law and medicine do. (OECD, 2019.)

Nonetheless, it has not always been like that and the development of trust has not happened over one night. Finnish school system took a dramatic turn in terms of trust during the 1900´s when it gave away the inspectors that controlled the teachers' job. The role of a teacher started to shift more to science based and encouraged more to explore and research one's own work while developing it. This turn of events enabled

the freedom of teachers to try different pedagogical teaching methods, which demanded trust to do so. (Salminen, 2018, 14.) Today, once hired, teachers are still given a lot of responsibility. Finnish school system still does not use the school inspectors and principals act as pedagogical leaders providing trust to teachers instead of controlling them. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with their colleagues, counselling and supporting each other. (Alasuutari, Gutierrez & Saavedra, 2018.)

One could argue that this high level trust within the teaching profession reflects to the pupils as well as they are given a lot of freedom. Curriculums are built student-centered; they get relatively little homework and spend less time at school in comparison with their peers in other OECD countries. However, the time at school is used very efficiently, with breaks every 45 or 90 minutes where the pupils go outside. (Alasuutari et al. 2018.) Trust is also present in the most recent Finnish National Curriculum (2016) that strives teachers to use pedagogical methods that strengthen students´ agency and their role of being responsible for their own learning (Lähdenmäki, 2019, 399).

Despite it is safe to say that "Finnish trust" is relatively high, it can be also portrayed as rather introverted by its nature (Ilmonen & Jokinen 2002; Raatikainen 2011, 55). Recent studies (Sinisalo 2012) show that the socio economic background seems to play a role in terms of teacher-parent trust. Only 50% of the teachers who took part in the study trusted less the mothers of boys who had only completed elementary school, while trusting more the mothers of daughters within the same level of education. In addition, the study indicated that mothers with lower educational backgrounds found it more challenging to trust class teachers than the ones with higher education. (Sinisalo, 2012, 11.) We can say that the background of the parents seems to have an impact on the relationship between teachers and parents. However, socioeconomic background is not the only circumstance that plays a role in the trust between teachers and parents.

It has been studied that the activity of parents at home, for instance upbringing and taking part in common activities, has positive effects on the trust of teachers. This is understandable since taking part, for example to schools activities, increases the communication between teachers and parents, which in turn strengthen the trust between them. In addition to communication, active parents usually have broader

networks than passive parents. (Sinisalo, 2012, 12.) The trust relationships between parents and teachers also seem to be connected to the trust relationship between teachers and students, which plays a significant role in the academic school performance (Bryck & Schneider, 2003, 40-45).

This becomes important when talking about the teacher-student relationship because the trust process is bidirectional; it is very challenging for a teacher to teach students if they do not trust the student. Correspondingly a student cannot learn from a teacher she or he does not trust. Trust between individuals increases the trust, which is called the positive circle of trust. (Raatikainen, 2011, 20.)

4 Interaction as a building block for trust

Interaction can be defined as a process of communication between two or more individuals where both linguistic meaning and the emotional response are collectively clarified whenever clarification seems needed. Understanbly, a developed relationship is essential for effective interaction, because this clarification becomes less needed as more meaningful relationships are formed. We can see this with close friends, for instance, when we do not have to be constantly paying attention to not being misunderstood. (Gorman, 1974, 29.) Implementing this theory to the classroom, a developed functioning student-teacher relationship can be characterized by qualities like openness and honesty. In this case both the teacher and the student can communicate directly and honestly with each other. In addition, freedom to support one another and the feeling of distinctiveness are essentials for a functioning relationship between a teacher and a student. The term of distinctiveness, in this context, means that both parties in a student-teacher relationship accept one's unique growth, individuality, and creativity. Just like in friendship, one of the most important preconditions in the functioning student-teacher relationship is the satisfaction of both parties when nobody feels necessary to fill one´s needs on the expense of another. (Gordon & Savolainen, 2006, 46-47.)

As stated, there is a strong connection between the strong student-teacher relationship and the motivation of students resulting in good academic results (Rooda et al, 2001). Therefore, we can agree that building this positive relationship could be a learning object itself (Fraser & Walberg, 2005). In today's school environment, this process is associated with different ambivalent and paradoxes. The structures and relationships can be tested and questioned and they are constantly paid attention to. Ilmonen & Jokinen (2002) mention the alternative *informal culture that* students bring to school, as one of the factors that set the institutional practices, such as control and monitoring, into a different order at school. The everyday life at school is therefore filled with different kinds of interaction situations between students and teachers where different social stands of the school, time and the relationships are discussed

both intentionally and unintentionally. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 174.) This contradiction has been identified in numerous research, pedagogical and educational literature. It seems that balancing between the professional distance and open and honest relationship sets a needed groundwork for this research on how to navigate in the prevailing principles as a teacher, which will be observed in the following chapter.

4.1 Emotional and cognitive communication

Due to the educational nature of classroom operations, interaction in the classroom includes both *emotional and cognitive* communication. Despite Gorman´s (1974) concern on lacking focus on the emotional component in the classroom communication might not apply anymore in today's teaching, he points out a valid and very important notion about a relationship between these two communications and their effect on each other. Gorman claims that until a student gets to *know* the others, she or he won't be fully capable of concentrating on the cognitive component of the communication process. (Gorman, 1974, 32.) Cognitive dimension in this context stands for *rational reasoning* whether another person can be trusted or not or if there are signs of blocking trust from the other person's side. Deciding to trust another consists of the trustworthiness of the other person, sense of responsibility and prior evaluation of one's capability being trusted. (Lewis & Weigert 1985, 970.) For instance, if person A speaks to B and D laughs, that follows a sarcastic response from B, person A might be less likely to speak again. Sure, this might seem a bit self-evident as a real life case, but Gorman (1974) stresses that in this kind of situation a sensitive teacher will assist students to deal helpfully with each other, whereas an insensitive teacher probably only wonders why person A is so quiet and asks him to speak up. (Gorman, 1974, 32.)

According to Gorman, sensitivity and knowing each other are important attributes in the classroom that can be developed throughout the time, and their value to students´ learning is strong. However, this kind of setting conditions by no means advise that everyone in the classroom should tiptoe, being afraid of causing any negative feelings, sure to a certain extent. Instead, this offers a fruitful opportunity to deal and practice to handle negative reactions in a healthy and helpful manner. (Gorman, 1974, 32.) After all, friends also disagree often, but despite that, remain friends. This leads

to the emotional dimension of trust that prevails in every trust relationship, especially in close ones, and bases completely on the *feeling*, and the way people feel about each other. (Lewis & Weigert 1985, 971.)

When interaction is blocked, we tend to treat each other in a formal, or even ritualistic manner or worst, avoid contacting each other at all. When interaction is unblocked, it is easier to get to know each other and there is not so much need for careful screening and possible problems that do appear are handled. (Gorman, 1974, 32.) Sure, people have throughout time been capable of learning facts and theories without warmth, but this way they also learn to be remote, which does not serve the purpose in this constantly changing world, where interaction skills are more and more important.

4.2   Teachers role in trust building

We can roughly summarize that trust in schools is based on *communication, cooperation, atmosphere of the school, rules* and *organized participation* (Raatikainen 2011, 58; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000) but more specific definition for trust between student and teacher can be drawn from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (1998) literature, that sums up five key components that are commonly used when evaluating trustworthiness. (Brewster & Railsback, 2003, 5; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998.) Furthermore, Brewster and Railsback list these components as qualities of an individual that have the most positive effect on interpersonal trust. They are *benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness.* (Brewster & Railsback, 2003, 5.)

- **Benevolence**: Trusting that the other person has good intentions and has your best interest by heart, as well as other people. She or he is motivated to defend other people´s benefits when needed.
- **Reliability**: Reliability stands for to the extent to which you can rely upon another person to come through for you, as well as believing that other people act consistently and follow through, in which case a person is not calculating one's own benefit and is capable and daring to trust others. Furthermore, a

person keeps his or her promises and meets some expectations of reasonable obligations given by other parties, for instance behaves in expected ways.

- **Competence**: Similar to reliability, competence is believing that a person is capable of getting through given tasks and meeting the expectations. For instance, if a teacher has good intentions and kind heart but is not capable of managing and getting through his or her tasks, she or he might be less trustworthy than if she or he was more professional at his or her work.

- **Honesty**: Honesty refers to a person's integrity, character, and credibility. To what extent a person can be counted on to perform situations adequately and fairly has a strong value on how she or he is trusted by other people.

- **Openness**: Openness stands for the judgments on how freely a person shares information with other people. For instance, a reserved communication can raise distrust because people might think about what is being withheld and the reasons for that. Openness also includes an idea on how much people are interacting with each other in the community and how much they are willing to trust each other. These concepts come across in people's action and their perceptions of the objectives, capability, and honesty of other parties. (Brewster & Railsback, 2003, 5-6.)

4.3 The five phases of trust building

These qualities defined by Brewster & Railsback (2003) might not come as a surprise to an educator, but even so building a trust with a student is not a self-evident matter. Skinner and Brown (2007) have collected a model of five phases of building trust for educators to follow. Despite that the model is originally designed for at-risk students, it is applicable with any teacher-student relationships, because taking a personal interest in every student is something that every educator should begin with. Making meaningful communication possible with students shows that the teacher cares for the student as an individual, and through that allowing them to be himself or herself. (Brown & Skinner, 2007, 1.) As a matter of fact, confidence in being you is one of the starting points in the process of trust development, both from teachers' and students' side. What makes this significant from the interactive point of view, is that the origins of confidence is strongly built up by the behavior of the educator. (Schweer, 1996; Stelter, 2019, 187.)

The first stage is *listening*. By an active, also known as empathetic listening, a teacher considers a learner as an individual, which helps respond to the needs of the student directly. Active listening requires the listener to be capable of spotting the unspoken feelings that a student might be unaware of or not willing to recognize. Active listening is one of the key ways to respond and reflect on one another, which in turn reinforce mutual understanding and trust. (Brown & Skinner, 2007, 2.)

The second stage is *validating*. Feelings of a student should be respected and validated. Respecting the feelings of students lets them know that they are esteemed. Nonetheless, this does not mean giving room for non-suitable behavior but instead validating stands for normalizing a feeling. Teachers should maintain their authority keeping the connection with students. However, it is essential that students feel that their feelings and thoughts are not judged but appreciated. (Brown & Skinner, 2007, 3; Church, 2006, 5.)

In the third stage, which is problem solving, teachers are encouraged to create conversations whenever students present a dilemma. This can also be called as dialogic problem solving because the questions a teacher asks in order to build a problem solving conversation will build the first line of connectable dialogue between a teacher and a student. Guiding the students to an active role in their problem solving will undoubtedly give them life long skills for their future life. (Brown & Skinner, 2007, 3; Robinson & Kakela, 2006, 202.)

Showing a student *a positive regard*, which is the fourth stage, and unconditional care is the most effective way to conceive a trusting environment. It is not unusual for students to test teachers to try to get a negative reaction from a teacher. Building trust that increases learning requires honesty because people trust other people who are honest. (Brown & Skinner, 2007, 4; Walsh, 2006, 14.) If students try teachers' limits, it is important for the teachers to show consistency in how much they care. By showing a personal interest in a student's life, for instance by asking questions about his or her well being, encourages them to move ahead as an individual and in their relationships. (Brown & Skinner, 2007, 4.)

The final, fifth, stage is *hope*. When all the stages from first to fourth are accomplished with a student, and a relationship has been built, hope can be introduced. This is the culmination of the Brown-Skinner model and its purpose is to

maintain the communication- and learning skills, as well as seeing him or herself as an active part of the learning community. The main message of this stage is that there will be something good ahead of the student and a good future waiting for him or her. (Brown & Skinner, 2007, 5.) In all of the stages, a teacher's sensitivity to receive feelings and reflect them, as well as genuine caring are highlighted and needed.

SAFETY	OPENNESS	CONSISTENCY	RESPECT
TEACHER AS A SAFE ADULT - Won't abandon	**MUTUAL SHARING:** - Positive and negative feelings - Experiences	**TIME** - Being present - Sustainability in lesson planning and implementation	**MUTUAL RESPECT** - Being heard and understood - Respecting dialogue
SECURITY - Confidentiality - Juridical liabilities - Good intentions	**HONESTY** - Question and being questioned - Being yourself	**JUSTICE AND EQUALITY** - Equal treatment for all - Righteous actions - Value discussions	**INDIVIDUALITY** - Believing students potential
GENIUINE CARE - Empathy and sympathy - Interest of a child and his/her wellbeing	**THE WAY OF COMMUNICATION** - Humor - Discussions - Signs and gestures	**AGREED RULES** - Mutual compliance - Tasks completed - Same rules for everyone	**PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS** - Teachers ability to stand behind everything she or he does and says

Table 1: Main themes of trust and the factors impacting to them

5   Methodology of this study

The aim of this qualitative research was to explore how elementary school teachers interpretent and understand the concept of trust between a student and a teacher. Furthermore, this study aims to find out what are the ways that trust can be built in a student-teacher interaction, as well as factors that may hinder it. From the beginning, it was clear for me to follow the path of a qualitative research approach because I find it challenging to measure trust. More importantly, trust is a complex and abstract concept from which this study aims to get more detailed and clear understanding. This can be established by allowing the participants to express their views on it openly, without being encumbered by what I expect to find out or what they have already read in literature. Qualitative research is a natural fit for this purpose as it aims to locate the observer in the world. It contains a set of interpretive, material forms that make the world visible. This way, qualitative research offers a naturalistic and interpretive approach to the world, studying the issues in their natural environment. (Cresswell & Poth, 2018, 7.)

Therefore, qualitative research serves the purpose of this study, that attempts to make sense of the phenomena of trust in terms of the meanings elementary school teachers give to them. In that sense, it also gives room to develop some new theory, while the existing theories of trust might not fit with the context of my research problem. It allows me to sum up the results freely and explain the mechanisms and linkages with an existing theory. (Alanko, 2018.)

5.1   Phenomenography as a methodological approach

In comparison with phenomenology, phenomenography as a research method is not very commonly used. Phenomenology and phenomenography both share the common term, "phenomenon", which stands for "to make a manifest" or "to appear", or "to bring to light". The suffix *-graph* stands for an approach of a research that aims to explain the various ways a party of people interpreting a phenomenon. (Holmström & Larsson, 2007, 55.) Phenomenography studies on how a phenomena *appears* to

someone. In research, it is commonly used in Scandinavia, Great Britain, and Australia; it is popular among studies in the field of education (Alanko, 2018), developed by Ference Marton and his coworkers in Göteborg in the 1970s (Holmström & Larsson, 2007, 55). The difference between phenomenography and phenomenology is that phenomenography is interested in the variation between different interpretations of the phenomena, not the actual phenomena itself, like phenomenology studies. The aim is to study different interpretations and their mutual relationships. The main focus is on descripting the concepts, rather than trying to find the reasons behind them. (Alanko, 2018.) In other words, whereas phenomenological investigation focuses on a prompt experience, phenomenographic method concentrates on both, conceptual and experimental thought. Phenomenographic aims to explain relations between an individual and the different viewpoints of the world around them, no matter if those relationships are embodied in the forms of an actual experience, conceptual thought, or physical behavior. (Richadson, 1999, 60.) As for the methodology of this research, it was clear for me to choose phenomenographic methods for this research simply because I am researching a phenomena and different understandings of it from the elementary school teachers, who observe it from the light of their own experiences.

5.2   Philosophical science of this study

As mentioned before, this research does not try to analyze or find the true meaning of trust in education but find out how teachers understand it instead. So, the philosophical science behind my research is closest to ontological, as phenomenography typically is. Ontological concepts in research are central but problematic at the same time; Conscious and ontological solutions used in studies are different that we are used to in everyday life. Ontology is about the way how the subject of the study is understood, i.e. is he or she active, passive or sensible? Ontology also asks questions about the nature of the reality: "What is the nature of the subject of the study?", "what is real?", "What can be considered as evidence?".

When thinking about my study in the light of philosophy of science, I see some connections to both of these assumptions. First I could not link it to either of them. However, I started to lean more towards ontological assumptions because there is a concept of trust and people can experience it differently. But since there is also knowledge and theory about my research concerning trust, it also has epistemological assumptions. Alanko (2018) narrows the ontological assumption down to an even more specific viewpoint of non-dualistic ontology that in my opinion corresponds to this study the best. It sees an individual as an inseparable part of the world, where everyone's viewpoint is subjective. This being said, there is no other "real world" but the one how she or he experiences it. Ontological assumptions have connections also somewhere between realism and konstruktivism, where an individual interprets the world according to the matters she or he has learned earlier. (Alanko, 2018.) This is another essential link to this study since it aims to study trust and how it is interpreted by teachers, as well as their views on how it is *structured* between the teacher and student, rather than how it is built.

5.3   Process of data collection

As Silverman (2005) states, there are no right and wrong methods for data collection, but rather more or less suitable ways for carrying it out (Raatikainen, 2011, 67; Silverman, 2005, 113.) In the light of the methodology of this research, one of the main purposes is to find the most suitable way to gather a wide spectrum of variety of answers. Therefore, in order to bring out the voices of the focus group, this study uses a semi-structured questionnaire that consists of five open-ended questions. In order to get as many answers as possible, I decided to use the advantages of social media. I used Facebook as the platform and a group there called Alakoulun Aarreaitta, which is the channel for elementary school teachers and teacher students. Posting the questionnaire there enabled me to get answers efficiently and anonymously. In addition, the questionnaire offered the safe environment for the participants to write their answers without any possible influence upon an interaction between the interviewer and them. It also gave time to think about the answers in time.

Furthermore, participants were told that the concept of trust is not defined for them in order to gather as many different and authentic replies as possible. The translated questionnaire is attached in the appendix. The questionnaire got 23 answers, which is enough to draw a conclusion. As Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2012) state, there is a significant difference between analyses of 3 and 30 answers (Sarajärvi & Tuomi, 2012, 90). The answers were collected to Google Sheets that worked as a tool for grouping the comments to the themes they belonged to. Google sheets allowed me to create an outlook of the themes and calculate effortlessly the comments for each theme. First, I needed to take a look at the overall answers multiple times and roughly pick themes that stood out from them. This is where the program became needed because one comment could involve multiple themes and it would have been difficult to use pieces of paper for this part. It was quite easy to form the four themes that were apparent. The singular comments that left out from these themes were also taken account in the analyses section, although they are not shown in the table later.

5.4   The process of data analyses

Whatever philosophical viewpoint the researcher is having and whatever is his or her data collecting method, the process of analysing it involves an x amount of data and generalizing it. I find the frame for the data analysis process, originally introduced by Timo Laine (University of Jyväskylä), a clear way to proceed with the collected data. The first step is to decide what your interests are in the material you have and it is important to keep this decision. The second step is to divide the process into three phases, which are marking and separating the meaningful concepts that are related to our interests. Everything else is to be left out at this point and will be excluded from the research. Then, all the gathered and marked data will be collected together. The third step is *grouping, theming,* or *typing* the material. The fourth and the last step is to write the conclusion. (Sarajärvi & Tuomi, 2012, 92.) For a successful inductive data analyze, the researcher is capable to simplify and reduce the data and form the definitions that describe the studied matters trustworthy. It can be done either inductively or deductively, depending on the purpose of the study. In inductive

analyze, the researcher proceeds in terms of the research material. (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, 1.) In the deductive analyze the already exsisting data is taken into consideration and combined with the matching mattes from the research material. (Burns & Grove, 2005; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, 1-2.)

This research follows both, the inductive and the deductive analyze. As mentioned before, the concept of trust was not opened or explained to the elementary school teachers any closer in order to receive as wide spectrum of answers. This allowed me to construct the concepts that describe the trust. This aspect makes this research inductive. However, the analyze process was also impacted by the already collected theory about trust and the links between the data could not be ignored. As a matter of fact, the constructed themes that arose from the questionnaire supported largely the theory and the other way around. As a researcher, I found it natural to find the matching definitions with the theory part. The collected data is also quantified in this study. In the quantifying process the researcher counts how many times the matters within the concept are mentioned in the material, or how many participant mentions the matter. (Burns & Grove, 2005, Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, 2.) In this research, the amount of comments for each simplified themes were counted because one comment could involve multible themes.

This research consists of two research questions, their results are analyzed slightly differently from each other. The first question attempts to find out teachers' understanding of trust in a student-teacher interaction. The data for it is collected from a specific question that asks directly how teachers interpret the concept of trust in a student-teacher interaction. The answers are read through carefully a couple of times, picking up the most relevant themes that stood out from the comments. At this point, the themes are kept wide which are later specified with sub categories, with the factors that teachers see as factors that impact these themes.

The second research question aims to delve deeper into the teacher-student trust. It studies the different factors, whether being strengthened or hindering, that teachers understand as significant in an interaction between a teacher and a student in the light of trust. Just like the first research question, the comments were also read through carefully marking the meaningful data. This approach aimed to see whether there are connections to the already investigated main theme categories and further define the second research question into more specific subcategories that were finally analyzed.

The sub categories provide different elements and examples that teachers gave in their answers that belong to specific themes. Some of the answers were short and exact, others long and more narrative, including ones about personal experience. Only one stated that he or she did not understand the question.

Research conducted using the inductive analyze involves challenges and so did study as well because the results of it are formed from abstraction. The researcher is able to describe part of the process of interpretation of the data thoroughly, but parts of it can be difficult to write open. (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, 2.) One of the most challenging cathegory for me was *safety*. The teachers takin part to this study, repeately talked about students *daring* to do something. When talking about trust between a student-teacher interaction, this indicated me that a student dares to do something when she or he is feeling safe to do so. In order to feel safe, she or he needs safety. I found this perfectly logical in this context but surely it was the result of my own reasoning, and therefore I also felt it little risky.

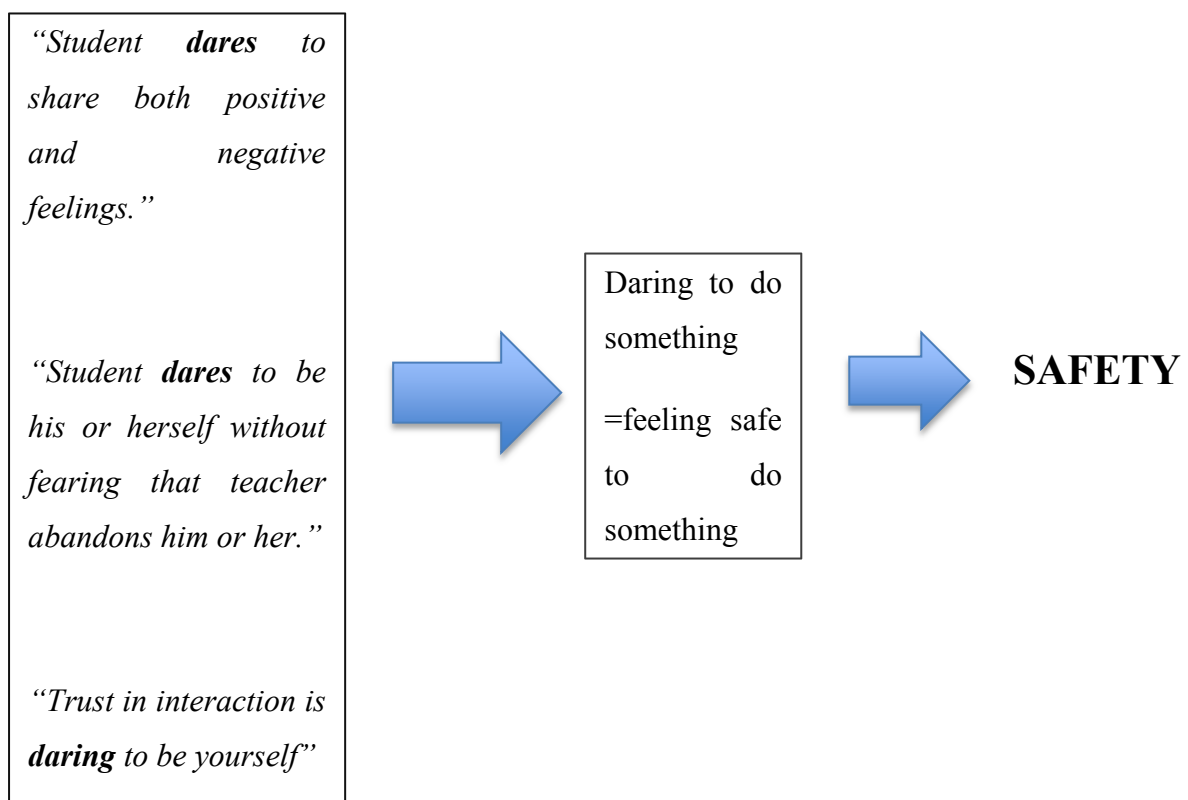| *"Student **dares** to share both positive and negative feelings."*		Daring to do something =feeling safe to do something		**SAFETY**
*"Student **dares** to be his or herself without fearing that teacher abandons him or her."*				
*"Trust in interaction is **daring** to be yourself"*				

Figure 1: Constuction of a theme

6 Results

This research bases its findings on the writings of elementary school teachers in Finland. Trust is an interesting topic as it can mean different things for different people. Therefore it is also personal but impacts us all in some way. The way trust relationships have shaped us throughout our lives also make us complex as human beings. Understanding the value of these experienced trust relationships in peoples' lives helps us to understand each other in the daily interaction with each other. This research approaches the concept of trust between a teacher and a student from two points of views:

1. How do elementary school teachers interpretent the concept of trust in a student-teacher interaction?
2. What are the factors that impact on the trust in a student-teacher interaction?

When reading through the answers, one clear impression, a genuine caring, stemming from the overall body of answers, seems to be commonly valued as the foundation and the starting point of trust in general. Another meaningful factor that arose to be an important issue, affecting everything, was time and resources in general; facilities, assistants and other factors allow teachers to be more present for each student to start with. It can be said that the teachers seem to understand that trust with warmth and caring *enable* the main themes that arose from the results. Furthermore, the results showed clearly that elementary school teachers put a high value on trust and interaction between a teacher and a student:

"*trust is really important in the student-teacher interaction. Confidentiality in an interaction furthers the communication and teaching successfully.*"

"*When talking about a student's process of learning and growing as a person, trust and interaction between a student and a teacher is the most important factor and it should be invested in.*"

Based on the research questions, there were four clear main categories that describe how elementary school teachers understand trust in a student-teacher interaction; *safety, openness, respect, and consistency.* Based on the findings, teachers understand

the feeling of safety (37.14%) as the dominant quality of trust with 13 comments, followed by openness (25.71%) and respect, both with 9 comments. Teachers associated trust with different aspects of consistency (11.76%) with four comments. The chart below describes the distribution between these themes.
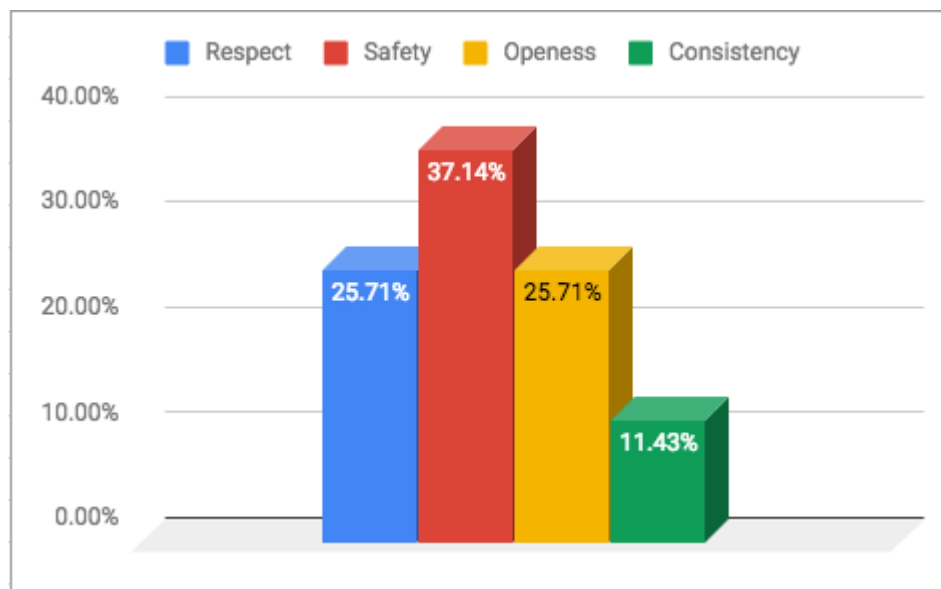

Figure 2: Distribution of the themes of trust

These main themes are presented separately in the following chapters, with the factors impacting them, based on the comments of the teachers. Despite the unequal amount of comments on these main themes, they are presented as equal outcomes because some of them are inevitably connected and depend on one another and this study does not analyze the quantity of the results. In other words, these four categories stood up from the material clearly. Furthermore, the answers clearly indicated that most of the themes are connected to each other in some way, which made the analyses challenging, yet rewarding.

6.1   Safety

Based on the material of the research, safety seems to lay a foundation for the trust in an interaction, both directly and indirectly. Teachers often start their answers by using words like "student dares to" or "student feels safe to", which implicates the feeling of safety in the classroom. Teachers demonstrated their understanding with their own personal experiences. The safety also comes from mutual trust on one´s good intentions, as well as genuine care. According to the writings of the teachers, the feeling of safety is something that is formed by multiple different factors. First and foremost, students need to see their teacher as a *safe adult* with whom they can share anything, even personal issues *confidentially*. Furthermore, safety comes from *good intentions, genuine care,* and *empathy*.

In the questionnaire, teachers value the role of a teacher as a safe adult in a student's life very high that came across in various different ways in the answers.

"A student needs to know that a teacher is a safe adult, who does want only good things for the student. The student feels safe to share any kind of feelings because she or he experiences that the teacher is on the student's side."

"Trust in the interaction means that a student dares to share negative things in his or her path or schooling."

"Trust means that a student dares to be him or herself and tell about any bothering issues and share any feelings while being sure that the teacher won't abandon."

"Trust in the interaction is daring to be yourself"

"Student can and dares to be his or herself and knows that a teacher listens and cares."

"In a trusting relationship, a student dares to be his or herself"

"I accept the student the way she or he is."

A teacher being a safe adult comes from being someone with whom you can share anything without being judged or abandoned. These answers clearly showed that before a student daring to do that, the environment needs to be suitable for that. It was stressed in some of the answers that as meaningful and strong this kind of trust

relationship is; it does not happen overnight and requires time. Being yourself and trusting that you won't be judged for the way you are is not a self-evident matter, even for grown ups. Based on the writings of the teachers, it would be ideal if students felt the relationship with the teacher secure for sharing even personal issues.

"A student trusts that she or he can talk to a teacher confidentially"

"Trust in an interaction means that a student dares to participate in the classroom and opens up even about sensitive issues personally with a teacher."

"Teachers can also have trust related wishes, for example that students would not record content of the lesson without the permission of the teacher."

These comments indicate the importance of the feeling of security as it comes to sharing your personal issues. However, this aspect brings up another responsibility related to teacher´s juridical liabilities.

"Teacher needs to tell a student that certain confidentially told issues raising a concern, have to be told to the student welfare service. However, issues that the student does not want parents to know, are to be kept between the student and the student welfare service -and the teacher if she or he forwards the issue by request of the student."

Confidentiality in the student-teacher interaction is an important factor in the feeling of security. This comment shows that it is the teacher's responsibility to let students know about his or her confidentiality obligations and liabilities. First and foremost, teachers see it important that students trust that their teacher has only good intentions on them, no matter what.

"A student can trust that the teacher is always acting for the benefit of the student, yet acting by the law and all the guiding regulations of the school, even if the student is not familiar with all of these regulations."

" Students understand their teacher´s viewpoint on good intentions and authentic care even when the boundaries and rules are decided and breaking them will cause sanctions. So for example, if a student breaks some rules and the teacher needs to address that, a disciplinary education discussion for example, it comes clear through the discussion that the teacher cares about him or her (too) well being.

"Trust is being sure that another wants only good for you and stays by your side."

"For the foundation of trust, it is essential that the teacher assures students that she or he is on the students´ side, and wants only good with no exceptions; even in situations when the teacher is strict or sanctions certain behavior."

Teachers think that trusting the good intentions lays the foundation also for the trust building in the future. Teachers stress that even in the situations where these good intentions might not be that apparent, students should trust that their teacher wants the good for them unconditionally and see his or her actions morally right and that the teacher cares for each student.

"The genuine interest and care for the student is an important part of the trust relationship between a student and a teacher."

" I am genuinely interested in a student and I care for him or her for real. In the door of my classroom there is a sign that says "you are important" that reminds students every time they come to the classroom that each of them are valuable. The most important thing in this profession is to face the student as a human being, an individual. The content taught comes next far behind. Asking "how are you doing today?" is a meaningful moment for many children and youngsters and also the time to listen and to them. There is no staring a screen at the same time!"

"A student knows that the teacher listens and cares for the student from the individuality point of view."

"A lot of positive encouragement, empathy and sympathy is needed!"

"Warm guidance, that delivers the message that I care about you."

"Empathy and sympathy are needed!"

"Knowing a student as well as possible, finding out one's strengths and weaknesses. Sensing the personality and being generally interested in the student, daily encounter."

"I hold my students and listen to their worries and let them cry. Sometimes I hold them just for no reason at all. I usually brush one of my students´ hair in the mornings from the "sleep".

Genuine care and interest in a student as an individual stood out in many replies. According to the teachers, this does not necessarily mean anything big but can be a simple sign that the teacher is interested in the student, such as asking "how are you doing today?". This shows that the teacher is interested in *your* well being today. Furthermore, many answers emphasized the importance of recognizing a student as an individual and that she or he as a person is far more than that academic performance.

6.2   Openness

Based on the research material, elementary school teachers put a lot of value on the openness in the trust in an interaction. Just like safety, achieving openness in an interaction also requires some time and understandably is dependent on the feeling of safety between a teacher and a student. This chapter introduces the involving factors that contribute to openness, such as the way you *communicate, humor, honesty,* and *mutual sharing.* Teachers also demonstrated these factors within examples from real classroom situations. According to the teachers, openness starts with mutual sharing, that sustains and enforces it creating a positive circle of openness.

"I understand trust in an interaction as a mutual openness."

"When a student tells about his or her possible joys and worries."

"Students feel ok to share even very personal things privately (even with the whole class and this has happened too. There was one highly sensitive person and one with an ADHD diagnosis, and they were independently and openly sharing their experiences in the classroom.)"

"Mutual listening"

"I share incidents and happenings of my own life. Especially showing my own personality instead of hiding behind the title of my position creates credibility."

"As a teacher, I am myself and share things about myself. I am a teacher and a human, just like anyone else. I am an authentic person to my students"

"I tell a lot of things about myself and let my students tell their things. You have to know someone in order to trust him or her. Shared experiences and interests connect people"

"Connection. It is impossible to build a trust without it. This means that both people meet in the middle to build it."

These comments all show that openness should happen interactively to work out. Sometimes the best way to encourage openness is showing an example of being open you as a teacher. Trying to find a common ground through possible common shared interests is a good way to connect and learn one another. Being open to each other often means being honest.

"Trust is being yourself and daring to be honest about things."

"A teacher and a student are honest to each other."

"An open and respectful environment secures honesty."

"Both students and a teacher dare to question and to be questioned"

"A student dares to question what a teacher says, and possibly corrects it or if the information is dated. I have this kind of student at the moment and I always remember to thank him for the correction."

"As a teacher I can also trust every student. I often ask if I can trust them and I have always been able to."

"I stand behind my honest words"

The word honesty came across in the replies quite a many times, especially in relation to openness. Teachers understand honesty as one of the impacting factors of openness and something that is strongly connected to critical thinking skills in an open classroom, daring to question and being questioned. Openness in an interaction is always connected to the communication skills, humor being part of it. Based on the teachers, the way we communicate gives messages on how open the interaction can be between student and teachers. Teachers also understand humor as an important element in the interaction that will help to create a connection with students.

"Humor will take you far! This spring I asked my five graders to assess me and give me a report card with grades. They were lovely! Nerves 10, raging 6, serving (slang) 10, etc. Trust means that teachers too can throw oneself in and give students a change to, for instance, to evaluate him or her."

"It was hilarious hearing one of my sixth graders telling her classmate that now the teacher has gone mad for good."

"Laid back and playful chatter helps build a connection with students."

"Conversation and positive encouragement."

"Relaxed and accepting attitude towards the thoughts of a child."

"Trust is positive discussion with a student."

"Keeping up a positive environment such as giving a student positive feedback to a student in front of the other students."

"I tell and show good manners and solutions in different problematic situations."

"Discussions, discussions, discussions and smiles, and crouching down with the little ones."

"Dyadic conversations personally, and with different table groups in the lunchroom, and maybe a physical touch on the shoulder. Positive commenting."

These answers show that humor and a positive warm communication with as much discussion as possible are a big part of building a connection between students and a teacher. Furthermore, some teachers highlighted that positive communication in the classroom requires some discretion, giving positive comments on a student publicly, and keeping constructive discussions private with the student.

6.3 Respect

Respect as a quality associated with trust in an interaction came across in the answers quite frequently. Just like trust, respect can be a very wide and abstract concept, especially when it is talked about in the same context in education. It was interesting how teachers approached respect from a humane point of view, instead of a power or authoritarian aspect.

"Teachers need to let students know that know-how is not the whole child but they are good the way they are as individuals."

"Teacher believes in a student's potential."

"Students know that their teacher respects them."

"Trust in an interaction is knowing that the other one means only good and respects you."

"Trust is appreciating and respecting dialogue with a student."

"Teacher respects a student as an individual, which is not limited to his or her academic performance."

These comments indicate that respect means a teacher respecting the individuality and the uniqueness of a student. The answers show that when talking about respect, the actual academic school performance does not play a role in it but it is all about acknowledging the potential and the gifts of students. Mutuality is also seen as an essential aspect of respect. Some teachers believe that trust appears in an interaction where the respect is given mutually.

"Trust in interaction is shown as mutual respect"

"Trust in an interaction is built by mutual respect. To become heard."

"Trust a mutual experience of being heard, listened and understood. Teachers earn students respect through pedagogical skills."

"Trust is taking responsibility and mutual fairness."

According to the writings, teachers believe that mutual respect is achieved by being heard reciprocally, being fair to one another, and being understood. It was commonly agreed that gaining respect also takes time and effort. Some teachers pointed out that teachers gain respect through pedagogical skills that are connected also to the last theme consistency.

6.4   Consistency

Based on the results of this research, teachers value consistency as one of the main areas when talking about trust in an interaction between a teacher and a student. Many teachers understand consistency as an ongoing habit in an interaction that eventually will build trust between teachers and students. Teachers mentioned time and resources as one of the main factors that enable the consistency in whatever they think as a meaningful action in their classroom. Justice and equality was also interpreted as something that requires consistency in trust. Teachers found that consistency in the teacher-student interaction means that agreed rules are obeyed and tasks completed.

"Students know that with time and in cooperation, they will develop and improve the teaching and knowledge together with their teacher."

"I aim to give time or my students consistently."

"Spending time and being present for the student."

"Sustainability and consistency when planning lessons and implementing them."

"I give time for my students when needed."

Teachers see time as an important and enabling factor in the concept of consistency. In order to give time to the student you simply have to have it. Resources like assistants and proper facilities were also mentioned as supporting factors in consistency. To achieve trust in the interaction, teachers see it important to be righteous to everyone so that students can count on being treated equally.

"When student trusts a teacher they know that they are treated with justice based on their previous experience"

"Teacher treats every student equally"

"I aim for justice, equality and consistency in my words and actions."

"Righteous and equal treatment for each student."

"Teachers should discuss with students about equal policies that apply to all. Teacher facilitates value conversations with students. The actions of the teacher are righteous for each student."

These comments show that the trust in the interaction will be achieved through the consistent actions of a teacher. According to that, trust is gained through an equal and a righteous treatment of each student. The guidelines for the equal treatment and justice in the classroom require agreed rules that are obeyed by everyone, including the teacher.

"I believe that teachers trusting students is highlighted in mainstream education and that the agreed tasks will be completed."

"Students trust that their teacher also obeys the agreed rules and that they are morally right."

"Teacher obeys the same rules with everyone"

"I tell the rules of my class to the students and obey them myself consistently"

"I do what I promise and listen to the opinions and possible wishes of students."

"clear rules and causality of consequences"

Consistency is built on various different things and with the other results, consistency also needs to be specified in order to be analyzed in the context of this study. Consistency in student-teacher interaction means obeying the rules and an equal and righteous action that applies to everyone.

SAFETY	OPENNESS	CONSISTENCY	RESPECT
TEACHER AS A SAFE ADULT - Won´t abandon	**MUTUAL SHARING:** - Positive and negative feelings - Experiences	**TIME** - Being present - Sustainability in lesson planning and implementation	**MUTUAL RESPECT** - Being heard and understood - Respecting dialogue
SECURITY - Confidentiality - Juridical liabilities - Good intentions	**HONESTY** - Question and being questioned - Being yourself	**JUSTICE AND EQUALITY** - Equal treatment for all - Righteous actions - Value discussions	**INDIVIDUALITY** - Believing students potential
GENIUINE CARE - Empathy and sympathy - Interest of a child and his/her wellbeing	**THE WAY OF COMMUNICATION** - Humor - Discussions - Signs and gestures	**AGREED RULES** - Mutual compliance - Tasks completed - Same rules for everyone	**PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS** - Teachers ability to stand behind everything she or he does and says

Table 1: Main themes of trust and the factors impacting to them

The table above collects all the answers from the questionnaire, collected into the four main themes (Safety, openness, consistency, respect) that stand for how teachers understand trust in a student-teacher interaction. The categories below them are factors that teachers think are the main factors impacting them. These categories are then again further narrowed down into subcategories, explaining the categories within examples. There are some elements that the teachers mentioned but that did not end up on the table, such as the parents and their attitude towards school. However, they are taken into consideration as part of the analyses.

7 Analyses

The primary aim of this study was to find out how elementary school teachers understand trust in the student-teacher interaction. These understandings are divided into smaller categories and observed in the light of factors that impact the main understandings. The very starting point of this analyze part is that teachers understand trust in an interaction as a very crucial part of education: *"Trust is the key of the teaching profession -Without it, there is no meaningful interaction",* as someone wrote. Analyzing the understanding of trust in an interaction and the factors impacting it, I see it as impossible to do it without taking into consideration certain casualties that are present inevitability in such abstract and multifaceted concepts. From the beginning of this process, it was clear to me that the concept of trust works both as the starting point and necessity to the end result of a successful interaction. This can be explained with Putnam´s (2000) concept of positive circle of trust, where exchanged trust generates even more trust between two parties. In the classroom context, this exchange could involve all of the final results of this study that enforce themselves. Based on the results, it can be said that the safety aspect works as a backbone in a student-teacher relationship; something that everything else is built on. Before going to the analyses of the main themes, it should be noted that some of the teachers highlighted the importance of the attitude of parents towards the school, the relationship between students and teachers, as well as the own attitude of the student, which is impacted by all the factors mentioned. The study of Annola & Kärmeniemi (2014) that indicates a correlation between the parents who have a higher education and a good school performance of a child, which is impacted by the parent´s positive attitude towards school, as well as time spent together with homework. (Kärmeniemi, S & Aunola, K. 2014, 150.) The current Finnish national core curriculum for basic education (2016) also sees the importance in the active interaction between home and school by stating that cooperation between school and home is fosters the well-being and safety of the student, the class, as well as the whole community of the school (Finnish national board of education, 2016, 37). These factors can be stated being the groundwork for the further process of the trust building between a teacher and a student.

7.1 Teacher is a safe adult, who won´t abandon and acts for the benefit for the child

Safety was presented overwhelmingly often in the answers of the questionnaire and perceived as the basic requirement for interaction. Safety as a theme is very wide and there were several different distinct categories that arose from it. According to the writings, pupils should have a feeling that the teacher is a safe adult, who does not abandon them. When focusing on the student-teacher relationship and what abandoning in this context means, the teacher won't choose whether to like or dislike the student, based on the opinions on the qualities of the student. The capacity of a child to trust a teacher as a safe adult is inherited from home and the previous trust relationships of a child through an active parental upbringing and passively received influence from the surrounding environment. (Pulkkinen, 2002, 22.) There can be extremely big differences between childrens' social capital. Therefore it is important for a child to learn that the teacher wants only good for the child and whatever the teacher does, the actions are done in the light of these good intentions. This goes along with the theory that the first quality of an individual, *benevolence*, that has an impact on an interpersonal trust, by Brewster & Railsback (2003). Moreover, it covers the other factors as well, that elementary school teachers see as an impact on safety; that the teacher wants only good things for the students (Brewster & Railsback, 2003, 5).

Good intentions play a big role in terms of security, which was another distinct category. Students should know that their teacher is always standing behind the student and acting always for his or her best interest, including the liabilities and responsibilities of the profession. Students should know that the teacher is always acting for the best of the child in the guidelines of the law, even if the child might not be aware of the procedure of the school. Teachers pointed out that it is important to go through some common policies of the school and that they are there to protect and support the child. The importance of trusting in the good intentions of the teacher also states the vulnerable position of a child. As Ilmonen & Jokinen (2002) state, trusting someone includes evaluating how much you can open up something so valuable like your feelings and personality to the custody of "another". This makes one dependent and exposed on his or her possible power. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 106.) The

feeling of security created from the genuine care and interest of a student as an individual. According to Brown & Skinner (2007), this positive regard that also stands for unconditional care is the most effective step to achieve a trusting environment (Brown & Skinner, 2007. 4). Without this unconditional care and genuine interest in the student's well being is challenging to create an openness, which is the second main theme that arose from the writings of the teachers.

7.2 Openness is created by mutual sharing, honesty and humor

Based on the research material, openness is understood as a major part of trust in an interaction. However, in this point it is crucial to point out the certain causalities between safety and openness. Teachers link factors like mutual sharing, honesty, and the way we communicate, to the openness that can be by definition and meaning intertwined to each other. In order to feel secure for the student to share and open up about his or her personal life, there has to be the feeling of a safe environment and people that do not judge. Teachers believe that mutual sharing is an important factor that enforces openness in a student/teacher interaction. This means sharing both positive and negative feelings and experiences.

 Teachers stated that finding commonalities and shared experiences is crucial in building a connection with a student, which in turn is an essential part of the decision making, whether to trust another one or not. People have a tendency to estimate risks in trusting a person based on the commonalities, shared history and experiences. (Schneider et al. 2002, 14-18.) This can also work reversed, as openness exemplifies for the judgment on how much another person is willing to share. In some cases, a reserved communication can boost mistrust because a person can get suspicious for what is being withheld and start to think of reasons for that. (Brewster & Railsback, 2003, 5-6.)

Honesty was also understood as one of the main factors for the concept of openness, which in the writings was presented as questioning and being questioned, as well as being yourself. When the environment is open and safe in the classroom, students also know that being questioned does not derive from bad intentions. In a healthy classroom environment questioning can evoke interesting educational conversations that in turn enforce openness even more through the communal trust. Discussions are

also seen as an element that impacts on openness; teachers are advised to get to know students by having one to one conversations, as well as keeping up with discussions where everyone is included. Needless to say, encouraging students to participate in these discussions is something teachers should invest in their work because just like all the aspects of trust, also openness is a process that will take time. This process of openness might involve students testing teachers aiming to get a negative reaction, as Walsh (2006) states. Trust relationship that has a positive impact on learning requires honesty since we have a tendency to trust people who are honest, and being yourself and honest requires consistency in order to gain trust. (Walsh, 2006, 14.)

7.3   Respectful teacher believes the potential of a student

Elementary school teachers see the concept of respect as one element of trust in a student-teacher interaction. This rather loose term can be interpreted from many aspects and so did the teachers too. Feelings of students should be validated and each one of them should be respected as an individual. However, this is not to say that non-suitable behavior should get room either, but teachers should keep their authority while maintaining the connection with pupils. (Brown & Skinner, 2007, 3; Church, 2006, 5.) Some teachers believe that the authority comes from teachers' ability to stand behind his or her words, being consistent with his or her actions and capability reason and argue the actions she or he makes. These factors were explained as the pedagogical skills that have an impact on respect. However, pedagogical skills in general can mean all the actions teachers do and see a pedagogical value in. However, these matters were only one example on how the respect in the classroom can be mutual between a teacher and a student.

Despite the fact that respect as a word can have an authoritarian and power related echo, teachers in his study valued respect through more equal and humane point of view. Mutual respect consists of mutual experiences of being heard, listened and understood. By an active and empathic listening, a teacher considers a pupil as an individual and respects his or her skills, strengths and weaknesses. (Brown & Skinner, 2007, 2.) This enables the mutual respect relationship between a teacher and a student

that also strengthens the respect towards the teacher even more (Heikinmäki, 2018, 25; Koski-Heikkinen, 2014, 138).

This type of respect is called social respect, which comes from ways of social interaction that happens across the whole school community. Respectful discourse is marked by genuinely listening to what every person has to say and by taking these views into consideration in following actions. Even if people do not agree, people can still feel appreciated if others respect their views. Without social respect, social exchange may decrease because people have a tendency to avoid demeaning situations if there is a change. (Bryck & Schneider, 2003, 40-45.) Each student is an individual, having their own potential and as a teacher it is significant to see and believe in each of them. Doing so, he or she actively builds up the confidence of a student, which as a matter of fact is one of the starting points in the process of trust development, from the teachers' and students' side. The roots of confidence are strongly built up especially by the behavior of the teacher. (Schweer, 1996; Stelter, 2019, 187.)

7.4 Consistent teacher follows their own rules and is present

elementary school teachers understood consistency as a meaningful part of trust in an interaction, that creates a pedagogical authority and a strong student-teacher relationship. One of the most distincts elements of consistency is time that it requires. Time as a resource enables the presence of the teacher. Time is also needed in a consistent growth as a growth to the teacher profession. Building your pedagogical authority requires reflection of your own actions and different situations and direction where you are going on your pedagogical path. Time and experience help in this but also requires a true will. (Harjunen, 2011, 212; Heikinmäki, 2018, 27.) The primary meaning for a pedagogical authority is to get students being part for the whole teaching-studying-learning process, which is only possible in a caring and listening environment, where a teacher is present for students. Students being active in this process also develop their values of a democratic society (Harjunen, 2011, 213; Heikinmäki, 2018, 27.) A democratic learning community is built by its operating methods together. A school culture that advocates participation, understands human

rights and works democratically and lays a strong base for the students' growth as active citizens. (Finnish National board of Education, 2016, 29.)

It is important that the teacher shows consistency in the rules and values of the classroom. This creates reliability which students can count on. Consistency in teachers´ actions appears in the way that agreed tasks are completed and commonly agreed rules are obeyed -also by the teacher. In a functioning learning community all members are treated as equals, which does not mean that everyone is the same. Equal treatment is formed both from protecting everyone's fundamental rights and changes for participation and identifying individual needs. (Finnish national board of education, 2016, 31.) A consistent teacher keeps promises and listens to wishes. As mentioned before, it is natural for students to evaluate to what extent they can rely on teachers; consistency and follow through are important qualities in the trust building process between students and their teacher. (Brewster & Railsback, 2003, 5.)

8 Discussion

The object of this study was to find out how elementary school teachers understand trust in a student-teacher interaction and observe these themes in the light of factors that impact them. The presumption of this study was that the trust is valued high in an interaction among elementary school teachers. Because of the abstractness of the topic, I was prepared to get more vague and ambiguous answers. Instead, the questionnaire received many precise answers from elementary school teachers. The first impression of the answers was that there is a very strong consensus of the importance of a teacher being a safe adult in a pupil´s life. This aspect came across in different ways in answers that have its reflection to all of the other themes of the study. This is the one interpretation that is not effected by any other interpretations of trust or impacted by any factors of trust. More importantly, it is an interpretation of trust that alone impacts on the rest of the trust building process. This makes the student-teacher relationship very unique by its nature; all of a sudden there is a new adult present in the life of a student, who cares about him or her unconditionally even at the beginning when trust is still being built. The actions of the teacher are a strong determiner to what extent a child feels safe in the class. According to teachers, those aspects are teachers' genuine care for the child and good intentions. It also means that teachers should mutually believe in the good intentions of the students.

Teacher's actions and the student's own resources to trust are in this point a strong marker how the trust building process will develop. This is closely related also to the question about the right age to start the school for children. Ilmonen & Jokinen (2002) state that the ones who still believe that the age seven is the suitable age to start the path of elementary school, often raises the matter of the nature of a communal school environment and its role in the emotional intelligence of a child. In this matter, the interaction and trust between students and teachers are highly emphasized. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 171.) In the same context, Lea Pulkkinen (2002) raises a question about the relationship between emotions and school. She argues that during the ages of seven and eight, a child becomes aware that other people have their own social viewpoints, that can differ from one's own, or be the same. However, in this stage, a child is still focusing on his or her own perspective, rather than trying to fit different opinions together. This is the first stage of the process of separating one's

egocentrism and therefore suitable age for start the school. (Pulkkinen, 2002, 114.) Pulkkinen (1994) also argues that our educational models in the 20th century should be the time of emotional intelligence because the whole previous century focused on the cognitive achievements and logical reasoning. Pulkkinen points that a child´s cognitive intelligence does not really matter without balanced emotional skills. (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 171; Pulkkinen, 1994; Kokkonen & Pulkkinen, 1996.)

8.1   Topical issues related to this study

While writing this research, we are facing a very exceptional and challenging time globally, due to the COVID 19 pandemia. Without going any further to the challenges of the education resulting from the prevailing circumstances, the increasing lack of close interaction with teachers raises a concern of "the new normal". Until this time, we have learned that and the trust relationships built at school will work as the ground for the future of a child. Now, if more distanced teaching and less human contact is the new normal, how will it shape the nature of education and later society too? As Gorman (1974) states, children have always been able to learn facts and concepts without warmth, but they have also learned to be remote. (Gorman, 1974, 33.) I cannot help myself from thinking if this will be the final result of these circumstances, or if this is actually the direction where we as teachers *should* aim due to the new normal -to teach children the remoteness. From the less cynical point of view, when it comes to contact teaching, the physical remoteness in the classroom could bring some new promising policies in the social settings, such as seating arrangements. Larger gaps between students would logically mean smaller class sizes, which would add the much needed time capacity to teachers for being present per student. This would be good news in the light of this study, since the lack of time and resources were one of the main concerns of the elementary school teachers.

As we have learned, real face-to-face human interaction with other students, teachers and other school personnel has numerous benefits from the standpoint of the socialization of a child (Van Maele, Forsyth & Van Houtte, 2014, 13). These challenging circumstances have exposed a worrying phenomenon that reveals another need for trust and interaction, as The Finnish General Broadcast published a piece of

news where it stated that there have been 10% fewer child protection notifications during the pandemia than the same time last year. The most alarming observation is that in the cases of violence targeted to a child have been reported one third of fewer than last year at this time. These changes are significant because there has been a steady growth in reported child protection cases during recent years. (YLE, 2020.) Sure, this might sound good if only paying attention to these numeral statistics. However, when taking account that most of the cases are reported by police or teachers, and that during the pandemic that the number of these reports have collapsed, the situation tells a sad story on how some children might be left without a safe adult during this time. For some children school is the only place where they can feel secured because the majority of the child protection reports are related to domestic violence or problems with alcohol. (YLE, 2020.) The significance of trust between a student and a teacher is even more emphasized during this time. Students maintaining communication -and learning skills and seeing themselves as an active part of the school community also gives hope that there will be something good ahead of the students and a good future awaiting for them. (Brown & Skinner, 2007,5) Teachers 'role as a safe adult is even more highlighted than before.

8.2   Ethics and reliability of this study

An open subjectivity of a researcher and accepting it is the starting point of a qualitative research (Eskola & Suoranta, 1999, 211). This is an element that might feel somewhat liberating to a researcher as for the interpretation of the results of one's study, at least it did for me; I will analyze the results as I understand them. However, this liberation of interpretation opens up a whole new responsibility, because the most essential criteria for the reliability in the qualitative research is the researcher himself and hence measuring it continues for the whole process of the research. Just like Eskola & Suoranta (1999) state, that is also the reason why qualitative studies often have a tendency to be more personal than quantitative research do. (Eskola & Suoranta, 1999, 212.) Having this said, taking into consideration the freedom of interpretation and the topic which alone have various understandings made me

prioritize the data collection and analyze it as clearly and understandably as possible. My aim was also to foster the reliability of this study by offering it as open and clear descriptions of the research process. In phenomenographic research, reliability is based on both the research material and validity of the conclusion. This means that the material and conclusions need to correspond with the thoughts of the researched people, while having connections on theory. (Syrjälä, Ahonen, Syrjäläinen & Saari, 1994, 152.)

While gathering the research data, I was very careful that the collection process followed a reliable research regime. I chose the Alakoulun Aarreaitta Facebook group as the portal for my data collection because of its audience, elementary school teachers. The questionnaire was conducted using the Google Forms that allowed participants to fill it with their own time and use as much time as they need to delve deeper into the questions. Furthermore, because trust can have so many different meanings and is personal, I chose the data collecting method that also allows privacy; the responses are all anonymous and this was also told to the participants.

In phenomenographic research a researcher should recognize one´s role related to the research and the results of it. The researcher is inevitably part of the results through his or her own subjective world and because she or he is theoretically intertwined to the process of the study. In this case, any other researcher can basically organize the same material differently and categorize it the phenomena in different ways. Hence the reliability of phenomenographic research is primary about a fulfillment of an inner reliability. The research is not able to be repeated per se and it is not necessary. Instead, an outsider should be able to find understandable and clear results. (Niikko, 2003, 39-41.) During the data analysing process, I faced this dilemma. When interpreting teachers' writings I aimed to name the themes as precise as possible. Despite that, I cannot help myself wondering how much the named themes are influenced by my own interpretations that in turn are results of my own history and experiences, the way *I* understand trust. It does not help that the themes and groups mostly are considerably loose terms that can mean various things and that there are clear causations and overlappings in these concepts. However, this is also the reason why I aimed on ending up as clear analyses as possible so that the inner reliability of this research would remain.

8.3 Topics for the further research

This study focused on the trust between students and teachers and it was observed from the teachers' point of view. My main purpose was to collect meaningful information for teachers and teachers to come about different approaches building trust in an interaction with students. My final thoughts are that this study managed to gather data both macro and micro level; observing trust as a phenomenon with looser understandings and getting actual real life examples and advice. However, as said, these are comments from teachers and they treat the topic from their point of view and therefore tells only the other side of it. Some teachers stated that the relationship between teacher and parents forms plays a major role in the trust between their children and their teacher. I found it difficult to limit this study on the teacher-student interaction because there is plenty of interesting literature about the interaction between parents and teachers, which I just had to leave out. For further research I would be very interested in learning especially about the parents´ understandings of trust in a teacher-parent interaction. When talking about the parents. The current Finnish national core curriculum (2016) reminds that the responsibility for building the foundation for cooperation between school and home lays with the educational provider, which starts with building trust, equality and mutual respect. In order for a strong cooperation with home, the school staff needs to act initially with personal interaction with parents as well as assure a functional communications by other means. (Finnish national board of education, 2016, 38.) In order for making these guidelines even more concrete, I am keen to learn the views of the guardians; how do they understand the trust between home and school? Researching trust from their perspective could bring surprising and very useful information to the field of education.

Furthermore, from an angle of moral-ethical development of an individual, it would be interesting to dive into the world of youngsters, for example in terms of social capital, that lays whole a different preconditions for trust building for teachers. During puberty stage people understand the necessity of social norms, because they stand for the common viewpoints. This could mean for instance the rules that everyone obeys in different games and a common concensus what is morally right and wrong. (Pulkkinen, 2002, 115.) Young people are capable to create their own worlds

and cultures, way of dressing, music, customs of success in school performance, as well as attitudes towards adults (Tolonen, 2007, 33.) Furthermore, youngsters are in the phase in their development, where they learn to transfer an authority forward, not only receiving it (Ilmonen & Jokinen, 2002, 191.) These are only few examples that assumable make the student-teacher relationship, in terms of trust, different from what elementary school teachers mentioned.

As stated, this study focused on learning the interpretations of trust by elementary school teachers. Despite that there were plenty of room for deeper analyses about the causations between different factors and understandings of trust, this study only raised the main themes with the factors impacting to them. Regardless the complexity of the topic, it offers an opportunity to take a closer look at the interaction between these factors.

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Appendix 1

Luottamus opettajan ja oppilaan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa

Trust in a student-teacher interaction

Kiitos ajastasi! Tämä kysely tulee olemaan osa Pro gradu -tutkielmaani, joka tutkii opettajan ja oppilaan välistä luottamusta opettajien näkökulmasta katsottuna. Kyselyn tarkoituksena on koota opettajien erilaisia käsityksiä luottamuksesta ja miten se koetaan oppilaan ja opettajan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa. Sen vuoksi varsinaista luottamuksen käsitettä ei avata tämän kyselyn ohella sen enempää ja kaikenlaiset kokemukset ovat tärkeä osa tutkielmaani. Kysely sisältää viisi avointa kysymystä joista jokainen on merkittävä. Vastaa kysymyksiin omien kokemustesi perusteella. Tutkimuksen tulokset tulevat olemaan julkisia, mutta vastaajat pysyvät nimettöminä eivätkä ole tunnistettavissa. Kiitos vielä kerran ja hyvää kesää kaikille!

Thank you for your time! This questionnaire will be a part of my Masters' Thesis that researches trust in a student-teacher interaction from a teachers 'point of view. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather different interpretations of trust and learn how teachers experience it in a student-teacher interaction. Therefore the actual meaning of trust won´t be opened here and any kind of experiences are a meaningful part of this research. The questionnaire includes five open-ended questions from which all of them are important. Please, answer the questions based on your own experience. The results of the survey will be public but participants will remain anonymous. Thank you and have a good summer!

1. Miten käsität luottamuksen oppilaan ja opettajan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa?

1. How do you understand the concept of trust in a student-teacher interaction?

2. Millaisia tapoja käytät luottamuksen rakentumiseen oppilaan kanssa?

2. What kinds of methods do you use for building a trust with a student?

3. Millaiset mahdolliset seikat edesauttavat luottamuksen rakentumisessa oppilaan kanssa?

3. What are the possible factors that foster the trust building with a student?

4. Mitkä mahdolliset seikat hankaloittavat luotamuksen rakentumista oppilaan kanssa?

4. What are the possible factors that hinder the trust building with a student?

5. Mitä muuta haluat kommentoida luottamukseen liittyen?

5. What else would you like to comment regarding trust?