



Leadership Within the Phenomenological Structure of Teacher Creativity

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Few studies have investigated the relationship between teachers' leadership and creativity, and thus far, no quantitative or qualitative studies have been undertaken focusing on teacher leadership in the context of teacher creativity and, more specifically, in the context of the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity. Thus, the study presented in this article draws attention to the phenomenological relationship between teacher creativity and leadership. The research question used as a guide for this study was as follows: What does a teacher's leadership in the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity mean? The study aimed to describe teacher leadership as a component of the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity. Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person (teacher's) point of view. In the study, integral phenomenology as a specific approach to design was applied. Unstructured in-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted with non-art discipline teachers. This means school teachers who do not teach arts (music, dance, theatre) but other subjects such as physics, mathematics, chemistry, geography, informatics, languages, biology, communication, psychology and, etc. This article presents the results of 19 analysed interviews. Findings showed that the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity consisted of eighteen themes covering specific sub-themes; one theme represented teacher leadership, encompassing innovativeness, influence, and collegiality. The teacher leadership within the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity was related to the following themes: being curious, being brave, being in relationship, being a citizen, motivating, and opening up. It could be concluded that the complex phenomenological structure of teacher creativity proves that neither teacher creativity nor leadership are individual elements or individual competencies that are acquired separately – teacher creativity is always accompanied by teacher leadership and vice versa. Findings provide opportunities to change our conceptions of teacher leadership in relation to teacher creativity. This study shows that teacher leadership does not play a key role in her/his creativity.

Keywords: classroom, non-art subject teacher, student, teacher creativity, teacher leadership

INTRODUCTION

Teacher leadership refers to the set of skills demonstrated by teachers who teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms to others within their schools and elsewhere (Carver, 2016). In the classroom, teacher leaders model the type of behaviours and learning they want to see and encourage in students (Kinai, 2013). Teacher leaders are transparent in their own learning, not hiding their own mistakes and making visible their thinking and learning processes for students to reconstruct and follow (Nadelson et al., 2020).

There is a variety of leadership theories that include numerous characteristics pertaining to the concept (Benmira and Agboola, 2020): (i) Behavioural theory suggests that the best predictor of leadership success is viewing how a leader acts. (ii) Contingency theory called situational theory, focuses on the context of a leader and looks at the situational effects of the success or failure of a leader. (iii) Great Man theory called the trait theory, suggests that good leaders are born and that leaders deserve to be in their position because of their special traits. (iv) Management theory called transactional leadership, and focuses on supervision, organization, and group performance. (v) Participative theory called democratic leadership and suggests that employees be directly involved in decision making in their organization. (vi) Power theory looks at the way a leader utilizes their power and influence to get things accomplished. (vii) Relationship theory focuses on leaders who are mainly concerned about their interactions with others.

The significant research-based materials on leadership styles are also available. For example, Subandi et al. (2020) studied science teacher' leadership styles and competencies from the perspective of high school students; Kalkan et al. (2020) revealed the relationship between school administrators' leadership styles, school culture, and organizational image; Even and BenDavid-Hadar (2021) uncovered teachers' perceptions of their school principal's leadership style and improvement in their students' performance; Yalçınkaya et al. (2021) substantiated the effect of leadership styles and initiative behaviours of school principals on teacher motivation; Duraku and Hoxha (2021) proved the impact of transformational and transactional attributes of school principal leadership on teachers' motivation for work; Trigueros et al. (2020) confirmed the influence of transformational teacher leadership on academic motivation and resilience, burnout and academic performance; Yusof et al. (2020) explained teacher leadership relationship with students' performance; Simpson (2021) research showed that when the necessary antecedents and enablers are in place, teacher leadership can grow and lead to positive outcomes for students, teachers, and the greater school community; Ngang (2012) identified effective teacher leadership style in managing classroom which included managing classroom environment, teaching skills and children's performance. From these resources, the idea emerges that the behaviours of teacher leaders influence classroom learning climates and cultures conducive to creativity (Sokol et al., 2015). In 1962, Fred Fiedler began deliberating the relationship between leadership and creativity. He assumed that in the case of a bad or a good atmosphere among groups, different behaviours of

leaders will foster creative attitudes or will hinder this process (Sokol, 2015).

Today, creativity is considered one of the most significant criteria expected from teachers and has been indicated as the most important factor in the process of classroom management (Khodabandeh and Jamali, 2019). A teacher's creativity comprises a set of skills that are important for producing original ideas that are meaningful and valuable within a particular context (Sternberg, 2012). Creativity requires both the "right" set of skills and dispositions from teachers (Swain, 2019).

A teacher's leadership and creativity are crucial in providing imaginative and thoughtful responses to opportunities and challenging issues that would otherwise inhibit the students' learning in the classroom (Soh, 2000). It includes seeing, thinking, and doing things differently to improve the learning of students. Through leadership and creativity, teachers provide the educational conditions, environments, and opportunities necessary for students to become effective learners (Stoll and Temperley, 2009). Zydziunaite et al. (2021) confirms this statement in their research, which reveals that teacher leadership and creativity in working with students in the classroom is manifested through learning co-creation while building knowledge and strengthening knowledge capacity. Few studies have investigated the relationship between teachers' leadership and creativity (Rankin and Brown, 2016; Sharma, 2017; Hsin-Hao and Yuan, 2021), and thus far, no quantitative or qualitative studies have been undertaken focusing on teacher leadership in the context of teacher creativity and, more specifically, in the context of the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity.

Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person (teacher's) point of view. Phenomenology is a way of thinking about ourselves. Instead of asking about what we really are, it focuses on phenomena. These are experiences that we get from the senses – what we see, taste, smell, touch, hear, and feel (Van Manen, 2014). The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, and it is being directed toward teacher leadership, as it is an experience of teacher creativity. It means that teacher leadership emerges as a component of full structure of teacher creativity.

The notion "phenomenological structure" is related to Husserl's philosophical thought (Husserl, 2012). His original method, called a Husserlian description, discloses the structures and forms of conscious experience and begins by describing an actual experience in the first person (Owen, 2019). However, descriptions may begin at this basic level, they are often considerably more lengthy, involved and complex and often range from descriptions of the singular and empirical to descriptions of the essential and universal. Empirical descriptions depict the essential or invariant structures of conscious experience (Zahavi, 2002). In this case – teacher's experiences of teacher's creativity.

Teacher leadership, like other components in phenomenological structure of teacher creativity, is found latently in the analysis of qualitative data and emerged from teachers' experiences through their narratives obtained during interviews. Leadership here seems like an unplanned component

of teacher creativity. And the term “phenomenological structure of teacher creativity” means that the concept of “teacher leadership” and evidence for a relationship between teacher leadership and teacher creativity arose from empirical phenomenological data based on teachers’ experiences, and that relationship is not planned to be proven in advance. The term “phenomenological structure of teacher creativity” means that this structure was not developed prior to the study based on a literature review. This structure refers to experiences of teacher creativity in which her / his leadership is not a priority, but it is present along with other components. This structure is not hierarchical, it does not show which component is more important and does not reflect the direct calculated relationships between the components. All these components are interconnected and the creativity of the teacher is being implemented through professional activities. Speaking in plain, non-academic language, we could say that in this article we are talking about the content of teacher creativity, which is formed from the findings of phenomenological research and reveals teacher leadership, as one of the content components related to phenomenon of teacher creativity. This is why the following research question arises: What does a teacher’s leadership mean in the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity?

The aim of this study was to describe teacher leadership as a component of the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Creativity includes one’s ability to think in new ways, positively influencing one’s problem-solving skills (Unsworth, 2001). However, there is no consensus about how to define creativity. Most definitions emphasise the role of the environment in promoting or inhibiting creative abilities (Al-Karasneh and Jubran, 2013). Creativity is the interplay between ability and process by which students produce learning outcomes that are both innovative and useful within the specific context (Plucker and Beghetto, 2004). Teacher creativity is a widely used term both inside and outside the school setting and includes the ability to bring about change, moving from an old paradigm to a new one while implementing learning goals (Darma et al., 2021). Teacher creativity involves the ability to facilitate meaningful and experiential learning, which helps students develop a variety of skills, including social, emotional, and cognitive skills (Dweck and Leggett, 1988; Rankin and Brown, 2016).

A variety of factors influence a teacher’s creativity, including their work experience in the teaching profession; history of interactions with students; the use of different educational environments, instruments, and methods; and collaboration with fellow teachers and school administrators (Oroujlou and Vahedi, 2011; Blazar and Kraft, 2017).

Existing research on teacher creativity covers a wide variety of topics, including the following: teacher creativity as it relates to the learning outcomes of undergraduates (Rankin and Brown, 2016); effective education (Shank, 2016; Blazar and Kraft, 2017);

teacher imagination (Egan, 2007; Hsin-Hao and Yuan, 2021); creative teaching (Sharma, 2017; Hsin-Hao and Yuan, 2021); school administration leadership styles (Abdullah et al., 2016); teachers’ leadership styles and educational interactions with students in the classroom (Mousavi et al., 2011); and teachers’ personal traits (Prabhu et al., 2008).

Teacher creativity is inseparable from creative teaching, involving the incorporation of a teacher’s expertise in applying various methods, personal qualities, attitudes, and values into students’ learning experiences and environments (Lapeniene and Dumciene, 2013). Teacher creativity is considered to be imperative in creative teaching (Al-Karasneh and Jubran, 2013). Creative teaching is the act of teaching in a novel and useful way that promotes student growth related to the development of original thought and action. Creative teaching focuses both on the methods a teacher uses to deliver learning and the overall effect those methods have on students and the outcomes produced (Cremin and Barnes, 2018). Teacher’s leadership in a classroom goes together with creative teaching (Hsin-Hao and Yuan, 2021), promotion of innovations (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009), and teacher’s creativity (Abdullah et al., 2016). Creative teaching is based on four features: relevance, ownership, control, and innovation (Cremin, 2009).

There is no universal definition of “teacher leadership,” but generally it is seen as emerging when teachers have opportunities to build cooperation-based relationships and share resources and strategies, which improve teaching, learning, and engagement in professional development (Poekert et al., 2016; Hiron, 2017). Teacher leadership includes the responsibility for a range of decisions in curricular matters, assessment and evaluation, resources, collaboration, and professional development regarding practicing and managing teaching and learning with students in the classroom (Pont et al., 2008). Moreover, teacher leadership engenders meaningful learning by students in the classroom. In this way, teachers apply strategies that can transform their teaching practices and enhance student’s learning (Mullen and Browne-Ferrigno, 2018).

Teacher leadership is implemented through particular dimensions (Harris and Muijs, 2004; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014): brokering, where teachers implement recommended effective practices; participative leadership, where teachers develop and own new strategies; mediating, where teachers use craft knowledge and also help to interpret and seek help on various improvement plans; and forging close relationships with other teachers, so that reciprocity of teacher learning as well as change and improvement in student learning occur.

Regardless of the teacher’s leadership characteristics, it is important to see its connection to creativity. Danielson (2007) is considering about the creative tension between the school administration and teachers, and among the teachers interacting with each other. It means that the school administration has a role, but teacher leadership does not rest (Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014) and teacher creativity emerges through a variety of interactions at school, not just traditional ones, which are focused on teacher and student. Even the ability of the teacher creatively adjust the school schedule to support both integrated and single-subject instruction of

students is related to teacher's self-empowerment of leadership (Donaldson, 2006).

Teacher leaders influence others with their inspirational motivation and challenge their students in problem solving and provide a learning environment tailored to individual needs (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). The power of teacher leadership is to create new meaning for students and school communities. That's why it's important to identify, develop and strengthen teacher leadership in schools: leadership that enables schools to create learning environments that generate high quality outcomes for students (Crowther et al., 2002).

Creativity in the classroom requires the effective leadership of a teacher (Wildy and Loudon, 2002). Teacher leadership in the classroom is identified through challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modelling the way, and encouraging the heart (Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Teacher leadership includes acting in a way that helps students to complete learning tasks successfully and maintaining meaningful educational relationships with students (Berry et al., 2010). Teachers' leadership skills correlate with the success of their creativity and creative teaching practices in the classroom (Gunter, 2001). Teacher leadership is key to nurturing creativity within the classroom environment and to developing an atmosphere of creative learning among students (Plucker and Beghetto, 2004). The creative teacher, through leadership in the classroom, seeks to emancipate and liberate the creative potential of students through learning (Wildy and Loudon, 2002). Leadership skills are important for teachers to help their students succeed with their learning goals, as teacher leaders influence students while they lead and manage the class. For teachers, having these skills enables them to modify their teaching practices for the specific needs of their classrooms (Dunford et al., 2000).

Teacher leadership and creativity are connected through a teacher's passion for their work, professional independence, teaching and learning goal setting, teaching originality and flexibility, varied interests, teacher intelligence and motivation in objectively assessing students' learning outcomes (Gunter, 2001), vigilance of their role in maintaining an atmosphere of morality and ethics in the classroom, creation of an atmosphere of motivated learning, and development of a learning co-creation relationship with students (Bovill, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Design

In the present qualitative study, phenomenological research was implemented. Phenomenological research within a qualitative design, attempts to understand the essence of a phenomenon being researched from the perspective of the research participants who have experienced the particular phenomenon (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Phenomenology in education includes educational experiences, processes, and means of learning and teaching. Phenomenology is not applied to education as a philosophical understanding but is subject to educational interests, purposes, and moral considerations, from which it cannot be separated (Biesta, 2011). Phenomenology focuses on the commonality of

a lived experience within a particular group. In this study, the non-art subject teachers were representative of a particular professional community; the teachers' experiences of creativity in which their leadership emerged as an important element of the phenomenological structure of creativity in teaching was coincidental.

In this study, integral phenomenology was applied as a design approach. This approach is based on the paradigm of post-cognitivism and the aligned movement of enactivism:

- Post-cognitivism challenges tenets within cognitivism, including ontological dualism, representational realism, that cognition is independent of processes outside the mind and nervous system, that the electronic computer is an appropriate analogy for the mind, and that cognition occurs only within individuals (Still and Costall, 1991). Post-cognitivism takes the position that the human sense of the situation is based on goals, bodies, and culture – all unconscious intuitions, attitudes, and knowledge about the world. This “context” or “background” is a form of knowledge that is not stored in brains symbolically, but intuitively in some way. It affects what is noticed, what is expected, and what possibilities are not considered (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986).
- Enactivism argues that cognition arises through a dynamic interaction between an acting organism and its environment (Thompson, 2007). The term “enactivism” is close in meaning to “enaction,” defined as the “manner in which a subject of perception creatively matches its actions to the requirements of its situation” (Protevi, 2006, p. 169–170). Enactivism emphasizes the growing conviction that cognition is not the representation of a pre-given world by a pre-given mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs (Varela et al., 1992, p. 9).

It has roots in phenomenology and embodied cognition and describes the cognition capacity of enacting a world (Duffy, 2020). Embodied cognition approach emphasizes that cognition involves acting with a physical body on an environment in which that body is immersed. Embodied experiences contribute to a dynamic grounding of cognition over the lifespan (Spencer et al., 2011). Human beings do not passively receive information, which they then translate into internal representations. Their cognitive systems participate in the development or creation of meaning engaging in transformational interactions: they enact a world (Di Paolo et al., 2014). Post-cognitivism with enactivism views cognition as sense making, referring to personal meaning that an individual generates or “enacts” by interacting within their environmental contexts (Stilwell and Harman, 2021).

Integral phenomenology refers to the multifaceted procedures of combining, integrating, linking, and employing multiple methods for data collection or analysis, or using different versions of the same methodology (Pokropski, 2018; Martiny et al., 2021). In the present research, we integrated the phenomenology of practice as outlined by Van Manen (2014) and the phenomenological hermeneutical method for researching lived

experience outlined by Lindseth and Norberg (2004). Integral phenomenology is based on a non-traditional, one-version approach, but it uses integral approach, combining at least two versions of the phenomenology. The integral phenomenology in this study is seen as an attempt to understand what experience is and means, and a formalized account of conscious experience and its implications (Zydzūnaitė and Arce, 2021).

The phenomenology of practice involves different ways of knowing the world (Van Manen, 2007). It is the study of the primal, lived, pre-reflective, pre-predicative meaning of an experience, and it is the study of how individuals make sense of their own experiences. Phenomenology is the process by which a person gives meaning to authentic personal experience (Van Manen, 2017). This personal authentic experience and the authentic personalised meaning make up the content of the phenomenology of practice. The term “phenomenology of practice” has no direct binding link with the profession, the professional community, or a specific professional practice. The notion of “practice” in this version of phenomenology is understood more broadly, without professional or vocational limitations. It is a daily life practice to which the individual gives an authentic meaning, regardless of the person’s profession, mode of action, or specific activity (Van Manen, 2007).

A phenomenological hermeneutical method for researching lived experience is related to interpreting interview texts inspired by the theory of interpretation presented by Paul Ricoeur (1992, 1995). The focus of the present phenomenological research is on comprehensive understanding, which reveals new possibilities for being in the world. This world is the prefigured life world of the interviewees as established in the interviews and refined via the researchers’ interpretations (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004).

Sample

The sample in the present study was formed using maximum variation purposeful sampling. The objective of this method is recognizing important shared patterns that span across research subjects and cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity (Palinkas et al., 2016). It is used to document unique or diverse variations that have emerged in adapting to various conditions (Patton, 2002). The appropriateness of this sampling type for the current research determined the selection of representatives of the teachers’ professional community and the identification of preliminary selection criteria for the study participants as follows: pedagogical experience of at least 1 year; representing male and female genders; age attesting to the completion of undergraduate studies, with a minimum age of 22 years; working as a teacher at a school, but pedagogical studies are not necessarily completed; teaching non-art subjects at a school [in order not to rely on the stereotype that only teachers of art disciplines are creative; this means school teachers who do not teach arts (music, dance, theatre) but other subjects such as physics, mathematics, chemistry, geography, informatics, languages, biology, communication, psychology and, etc.]; and has changed schools at least once during their entire teaching career.

To find participants relevant to this study according to the selected criteria, purposeful maximum variation sampling was

combined with snowball sampling, which is often applied when samples with the target characteristics are not easily accessible (Naderifar et al., 2017). Snowballing is a method of expanding a sample by asking one informant or participant to recommend others for interviewing (Groenewald, 2004). Instead of selecting a sample, every subject who met the criteria was selected until data saturation was achieved (Jalali, 2013). Data saturation in this research was directly related to sample size; interviews were conducted until at least one new element was found, and data collection was completed when no new components emerged in the final interview. Saturation in this study researchers define as data satisfaction. It is when the researcher reaches a point where no new information is obtained from further data. Saturation point determines the sample size in qualitative research as it indicates that adequate data has been collected for a detailed analysis. In interviews, when researchers began to hear the same comments again and again, data saturation was reached. It was then time to stop collecting information and to start analysing what has been collected (Saunders et al., 2018).

The most prominent criterion of sampling in phenomenological research is the participant’s experience with the phenomenon under study. The researchers looked for participants who have shared an experience, but vary in characteristics and in their individual experiences (Palinkas et al., 2016). In a phenomenological study, researchers do not care about the quantitative balance between the characteristics of the study participants (Guetterman, 2015). This means that the study did not aim to include an equal number of teachers in the study according to their work in primary or secondary school(s). The researchers did not aim to classify teachers according to whether they work with primary school students, or with secondary school students, or with gymnasium students. This study aimed to describe teacher leadership as a component of the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity. Teacher leadership and creativity in this study are not related to school type or other characteristics. An essential criterion for participation in the study was to work as a school teacher for at least 1 year.

A total of 37 teachers were interviewed. However, only 19 teachers communicated in their interviews that leadership was a component of teacher creativity. In these 19 interviews, the topic of leadership emerged in the phenomenological structure of the teacher creativity. Therefore, this article presents the results of the 19 analysed interviews. Characteristics of research participants were as follows:

- Age: 22–70 years (average 42.5 years).
- Gender: 10 men; 9 women.
- Work experience: 1–48 years (average 21.8 years).
- Education: (i) tertiary level: 18 university graduates with bachelor’s degrees and 1 college graduate with a bachelor’s degree; and (ii) according to the mission of the study programme, 15 graduates of pedagogical studies, 4 graduates of studies in other fields (i.e., law, ethno-culture, theology, and history).

- Subject: each teacher taught 1–4 subjects at their school [e.g., physics, engineering, mathematics, informatics (IT); biology; history, basics of citizenship, and philosophy; history, basics of citizenship, economics, and sexuality education].
- The following subjects were taught (with the frequency indicated in parentheses): foreign languages (4), history (3), Lithuanian language and literature (5), primary education (3), physics (2), mathematics (1), IT (2), philosophy (2), basics of citizenship (2), biology (1), sexuality education (1), and economics (1).
- The interviewees' reasons for changing schools at least once during their teaching careers included the following: (i) personal reasons (14): change of residence (4), burnout (4), school head mobbing (1), and inadmissibility of organisational culture (5); and (ii) institutional reasons (5): school closure (2), and staff redundancies at schools (3).

Data Collection

Unstructured in-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted in the present study. Thus, the researchers had no predetermined set of questions. The research participants were encouraged to talk about areas of particular interest to the researchers and the study (Bevan, 2014). These were very general, or even quite vague at the outset. The researchers let the participants speak freely and responded to what was said to continue the interview (Guerrero-Castañeda et al., 2017). This research also entailed asking the participants to set aside their experiences about teacher creativity within teaching and interacting with students and to share their reflections on the value of being a creative teacher. The following interview questions were provided to research participants:

- How did/do you experience creativity within the teaching profession and when interacting with students in a classroom?
- What value, if any, has been derived from being a creative teacher?

Data collection was conducted by directing the research participants to focus on how they think and feel (Kvale, 2007; Leigh-Osroosh, 2021). Researchers asked the participants to describe their lived experience using their own authentic language, free from pre-existing intellectual and societal conditions (Flood, 2010). This is related to bracketing, which is an act of suspending judgment about the natural world instead of focusing on analysis of experience (Vagle, 2018). The other act of bracketing involved in this study was the researchers' bracketing of their own preconceptions, ensuring they entered into the interviewee's lifeworld and using themselves as experienced interpreters (Jackson et al., 2018). The interviews were conducted between December 2020 and June 2021.

All interviews were conducted in an online format. The specific date and time of the interviews with each study participant were agreed upon individually. The duration of the interviews varied, from a minimum of 50 min to a maximum

of 162 min. All interviews were recorded. Each interview was transcribed and analysed consistently one after the other so that new details were not missed and ensure the implementation of the principle of theoretical saturation in a transparent manner. A total of 37 interviews were conducted, with no new details emerging in the last interview. However, only nineteen of the interviewees had developed teacher leadership (see the sample parameters in the Methodology section). The focus of the interviews was on teachers and creativity and the leadership wasn't directly asked so as not to reimpose influencing factors on creativity into the data.

Data Analysis

Phenomenology seeks to describe the "life world" structures – the world as it is lived and experienced by research participants (Mortari, 2008). The life world is defined as that which is lived by the individual in their everyday life as an entity that is not detached from their surroundings (Küpers, 2007, 2009). For data analysis, the approach of integral phenomenology was applied, which is based on Wilber's (2001, 2008) integral theory and related to the integral approach. An integral approach to any field attempts to include as many perspectives, styles, and methodologies as possible within a coherent view of the research topic. The integral approach is a way to draw together already existing separate paradigms into an interrelated network of approaches that are mutually enriching (Wilber, 2008).

The data analysis was performed in two rounds, with the first round related to the version of phenomenological hermeneutics put forward by Lindseth and Norberg (2004) and the second round to the version of the phenomenology of practice posited by Van Manen (2014). During the first round, the relationships between the themes were clarified through the following four processes (2004):

1. *Naïve reading* goes with naïve understanding when the text in every interview is read several times by seeking to grasp the whole meaning within the particular context. The text is read several times in order to grasp its meaning as a whole. The researcher should be open to the unknown in the texts of interviews. To do this it is necessary for researcher to be open enough to allow the text to speak to researcher(s). The researcher is in the position to "step back" from their natural attitude by shifting their understanding to a phenomenological attitude, which is then communicated through the researcher's analytic and interpretative text. During the naïve reading we try to switch from a natural attitude to a phenomenological attitude. An expression "naïve reading" reflects a phenomenological attitude – to be open, not to bring one's preconceived notions – practical, theoretical, stereotypical, but to be careful when reading the interview texts, opening up to what research participants communicate. The goal of researchers in phenomenological research is to represent the research participants' voice.
2. *Structural analyses*. Structural analyses involve dividing interview transcripts into meaning units. In this step, the subthemes are formulated and clustered into larger themes

that are essential to the meanings of the lived experience of the research participants.

3. *Comprehensive understanding.* This is implemented when themes are summarised and reflected on in relation to the research question, research phenomenon, and the context of the study. Researchers seek out literature regarding the meaning of lived experience in relation to a particular phenomenon. The researcher perceives the interview text in light of the selected literature text/texts and vice versa, seeing the literature text in light of the interview texts. The focus is on living in the world that the interview text opens.
4. *Formulating the findings.* Findings are formulated in a phenomenological hermeneutical way to express the meaning of lived experience by giving priority to using everyday language.

The dimensions of teacher leadership were described in the second round, which consisted of five steps (Adams and van Manen, 2006; Van Manen, 2006, 2007, 2014, 2017; Van Manen and Adams, 2010):

1. *Bracketing and phenomenological reduction.* Phenomenological reduction is a purposeful opening by the researcher to the phenomenon with its own meaning. In this step, the researcher does not enter the space of the phenomenon, which is expressed through the authentic world of the research participant. The researchers become familiar with every recording and transcription of every interview through multiple listenings and readings, developing a holistic understanding about the phenomenon-related content of the collected interviews.
2. *Delineating units of meaning.* Statements/units that illuminate the research phenomenon are extracted from interview transcriptions, and the list of units related to the meaning of the researched phenomenon is developed.
3. *Clustering of meaning units to form themes.* The researcher, by examining the list of meaning units, seeks to elicit the essence of every meaning unit within the holistic context of the research study. Clusters of themes are formed by grouping meaning units together. There are overlaps in the clusters of themes, and thus relationships between them are discovered.
4. *Summarising each interview.* A summary that incorporates all the themes elicited from the qualitative interview data provides a holistic context of the research phenomenon. The content of each theme is then analysed on the basis of phenomenological dimensions – corporeal, temporal, spatial, and relational, as well as others emerging from the content of the qualitative data. A dimension of materiality has emerged in this study as additional to traditional phenomenological dimensions.

Quote selection reflects strong patterns in the data; while discrepant examples serve an important purpose, their use is purposeful and explicit (Eldh et al., 2020). The quote selection

was distributed across participants, in order that researchers represent the data set. Researchers chose the longer quotations, which were used to exemplify more complex understandings (Creswell, 2012) in order to elucidate the informants' perspectives (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006). The quotes were selected they meant to be representative through its relationship to a specific subtheme and theme, which emerged through analysis from qualitative empirical data.

Ethics

The study involving human participants was reviewed and approved by the Board of Ethics of the Educational Research Institute, Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University (28.12.2020, Protocol No. 5).

Research participant recruitment and their decisions to participate in the interview did not involve issues related to social, moral, cultural and/or political aspects, and there was no reimbursement for participants' time and expenses as all the interviews were conducted on-line (Orb et al., 2000). There were no ethical conflicts because the research team allowed freedom of choice regarding participation in the study. The research team ensured that participants were provided with an informed consent prior sheet, which provided information about study aims and procedures, the nature of teachers' recruitment for participation in the study, and the assurance of participants' anonymity and confidentiality (Walker, 2007).

FINDINGS

The phenomenological structure of non-art teachers' creativity consisted of eighteen themes covering a variety of specific sub-themes. One theme represented teacher leadership, encompassing innovation, influence, and collegiality (see **Table 1**).

The theme "leading" within the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity was related to the following themes: being curious, being brave, being in relationship, being a citizen, motivating, and opening up (see **Table 2**).

Relationships Between Themes

The theme "leading" was related to other themes from the phenomenological structure of non-arts teachers' creativity through two specific sub-themes – innovating and influencing.

Leading and being curious. A teacher's leadership is combined with their curiosity through teacher innovation. Such innovation, in the context of the theme of teacher curiosity, focused on provoking the student to engage in critical thinking and breaking down stereotypes, leaving space for self-expression and the joy of discovery:

"[M]ost of my lessons are going upstream." I ask, "Is it really so?" And the authors I choose for students to read are trying to dispel the myths and stereotypes. Students sometimes feel uncomfortable. For example, one girl said, "It was here that we learned that in the Middle Ages everything was black, and now you are saying here that

TABLE 1 | Leadership within the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity.

Theme	Sub-theme	Theme	Sub-theme
Being exploratory	Renovating	Being inclusive	Inspiring
	Engaging		Being persuasive
	Being spontaneous		Being interesting
	Researching		Playing
	Reflecting		Communicating
	Experimenting		Unifying
Being flexible	Being spontaneous	Being authentic	Being in freedom
	Being sentimental		Provocating
Being a citizen	Being conscious	Searching	Innovating
	Influencing		Renovating
	Encouraging		Being purposive
Being brave	Being open to others	Leading (Being leader)	Innovating
	Innovating		Influencing
Being a learner	Improving	Educating	Being collegial
	Changing		Being methodological
	Being purposeful		Communicating
	Being open to others		Being systematic
	Sharing		Unifying
	Being adaptable		Being purposeful
Raising	Being in self-esteem	Motivating	Influencing
	Inspiring		Being in introspection
Being authority	Being professional	Being analytical	Self-assessing
	Being purposeful		Being responsive
	Influencing		Being unlimited
Being in the profession	Being productive	Opening up	Being in self-esteem
	Being purposeful		Being communicable
	Being critical		Influencing
	Being in self-education		
	Being open to others		
	Influencing		
Being in relationship	Being immediate	Being curious	Influencing
	Being humanistic		Renovating
	Being collegial		Being purposeful
	Reflecting		Innovating
	Being empathetic		
	Being didactic		

The theme 'leading' within the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity was related to the following themes: being curious, being brave, being in relationship, being a citizen, motivating, and opening up (see **Table 2**).

it was completely different and not black.” I say, “Read critically. I encourage you to rethink every sentence and ask questions. No one is able to tell you how it really is; there is no one definitive answer. There are considerations. You have to learn to consider. Ask questions as you read each sentence and hear each statement from the teacher. So go to a history teacher and ask questions instead of digging up what you don’t believe.” I really want them to discover for themselves serendipity. When you discover for yourself, then you accept it completely differently (Teacher A).

Under the theme of “leading,” teacher innovativeness focused on being critical in achieving learning outcomes:

Anyway, it’s me now with my hands down, because that’s the job of Sisyphus. But I still try. Now we are competing, who will read better and who will read more books. And the kids are reporting, drawing, writing. This is my bigger job. Encourage students to read. Do not moralise to read but motivate them by example. Therefore, today they compete not for learning achievements but for the books they read. It is reading that enables students to learn better and have higher moments of achievement. Understand? To compete not for scores, but for available knowledge (Teacher E).

Leading and being in relationship. The theme “leading” was linked to the theme of “being in relationship” by the sub-theme “influencing.” Regarding the topic of “being in a relationship,” the

TABLE 2 | Relationships between themes.

Themes	Leading
Being curious	Innovating (sub-theme)
Being brave	
Being in relationship	Influencing (sub-theme)
Being a citizen	
Motivating	
Opening up	

subtheme “influencing” focused on the aesthetics of the teachers’ image:

A teacher can’t come with the same sweater every day; a teacher has to be with high heels, no matter how hard, no matter how complicated. And they will look at you, they will not dare to disturb you and you will achieve everything you want in the lesson. [. . .] Do you think the appearance of a teacher does not affect student learning? Maybe indirectly but does. Teacher’s stretch, dignity, clothing, posture, everything matters. Students notice everything. (Teacher B)

For the theme “leading,” the sub-theme “influencing” was seen to help teachers impart knowledge to students by promoting information accuracy:

I especially appreciate some assignments when I cite a source and when students bring work, present, and indicate the source you used. Indicates where the citations were taken. When students can name exactly what they have seen, read, know, watched. If students are still using cumulative, then they are encouraged to do so. For students, learning accuracy, precision, ethics in quoting, arguing with the thoughts of authors. Everything matters. Students learn ethics. But I have to do it the way I teach students. They watch me and appreciate me. Therefore, I have no right to make a mistake. (Teacher J)

Leading and being a citizen. Teacher leadership was linked to citizenship by teacher influence. For the theme “leading,” the sub-theme “influencing” focused on the use of school inventory in accessible ways and the teacher’s initiative through innovations:

As a leader, I motivated students. I initiated a project at the library, “Library without Borders.” And I motivated students and teachers to go to the library and read books. They do not visit the library because it needs to be presented through specific premises. Not everyone dares to come to the library and read library books. The library is rich in publications, so I took the lead in opening the school library treasure to students and teachers. I thought of inviting students and teachers to the library. I knew typical calls wouldn’t work. So, I came up with a project and involved students and teachers. That’s how we all rediscovered the school library. (Teacher D)

Leading and motivating. The theme “leading” was linked to the theme “motivating” by the sub-theme “influencing,” which focused on the formation of students’ learning achievement through the teacher’s motivation:

And not only during Lithuanian language lessons, but also through other lessons. If you want to speak beautifully, to express your thoughts beautifully, you must have a large arsenal of words [...]. That’s why you read. And then I appeal to examples: “Oh, this one reads, and you try, maybe you’ll get better.” I encourage the student by a living example, and that is enough, and I give the books as a gift. Personal gift from me, teacher. I buy and donate books. Students like to get the books as a gift. And they read. And they learn a few lessons: it’s better to buy a book than an unnecessary item – a book is an investment in personal intellectual growth; it is important to shape our library at home – it is a great asset that we pass on to future generations. Students like it. (Teacher C)

For the theme “leading,” the sub-theme “innovating” focused on the “correct” selection of teaching material to encourage students to learn and develop their critical thinking:

Sometimes very simple, sometimes very complex. But I have a good experience. The most important thing for students is to choose the right book. Let’s say I read with my students, and they read now. They had already acquired the ability to read, and that skill was formed when I initiated. We examine works – there are those who find it harder to succeed, but most of them try, learn, deepen, and achieve excellent learning results. I keep telling you about the inspiring example of a teacher. Students learn from example. Students follow a teacher who is an authority they trust. That is leadership. Teacher leadership, no different. (Teacher T)

Leading and opening up. The theme of “leading” was linked to the theme of “opening up” by the sub-theme of “influencing.” In the themes “opening up” and “leading,” this sub-theme focused on creativity in terms of using teaching material without focusing on a desired learning outcome and two teachers had a perspective on the respective theme:

[Y]ou [are] still educating and moving forward. And you find ways to express the teaching creatively. I don’t know, not my own probably attitude is such that and I think every student is different. And that’s why I think the learning outcomes for each student are personal, personalised. Therefore, my job is to reveal to students their abilities and talents. Show them that they can. Open themselves to themselves. (Teacher I)

Open yourself to them. I would think that if I would be just a literature teacher, I would encourage students to read. They don’t want to read much. But I have my own methods for getting interested. We read the passage, and I encourage you to criticise and talk. Those excerpts lead them to longer readings and then to specific books. (Teacher F)

Leading and being brave. Teacher leadership was combined with courage through teacher innovativeness. “Innovating” in themes such as “leading” and “being brave” had different meanings. For the theme “being brave,” a teacher’s innovativeness meant the courage to retrain:

I am a physics teacher. The school has always needed and needs to be bold in adapting to innovation. But it requires learning. I am the generation that needed to learn to work with computing machines – I learned, and it was a success. But the time came for computers. Computers came to our school first, and I had to learn to work with them. And I learned. I became a computer science teacher. I liked it because the kid really likes this subject. This makes me more interested in computer science than physics. The courage to change professionally is always needed. For students, I am a real example that change in life is a real professional step and adaptation to change is necessary. It happens through teaching, learning, decision making, and so on. (Teacher H)

Dimensions of Teacher Leadership

The theme “leading” consisted of three sub-themes: innovating, influencing, and being collegial. The latter included five phenomenological dimensions: temporality, spatiality, materiality, corporeality, and relationality (sociality). *Temporality* related to the teachers’ leadership in being able to motivate students to learn:

Students have always known that after 6 months, they will be rewarded for their abundant and active work by reporting, drawing, writing, and the like. (Teacher T)

Temporality unfolded through additional reading in the lessons. The teacher leader planned the students’ time in the lesson so that there was always a medium a pause for reading:

And whatever I do, we always have reading time in the classroom. (Teacher K)

The teacher was interested in having students develop reading skills as much and as often as possible.

Relationality reflected the discussions between teachers and students. The teacher realised leadership by informing students about world innovations through reading the latest scientific articles. By reading together, students discovered a sense of cognition. Students were actively involved in the selection of information, unless the article was complex and required teacher intervention or a broader explanation:

We talk a lot about reading. No matter what scientific articles appear, I always tell them about them. I read with them. They choose what they want to read. I never provide a list for reading to students. Unless you see that the student is having a hard time and needs extra help, that’s a whole different matter. In this case, a separate access to every student is required. (Teacher V)

Relationality was a reminder that building relationships is essential to creating a shared team atmosphere. Students who cause problems during a lesson can sometimes be a very difficult

part of a teacher’s workday. Relationality is inseparable from a teacher leader’s planning for improvement and feedback:

For the second year in a row, the emphasis is on feedback; it is one of the forms of professional development when a teacher goes to a colleague’s lesson with a certain task. (Teacher D)

The teacher saw leadership through collaboration with fellow teachers. For example, a peer might see a problem from the side lines while observing a lesson and could then help the teacher by speeding up the search for a positive outcome. Teachers might also help monitor a problematic student whose behaviour interfered with the overall rhythm of the lesson. The teachers discussed the analysed results together:

Fellow teachers come to the lessons, observe, and then discuss. Their support and help is invaluable. We follow the rule that we do not criticise each other. Therefore, the presence of another teacher or several teachers in a particular lesson does not mean inspection and criticism, but means cooperation, trust. Such a culture means a strong professional relationship and a personal relationship. Collegial connection. (Teacher Z)

Such a relationship formed an atmosphere of mutual trust among the teaching staff.

Spatiality revealed the role of a teacher’s courage. A teacher leader admitted that being alone on the “battlefield” was challenging:

If you are alone in taking initiatives, implementing change is very difficult. Implementing change in the teacher community is not easy, especially when it comes from the outside and still needs to be organised inside. But every change needs courage. Above all, the courage to speak out loud about desired changes and those that focus on student learning success. And that’s what’s going on – creating a space for collaboration where creative decisions, discussions, criticism, consensus, and so on take place. This is an extraordinary space – communication, learning from each other. That space is social, moral, intellectual. The space for teachers to be teachers. (Teacher G)

Even a small boost made the teacher happy because their goal was to spread the innovations to fellow teachers.

Spatiality reflects innovative vision. When a teacher leader initiates an innovation. (Teacher D)

However, the understanding of space in school life was also related to physical space:

The library that is in the corridor, without borders, is a passage with reading, where reading becomes comfortable, does not require a separate space. What do I need from that passage. At the same time, I develop students’ awareness of creating an authentic intellectual space through reading. (Teacher E)

Spatiality was reflected in the virtual reading room. When a teacher implemented leadership by sharing, for example, the books they read with students:

We have a virtual reading shelf. I put my books there, what I read, we write comments to each other. (Teacher K)

The teacher motivated the students to read. The liked books received wider discussion. Leadership was also related to the common intellectual space formed by the teacher and the student through reading.

Corporeality revealed one teacher's frustration with students' learning. The teacher leader felt like Sisyphus, rolling the students' learning like a huge stone on a steep hill:

Anyway, this is Sisyphus work. I am sad because of student learning if it is unsuccessful. I experience defeat, frustration, or even shame when students fail to learn, when their learning achievements are poor. That's a big part of me. You know, if students succeed, it's my victory and theirs, if students fail, it's my defeat. (Teacher L)

Corporeality reflected another teacher's belief in the hope that "all will be well," and they will be able to deal with any problem related to teaching and/or learning:

I do not give up. Students need to see the teacher leader they want to follow. In all meanings. Therefore, I have no right to allow myself to be unexciting, ignorant, not trying. Students want to see a teacher as a leader, which means an educated, calculated, cultural, ethical teacher. (Teacher D)

The teachers understood that their job was to motivate students and that they needed to be examples of leaders for their students.

Materiality was experienced by teachers through the application of specific methods, such as reading books – students read specific books, the reading of which was a tangible result for them:

[N]ow we are competing to see who reads more, who reads better, who reads more books. Conscious competition gives the student the opportunity to develop [a] variety of skills which are important for their learning. For example, materiality is related to choosing a book for the student. The most important thing for students is to choose the right book. Let's say I read with my students, and they read now. Reading to my students is the basis of mutual competition. Such a match is a wonderful, tangible material result. Reading determines other things of learning success – the language of reading students is enriched, they write great texts, their speaking, and speaking becomes critical rather than retelling. Students become more confident. And what? Read only [...]. Awesome method. (Teacher H)

Thus, the teachers shared with their students what was precious to them – books. Reading became a tangible mix – qualitative and quantitative – in the material reality of teacher leadership.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study showed that teacher leadership in the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity was only one component among many and was multi-layered, consisting of three elements – innovativeness, influence, and collegiality – that integrated teacher personality, social and management skills, and morality. The content of teacher leadership within the creativity structure represented the teacher's professional self, which in teaching practices forms an educational relationship with students, and influences learning through teaching. Teacher's professional self is an essential tool for expressing teacher's professionalism. These research results confirmed Van Manen's (2007, 2014) idea that the phenomenological structure of any phenomenon in education is primarily practical and reflects the practice of living, which includes acting in everyday situations and engaging in relationships. Taken together, this is a phenomenology of practice. In the present research, this was a phenomenology of teacher leadership practice within the structure of teacher creativity.

Our research was done on teacher creativity, and from the data emerged the component of teacher leadership, which is complex. It should also be noted that the research was conducted on teacher creativity in the classroom working with students, and the results of the study regarding the leadership component (theme) showed that even when simply working in the classroom with students, the teachers had influence outside the classroom. Students learned from the example of a teacher and took skills acquired in the classroom and applied them in other life contexts. Consequently, teacher impact was seen in the classroom but was difficult to capture outside the classroom as students applied those skills in a variety of life contexts. The results of our research broaden existing understandings. For example, Stoll and Temperley (2009) argued that teacher creativity and leadership in working with students in the classroom require imagination, the ability to manage the classroom, and the ability to create the necessary environment by managing challenges so that students can become effective learners. In addition, the results of our study confirmed the findings of Carver's (2016) study, which indicated that teacher leadership manifests itself in skills. Our research demonstrated the essential skills (innovativeness, influence, and collegiality) and how and in which specific aspects (being curious, being brave, being motivating, being a citizen, being in relationship, and being open) these skills are related.

The findings of our study showed that teacher leadership in the overall phenomenological structure of teacher creativity encompassed several phenomenological dimensions, with the latter related to the following aspects:

- *Temporality* in our research was related to a teacher's ability to influence others and to relationality, or the ability of a teacher to build relationships with students through their teaching, planning, feedback, and cooperation with fellow teachers. Important findings here were that a teacher's ability to build relationships combined the dimensions of temporality and relationality and expanded the perception of these dimensions – in the temporality, the teacher's

ability to plan and manage the time was important for the quality of their relationships with students in a classroom. These research findings also overlapped with Pont et al. (2008), Poekert et al. (2016), Hairon (2017), and Mullen and Browne-Ferrigno (2018), who found that teacher creativity was realised through leadership, when the teacher was able to collaborate, build relationships with students, and make effective decisions related to the implementation of education.

- *Spatiality* in this research was interrelated with a teacher's courage to manage challenges when regarding creating and transforming environments by moving away from the concept of the physical and toward intellectual and virtual spaces. This means that our research showed that the teacher, in their work with students in the classroom and in the school environment, created intellectual and social spaces for learning through teaching that manifested itself in creativity, innovation, initiative, and impact on students in terms of motivated learning. These findings confirmed the findings from the studies of Gunter (2001) and Bovill (2019) that teacher leadership and creativity are connected through their teaching originality, flexibility, interests, and passion to work to maintain an atmosphere of motivated learning.
- *Corporeality* in this research referred to complex feelings and experiences in educational relationships with students when a teacher experienced various emotions but did not lose their sense of hope and bravery. These research findings showed that teacher leadership is challenging and requires the strength of the teacher creativity to manage students, influence student learning, and courageously enact leadership through teaching. This was also found in the research studies of Wildy and Louden (2002) and Kouzes and Posner (2003).
- *Materiality* in our research referred to teaching methods as intellectual instruments used by teachers. This result was consistent with the research findings of Al-Karasneh and Jubran (2013), Lapeniene and Dumciene (2013), and Cremin and Barnes (2018), indicating that teaching methods positively affect students' learning when these methods are creative and stimulate students' growth. Our research results also confirmed the findings of Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009), Abdullah et al. (2016), and Hsin-Hao and Yuan (2021) that leadership and creativity in teaching activities are interrelated through the applied teaching methods, whereby they promote the growth of students and the development of their talents.

CONCLUSION

Teacher leadership in the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity refers to being a part with its own unique content, consisting of three components: innovation, influence, and collegiality. The first two are aimed at students and the third at fellow teachers. Teacher creativity and leadership are

interrelated – teacher creativity is not fully realised without creativity and vice versa. However, this connection is specific and consists of components that link a teacher's creativity and leadership: being curious, being in relationship, being a citizen, motivating, opening up, and being brave. Thus, the connection between a teacher's creativity and leadership is not focused on specific expert knowledge, but on a teacher's personality traits, morality, and sociality. In addition to leadership, 17 topics were identified in the present research regarding the phenomenological structure of teacher creativity. From this, it was clear that in addition to a teacher's characteristics, their abilities, professional skills, knowledge, intelligence, erudition, managerial skills, and psychological skills were all necessary. This complex phenomenological structure of teacher creativity proved that neither teacher creativity nor leadership were individual elements or individual competencies acquired separately – teacher creativity was always accompanied by teacher leadership and vice versa.

Findings provide opportunities to change our conceptions of teacher leadership in relation to teacher creativity. This study shows that teacher leadership does not play a key role in her/his creativity. It is a component that integrates with other components to fully realize the teacher's creativity. The results of the study reveal the need to change attitudes toward teacher leadership. It is recommended not to associate teacher leadership traditionally with styles, but to focus more on dimensions, and in this case the incorporation of phenomenological dimensions (temporality, spatiality, corporeality, materiality) into the extension of teacher leadership could be one of the appropriate methodological choices. The teacher leadership can be observed through her / his creative educational relationship with students and with fellow teachers, school administration and the school community.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets presented in this article are not readily available because the data is completely anonymous. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to VŽ, vilma.zydzunaite@vdu.lt.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The study involving human participants was reviewed and approved by the Board of Ethics of the Educational Research Institute, Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University (28.12.2020, Protocol No. 5). Written informed consent for participation was not required for this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

VB conceived the original idea with the support of VŽ. VŽ conducted the literature review, coordinated the data collection (interviews) on social impact, and revised the final version of the manuscript. VJ with the support of LK analyzed the results of the

line of research (phenomenology). VB conducted the interviews, and transcribed and analyzed them with the support of VŽ and VJ. LK wrote a full draft of the manuscript. VŽ, VJ, and VB revised it and included corrections. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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