



Copyright © 2024 by Cherkas Global University
All rights reserved.
Published in the USA

European Journal of Contemporary Education

E-ISSN 2305-6746

2024. 13(4): 683-701

DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2024.4.683

<https://ejce.cherkasgu.press>

IMPORTANT NOTICE! Any copying, reproduction, distribution, republication (in whole or in part), or otherwise commercial use of this work in violation of the author's rights will be prosecuted in accordance with international law. The use of hyperlinks to the work will not be considered copyright infringement.



**European Journal of
Contemporary Education**



ELECTRONIC JOURNAL

Teachers' Perceptions of the Contextual Factors that Support Teacher Leadership in School: A Co-Creation Perspective

Lina Kaminskienė^a, Vilma Žydžiūnaitė^a, Vaida Jurgilė^{a,*}

^a Educational Research Institute, Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Abstract

This study has aimed to reveal the complexities of the contextual factors that support teacher leadership. Contextual factors reflect the environment where teachers work; they include but are not limited to teaching practices, trust in the support teachers receive from school administrators, school climate, parents' views, and school culture. In the study, co-creation has emerged as an overarching factor in managing the complexity of the contextual factors that support teacher leadership. This study was based on a qualitative research design involving thematic analysis. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 42 schoolteachers from Lithuania, and purposive sampling was applied. The results suggest that administrative support, school administrators' attitudes toward teacher leadership, teachers' co-creation-based formal and informal learning of leadership skills, teachers' partnership and collaboration with school communities, the use of learning spaces, and the modeling of educational processes through co-creation practices are contextual factors that influence the emergence and development of teacher leadership in school.

Keywords: co-creation, contextual factors, school context, semi-structured interview, teacher perceptions, teacher leadership, thematic analysis.

1. Introduction

Teacher leadership is a pivotal factor that significantly influences educational success and student achievement (Leithwood, Jantzi, 2000; Marzano et al., 2005). Since the 1980s, research on teacher leadership has attracted substantial interest. Efforts have been made to conceptualize teacher leadership (Wenner, Campbell, 2017), to analyze the internal and external factors that contribute to the emergence and growth of leadership (Jäppinen, 2017; Liu, 2021), to explore how leadership stimulates school change and improvement of the quality of schools (Geijsel et al.,

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: vaida.jurgile@vdu.lt (V. Jurgilė)

2003), and to achieve many other aims. A large body of research has focused on teacher leadership, student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood et al., 2010), and the development of school culture (Deal, Peterson, 1999). Some studies have specifically examined school-level and personal factors, such as lack of time, language barriers, and leadership style, or personal factors such as teachers' assumptions about and willingness to take on additional leadership responsibilities (Al-Taneiji, Ibrahim, 2017).

A growing body of research (Ainscow, West, 2006; Hallinger, Heck, 2011; Leonard, Leonard, 1999) has highlighted that teacher leadership is intrinsically linked to educational community and collaboration; as a result, leadership research adopts a broader perspective wherein leadership is regarded not only as an individual phenomenon but as a product of a school's culture and wherein each teacher's role is viewed in relation to other teachers and to students. It is natural, therefore, that research has begun to explore contextual factors that stimulate the emergence and development of teacher leadership. Contextual factors reflect the environment where teachers work and include, but are not limited to, teaching practices, trust in the support teachers receive from school administrators, school climate, parents' views, and school culture. Thus, many studies have focused on the development of school culture as an important element in the manifestation of leadership, emphasizing the contributions of all members of the school community to the development of an open and supportive culture (Roby, 2011). Teachers' opinions concerning cultural and organizational issues are important in determining whether they will accept leadership roles (Mulford, Silins, 2003). However, cultural and organizational factors are diverse and include many complex components. One such component is trust, which is important in organizational culture and has a stronger association with teacher collaboration and a positive work environment than the other criteria (Demir, 2015).

Within this field of research on contextual factors, a growing body of research is increasingly examining not only collaboration between community members (teachers, administrators, students, parents) but also the phenomenon of co-creation, in which leadership is exercised through an open and ongoing co-creation process (Geurts et al., 2023). This co-creative practice was defined as a "collaborative, reciprocal process" that engages all participants of the school community (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Collaborative and co-creative factors are emphasized in Cassata and Allensworth's (2021) study, which highlights five patterns of teacher leadership actions – inspiring others, sharing with colleagues, working in collaboration, advocating for change, and providing individual support—and underscores the interactions between these teacher actions and school-level contextual factors. Some contextual factors are more important than others in relation to different types of actions, and particular attention should be devoted to sharing and collaborative work.

Although collaborative aspects have been considered contributors to teacher leadership (Schiff et al., 2015), limited attention has been dedicated to the complexity of contextual factors in relation to co-creation, such as how co-creation enhances the emergence and development of teacher leadership. For this reason, this study aimed to explore and describe the teachers' experiences regarding the school-level factors through the lens of the relationship between co-creation and support for teacher leadership. It raises the following research questions: What are teachers' perceptions regarding the contextual factors that support their leadership at school? How do teachers' experiences support their leadership through co-creative practices at school? The study thematizes teachers' experience-based perceptions of the contextual factors that support teacher leadership in school through a co-creative approach.

2. Literature review on the emergence of co-creative factors in teacher leadership studies

Teacher leaders do not act in isolation. An analysis of the scientific literature has revealed a dominant focus on shared leadership approaches (Harris, DeFlaminis, 2016), which implies that teacher leadership is strongly linked to a school's community and can be successfully realized through the active contributions of all community members. Teacher leadership is viewed as an essential component of effective school leadership, as one person cannot work alone to make the changes needed to fulfill students' ever-changing learning and school community needs (Timperley, 2005). Teacher leadership encompasses work at schools on different levels with students, colleagues, and school administrators and work that is focused on instructional, professional, and school development (York-Barr, Duke, 2004).

Further expounding upon the role of stakeholders and community members who support and maintain leadership at schools, Schieffer (2006) introduced the concept of co-creative leadership. He contended that leadership is primarily about ensuring that the members of an organization work together to achieve a common goal and solution. In organizations, it is typically not possible to successfully mobilize a community toward a common goal; this is because different groups within the same organization tend to compete or act separately. Schieffer (2006) argued that in today's complex environment, it is extremely difficult to maintain team leadership. Co-creation in a contemporary school is embedded in teacher leadership (Kaminskienė et al., 2022; Schieffer, 2006). It is closely associated with the school's culture and with community members' collaboration; however, it transcends simple collaboration, as it implies sharing responsibilities, redistributing power, creating new learning environments, initiating transformational change, and other endeavors. These aspects indicate that co-creation in teacher leadership manifests in transformational leadership practices (Spillane et al., 2004). Therefore, it makes sense to seek means to express leadership that integrate the different perspectives of the members of an organization; this can help to determine a common position or solution and to strengthen the agency of community members.

One of the pre-requisites for co-creation to develop in schools is related to the fact that contemporary organizations are becoming increasingly flat, less hierarchical, and that co-creative and self-directed management represents a new direction that can help today's schools operate in a complex and changing environment (de Souza, Begeer, 2020). In this manner, teacher leadership has become associated with teachers' intrinsic motivation, peer support, rapport with pupils, and trust.

Co-creation as a new practice and as an emerging concept in education allows us to analyze teacher leadership through new perspectives linked to the development of the agency of school community members, particularly teachers and learners (Geurts et al., 2023; Kaminskienė et al., 2020). Teacher leadership, as expressed through co-creative practices, confers a more holistic understanding of leadership for learning (MacBeath et al., 2018). It is characterized by a consistent focus on learning, a trusting climate, and qualitative dialogue about improvement, which is expressed as a multifaceted and complex narrative that takes place within and outside an organization (Robinson, Smith, 2014). Thus, teacher leadership in a co-creative paradigm stimulates the reassessment of existing power relations and dominant practices at schools (Jarrett et al., 2010).

The co-creative approach to teacher leadership holds that school principals play a role in sustaining a favorable school climate and environment to foster teachers' collaboration and co-creative practices. At the same time, a co-creative approach to teacher leadership helps to investigate teaching improvement (Coenen et al., 2023), assuming that school administrators no longer have to maintain teacher leadership single-handedly because teachers can seek support and encouragement from one another first. Thus, revelations in the research have suggested that despite the recognized support of school administrators, which contributes to teacher leadership, schools often depend on "in-group" teachers to take on leadership activities (Al-Taneiji, Ibrahim, 2017).

Recent studies on teacher leadership reveal how teacher leadership is implemented in the classroom through collaborative practices. It should be acknowledged that co-creation research more often focuses on higher education and emphasizes the role of students as co-creators in the educational process (Bovill et al., 2016; Bovill, 2019). However, research on teacher leadership at school suggests that collaborative learning in the classroom is related to teachers' values, pedagogical approaches, support for self-regulated learning skills, and the promotion of collaborative teamwork through active learning methods. Co-created initiatives enable experiential, problem-based, and active learning (Kaminskienė, Khetsuriani, 2019). Research findings also suggest that co-creation can contribute to a strengthened learning community in the classroom and at school in general. The use of co-creation practices results in improved quality of teaching and learning, which is meaningful to both teachers and students. Additionally, co-creation stimulates a variety of peer learning models and enhances experiential learning, leading to better engagement, meta-cognitive awareness, and a stronger sense of identity among learners (Cook-Sather et al., 2014).

The literature on the co-creative approach to teacher leadership is not vast; thus, this study aims to reveal the complexity of the contextual factors that support teacher leadership when co-creation appears to be an overarching factor. This co-creative perspective, which regards teachers as active agents in the school community, can help to understand new and emerging factors that support and nurture teacher leadership at schools.

3. Research methodology

Research design

Qualitative research is important in educational research, as it addresses the “how” and “why” of research questions and enables a deeper understanding of experiences, phenomena, and relevant contexts. The study used a qualitative research design for two primary reasons: first, qualitative research allows the researcher to ask questions about matters that cannot be easily quantified to understand human experiences; second, exploring the everyday realities of social phenomena and studying important questions can help to extend our knowledge and understanding (Cleland, 2017).

Sample

A purposeful heterogeneous sample was developed using maximum variation, which allowed the research participants to share patterns that they had observed (Palinkas et al., 2016). The appropriateness of the sampling type determined the selection of teachers as members of a professional community.

The following criteria were applied for the selection of research participants: educational experience of at least three years, minimum age of 22 (coinciding with the completion of at least a bachelor’s degree), having worked as a teacher at a school, and having taught different subjects in school. The teachers who participated in the interviews represented schools from large cities, small towns, and rural areas as well as public and private schools (six from primary, nine from lower-secondary, and 27 from high schools). In this manner, a sample was formed that would reflect the diversity of concepts and experiences in terms of contextual factors related to support for teacher leadership in school.

In this qualitative study, personal and direct methods were used to gain the consent of the research participants, to recruit them (e.g., via phone or in-person recruitment), and to establish rapport and trust with them. Their participation was confirmed through a follow-up email, phone call, or text message, wherein researchers reminded the participants of the date, time, location, and duration of the research session as well as the purpose and expectations of the research (Newington, Metcalfe, 2014). Participants who met the selection criteria were recruited until data saturation had been achieved (Jalali, 2013). The sample size was determined by the principle of data saturation. Data saturation is the point in a research process where enough data has been collected to draw necessary conclusions, and any further data collection does not produce value-added insights. It is a process-oriented concept, meaning that there is no specific point at which no new information can be obtained from additional data (Rahimi, Khatooni, 2024). A total of 42 teachers were interviewed.

Table 1. The characteristics of the research participants

Aged	22-64 years old;
Gender	14 men, 28 women;
Work experience	3-42 years;
Education	– tertiary level: 32 university graduates with a bachelor’s degree and 10 from college with a professional bachelor’s degree, – 30 graduates of educational studies and 12 graduates of studies in other subjects (history, biology, theology, philosophy, natural sciences, and technologies);
Teaching subject	4 in physics or mathematics, 4 in biology, 4 in history, 2 in basics of citizenship and economics, 5 in foreign languages, 5 in Lithuanian language and literature,

6 in primary education, 4 in information technology, 2 in philosophy, 2 in economics, 2 in arts, 2 in music.

Data collection

The data were collected from 2020 to 2022 in an online format using semi-structured individual interviews with open-ended questions. A semi-structured approach entails guiding the research participants to reflect on their experiences with a particular phenomenon and inspiring deeper reflections, which are conveyed as experience-based narratives (DeJonckheere, Vaughn, 2019). The interviews provided the opportunity for teachers to relay their direct experiences with the phenomenon of leadership by narrating it specifically (Maguire, Delahunt, 2017).

The overall purpose of using semi-structured interviews for the data collection process was to gather information from informants regarding their personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs related to the topic of interest. The researchers used semi-structured interviews to collect new, exploratory data related to the research topic (Lincoln, Guba, 1985). The semi-structured interviews enabled the researchers to collect qualitative, open-ended data and to explore participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about particular topics (Schoenborn et al., 2017).

In this study, researchers used the following approaches to help them plan for and conduct the semi-structured interviews (Jamshed, 2014):

1. Preparing for the interview: Researchers wrote down what information they wished to obtain. They did this by reviewing past observations and identifying gaps in the information. The researchers discussed the areas they needed their participants to elaborate upon.

2. Writing a guide: Once researchers had an idea of what questions they needed to be answered, they wrote a guide that included key topics and questions. Since the interviews were not formal, the researchers knew that they did not have to rigidly adhere to the guide. The researchers decided to approach specific research participants according to a unified list of topics and questions.

3. Introducing the self and building a rapport: Once the interviewee had joined the interview, the researcher introduced themselves, became comfortable with the participant, and explained the purpose of the interview. This included presenting topics they planned to cover during the interview.

4. Starting with the simple questions and transitioning to specific questions: The specific questions arose when research participants were discussing their experiences.

5. Being mindful of interview questions: Asking the right types of questions was vital to facilitate the success of the interviews. Researchers ensured that their questions were open-ended, and they avoided leading questions.

6. Recording and transcribing the interviews: This involved listening to the audio files and typing out the spoken words. Researchers used a text editor to transcribe the interviews manually. This required strong listening skills, a rapid typing speed, and attention to details.

Researchers developed and used an interview guide with the list of topics that needed to be addressed during the conversation (DeJonckheere, Vaughn, 2019). The topics were as follows: school administrators' support and attitudes regarding teacher leadership, teachers' leadership skills, teacher leadership within interactions with students and fellow teachers, teacher leadership in relation to teaching and learning co-creation in the classroom. All formulated questions began with the same wording: "Please share your experiences about ..." The open-ended nature of the questions provided opportunities for both the interviewer and interviewee to discuss topics in greater detail (Schoenborn et al., 2017).

Each interview was composed of two parts:

- The participants were asked about their experiences related to their pedagogical background and work in school. This helped to build rapport with teachers and contextualize their experience-based answers.

- Experience-based perceptions of the phenomenon of leadership were focused on uncovering a thorough account of contextual factors that support teacher leadership in school.

The participants were asked to narrate their experience-based perceptions of support for teacher leadership at school with a focus on contextual factors and co-creation. The concept of 'contextual factors' was shortly presented to research participants as characterizing schools as

dynamic systems that influence a broad range of dimensions of student learning, including academic, affective, social, and behavioral domains. A school's context shapes the core processes of teaching and learning in classrooms. Such an explanation did not limit the narratives of the research participants' experiences but provided clarity. This explanation added to the study participants' understanding of contextual factors and thus avoided reducing the validity of the study.

The following were the main interview questions:

1. Please narrate any experiences that reflect your perceptions of contextual factors that support your leadership at school.
 - 1.1. Please share the experience-based cases, examples about supportive actions of administrators to sustain teacher leadership in school.
 - 1.2. Please share experience-based cases, examples about school administrators' attitudes toward support for teacher leadership.
2. Please share your experiences related to support for your leadership through co-creative practices at school.
 - 2.1. Please share experience-based cases, examples about your formal and informal learning of leadership skills.
 - 2.2. Please share experience-based cases, examples about your leadership through co-creation-based collaborations with students, fellow teachers, and the school community.
 - 2.3. Please share experience-based cases, examples about your use of learning spaces in teacher leadership through co-creation.
 - 2.4. Please share experience-based cases, examples about your leadership related to modeling the educational process through co-creation practices.

The goal of the interview was to get as detailed narratives, stories, and details about their expressions of leadership at school as possible from each research participant, rather than facts without context.

The shortest interview lasted 64 minutes, and the longest was 101 minutes. The average duration of one interview was 87 minutes.

Data analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted for the data analysis. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes or patterns in the data that are important or interesting and to use these themes to address the research or draw conclusions about an issue (Braun, Clarke, 2006). This methodology is not related to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective (Clarke, Braun, 2013). Data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework:

1. Becoming familiar with the data: Read and re-read the transcripts while becoming familiar with the entire body of data and taking notes about early impressions.
2. Generating initial codes: Organize the data in a systematic manner using open coding. This means that the researchers did not have preliminarily formed codes; rather, they developed and modified them through the coding process. The researchers worked through each transcript coding that seemed to specifically address the research questions. After finishing the coding, the researchers compared their own codes created from the same data; they then discussed and modified them and formed a consensus regarding the final list of codes by generating new ones or modifying the existing ones.
3. Searching for themes: Examine the codes and synthesize them into a theme. This means that the codes were organized into broader themes.
4. Reviewing themes: Review, modify, and develop the preliminary themes identified in step 3. For this step, the researchers read the data related to each theme and considered whether the data supported it. They then discussed whether the themes fit into the context of the entire data set, as themes should be coherent and distinct from each other.
5. Defining themes: Identify the "essence" of each theme by revealing what the theme conveys, how the themes interact with and relate to the main theme, and how the themes relate to each other.
6. Writing: Prepare the research report, manuscripts, and conference presentations.

A semantic approach was applied for analyzing the explicit content of the data. With a semantic approach, the themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written (Braun, Clarke, 2006).

Ethics

Ethical approval for the research study was obtained from the Board of Ethics of Vytautas Magnus University (12.02.2020, Protocol No. 2). Trustworthiness was established through the fulfillment of the following parameters (Ainscough et al., 2018; Halkoaho et al., 2012): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The *credibility* of the data collected is representative of the phenomenon under study, namely the contextual factors that support teacher leadership in school. The credibility of the qualitative data was ensured through multiple perspectives throughout the data collection process to ensure that the data are appropriate. This was done through investigators’ triangulation; the data was collected and analyzed by three researchers (authors of manuscript). The interviews were conducted by all three researchers, each of whom communicated with different research participants and then independently transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews. The researchers forwarded the texts of the transcriptions to each other, read them to become fully familiar with the content of each interview, and engaged in several reflective discussions about the content to synthesize and distinguish between elements of the interviews. Such discussions were a prerequisite for the data analysis. Each researcher independently analyzed the texts of the transcribed interviews. Each analyzed interview was sent to the other two researchers so that the whole team became familiar with the sub-themes and the themes connecting them.

Transferability concerns the applicability of findings to similar contexts or individuals as opposed to broader contexts. The findings concerned teacher leadership, school environments, and co-creation in relation to teacher-student collaborations in the classroom. The results provide prerequisites for teachers and school administrators to reflect on their schools’ culture and teachers’ leadership role within it as well as teaching/learning environments where learning co-creation between teachers and students is relevant.

Dependability was ensured through rigorous data collection techniques and procedures and analyses that were well documented.

Confirmability was documented via clear coding through triangulation, wherein three researchers (authors of manuscript) checked the data to account for their potential personal biases.

4. Results

The findings revealed the co-creation-based contextual factors that support teacher leadership in school. Each factor included sub-themes classified into broader themes. Based on the themes in the content structure of each factor, a central theme emerged as an integral concept related to the influence of each specific factor (see Table 2).

Table 2. Themes and subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Supportive actions of administrators to sustain teacher leadership in school	Recognizing the teacher leadership exhibited through teachers’ initiatives Motivating teachers to be active and creative Communicating equally with the teachers Fostering co-creation through communication culture
School administrators’ attitudes toward support for teacher leadership	Caring about enhancing teaching quality by providing teachers with necessary tools Encouraging teachers through being open to their suggestions Trusting in teachers’ leadership by providing opportunities to make autonomous decisions Empowering teachers for leadership through involving in activities and engaging in problem solving
Teachers’ co-creation-based formal and informal learning of leadership skills	Fostering school community engagement through sharing ideas with each other Building rapport through collaboration with fellow teachers Building consensus with fellow teachers by sharing experiences, ideas and helping each other

Themes	Subthemes
Teacher leadership through co-creation-based collaborations with students, fellow teachers, and the school community	Constructing a general vision of activities within the teachers' community Cooperating with fellow teachers and students by providing evidence of mutual learning Creating authentic connections with students Building mutual trust with students
The use of learning spaces in teacher leadership through co-creation	Increasing students' motivation of learning through encouraging learning-related communication and cooperation Using school spaces for students' targeted learning and concentration
Teacher leadership related to modeling the educational process through co-creation practices	Cooperating with students in teaching and learning activities Collaborating with students in determining the quality of the teaching Accepting help from students by contributing to teachers' self-learning Cooperating for discovery-based learning through listening to students' needs and suggestions Realizing the own expertise in educational processes by fostering students' engagement

Supportive actions of administrators to sustain teacher leadership in school.

School administrators supported teacher leadership morally, socially, materially, and intellectually by recognizing teachers' contributions to increasing students' creative potential; supporting teachers' initiatives related to organizing extracurricular activities; communicating equally with teachers; and inviting them to participate in decision-making. School administrators recognized the teacher leadership exhibited through teachers' initiatives, including organizing events with students and participating in competitions with students based on co-creation:

The teacher's leadership in the school is visible and supported. I can experiment in my professional activities by applying methods, creating educational environments in the classroom, organizing outdoor learning, i.e. going outside the classroom with students to understand the subject matter through real-life experiences. The school administration supports teacher's leadership in a professional and social sense – provides opportunities to study in high-quality professional development courses, buys the necessary teaching tools and books. We as teachers are recognized at school – it's nice to be seen and praised. The school administration is always open to discussions and joint decisions. I see my mission in leadership through the development of students' creative potential, so my contribution is to inspire, encourage, support them through training and empowerment for motivated learning (R24).

I am convinced that extracurricular activities contribute to the reduction of student dropouts and increase their creativity. Therefore, I organize various activities for students, excursions, discussions by inviting authoritative and high-achieving people from society. All of this contributes to increasing students' self-awareness and self-confidence and strengthens students' social and moral competences. My extracurricular activities are always supported by the school administration socially, intellectually, and materially. Teachers' activity in organizing extracurricular activities is encouraged at school and visible (R22).

School administration is not one-sided – teachers are always invited to get involved in decision-making. The school administration talks and treats teachers as equals. The school administration supports the teacher's leadership not only through conversations, but also through concrete actions (social and moral support, material methodical strengthening), when the teacher is innovative, when the teacher does more than work with students only in the classroom. Many of our teachers prepare students for various competitions, knowledge Olympiads, exhibitions, concerts and etc. – it depends on the specific educational subject. Students like it, because through various activities they believe in their own strengths and creativity, and contribute to the co-creation of learning, when students learn from each other, and teachers exchange their knowledge, ideas, and creativity with students (R8).

The teachers felt that the school administrators supported their leadership initiatives. Thus, they were intrinsically motivated to be active and to create:

When I feel that I am visible, the school administration supports my ideas, then I have an internal motivation to move forward – to initiate, to give more and more through working creatively, and to do it in the name of student well-being through learning. And I think to myself – how important it is when you are not ignored, when you can do what you want. It grows wings. Then I go to school with pleasure and my dedication to students is getting stronger. The work of a teacher is not professional monotony, these are daily challenges, and in order to overcome them, I have to constantly grow and improve. And that requires constant learning. Therefore, requests to support participation in events, courses, seminars, conferences are always satisfied by school administration. Because the administration sees the result. I implement the innovations by working with the students. The teacher's activity and creativity are greatly supported by the school administration (R19).

To me, being a leader means being a creative, active, innovative teacher. I have to empower myself for this, because I need to devote extra time to both personal, professional development and the involvement of students in various non-typical activities inside and outside the classroom during learning. All ideas are supported by the school administration, because they see that the ideas work – the students are satisfied, the learning results are good enough. And when I am supported, then there is an internal motivation to come up with something else, to strive for even better student learning results. It's like a learning circle or spiral. I think it is good when a teacher does not feel alone with his/her ideas and the school administration recognizes them. Then learning in the classroom becomes a kind of learning laboratory (R2).

School administrators communicated equally with the teachers by supporting their leadership. Thus, ensuring open communication between the teachers and the administration by encouraging teachers to provide suggestions was part of the communication culture, thus fostering co-creation in the school culture:

I don't experience hierarchy at school. I feel understood and supported. I don't have to be afraid to say what's wrong. A culture of openness and equality is being created in the school. And teachers are also very involved in creating and maintaining such a culture. I love the way we all communicate because it's a strong part of co-creating together. The teacher's leadership is very clear here. Co-creation through learning in various directions - for teachers from students, students from teachers and administration, administration from teachers and students, teachers from administration – is the strength of our school. However, the teacher is seen as a key actor here (R20).

School administrators' attitudes toward support for teacher leadership.

The school administrators displayed their attitudes toward teacher leadership through particular actions, such as taking care of the means to support the quality of teachers' teaching, supporting teachers' initiatives, trusting teachers and involving them in problem solving and independent decision-making, and empowering teachers to engage in leadership.

The school administrators' attitudes revealed that they care about enhancing teaching quality by providing teachers with the necessary teaching tools:

If you tell them that you need music, instruments, that you need a blackboard, that you need blinds, that you need a carpet, then you will get everything. Through this, I see the positive attitudes of the school administration towards the teacher's initiatives, creativity, and innovation (R24).

School administrators' openness to teachers' suggestions and encouragement of their creativity demonstrated that they support teacher leadership:

Most of these are initiatives. Indeed, these initiatives are within the reach of the administration and are certainly being considered. But I have never experienced that the administration does not support, rejects the teacher's suggestions and ideas. We talk openly together. We make joint decisions thinking about the students, about the school. Administration seeks opportunities and positive outcomes for the school community, showing that the teacher's ideas and suggestions are supported (R8).

The school really supports initiatives and always allows teachers to work creatively (R7).

The school supports a culture of equality. The school administration consults with teachers, involves them in decisions and considerations. This allows teachers to be valued, respected, and recognized (R12).

The school administration's trust in teachers' leadership was realized by providing opportunities for them to make decisions autonomously:

The teacher can make decisions about the student's teaching and learning forms, methods, strategies, can initiate additional or extracurricular activities, can carry out innovations that have never applied before. The teacher's initiatives are heard and supported. Yes, it is necessary to discuss with the administration, but the final decision with responsibility is left to the teacher. Then the teacher does not feel that he or she cannot, or he or she is not capable. The openness of the administration and support for the teacher's leadership is the real professional life of the teacher in our school (R5).

The school administrators empowered teachers for leadership by involving them in activities, providing opportunities for leadership, and engaging them in problem solving:

The school administration involves teachers in various decisions. And this is not only related to teaching and learning. This is also related to the affairs of the school community. We discuss various things, for example, what needs to be strengthened, how to maintain values, what to prevent, so as not to harm the school's reputation and the well-being of the school community. It is this decision-making that is very felt and experienced at school. Not all teachers get involved. But still the majority are proactive and active teachers. They are role models for the school community. And the teachers or the administration are not alone in solving the problems. Everything together. Therefore, as a teacher, I feel good here (R10).

Teachers' co-creation-based formal and informal learning of leadership skills.

Teachers acquire leadership skills in both informal and formal ways. The informal avenue includes learning through practice, engaging in empowering initiatives, sharing knowledge and experiences, proposing ideas, creating extracurricular activities, and communicating with all members of the school community. Teachers view themselves as community members who engage with others through empathic communication and by recognize others' needs to be supported, helped, and encouraged. This creates an empathic communication culture within the school. Teachers' work in the classroom with students also benefits from the development of leadership skills and from improvement activities that the teachers observe and recognize.

Teachers exercised leadership within the school community by fostering community engagement. Teachers motivated the community by sharing ideas with each other:

We have a gymnasium council that includes teachers, parents, and senior high school students. I had to work with the municipality. I felt that I could actually ignite, help, feed ideas, and help implement their own creative ideas (R22).

The professional teachers' community in the school is strong. We are not active. We aim to be an example of marriage, actions, attitude. We believe in the power of co-creation. When we are together, we learn from each other. We create and implement projects, we often discuss with each other – with teachers, administration, students, student parents. And the teacher's leadership is felt everywhere, as it is recognized and supported. We all see the essential result of co-creation – it is good for us to be together at school. We are proud of each other. Is that bad? (R32)

Teachers built rapport through collaboration with fellow teachers by working within a professional team:

This is the community in which you live and with which you constantly communicate. One of the most important qualities of a leader is the ability to build relationships with people. If you really know how to do it <...> the team, teamwork, support, and everyone's overall result are very important to me (R8).

I feel strong after working at school for many years, because we, the teachers, are connected to each other and act as a strong professional team. I know that this kind of feeling might not happen at school, but it's like that here. We as teachers communicate and collaborate with each other. We talk and talk about difficult things. I mean that there are also prejudices, dissatisfactions, maybe even healthy anger when we talk. But we always respect each other. We always have a lot of trust in each other's competence and personality. We know each other's strengths and weaknesses. We talk about it. We decide. We support each other. We learn from each other. I think that there is a team, and leadership, and co-creation at the same time (R30).

Teachers sought consensus by sharing ideas with fellow teachers and supporting them through encouragement and help:

There were 13 groups in the school, and there were even more teachers <... > it is necessary to come to an agreement, to agree, to accept other people's opinions, to offer your own (R24).

If I see the potential of a colleague or if I see that a colleague is timid, but I feel that he or she has some ideas, then I always want to encourage him/her, push him/her and collegially help

him/her to reveal himself or herself (R28).

I think that a one-size-fits-all solution is better than several individual solutions. It is important for me to understand the context, the system. Understand values and attitudes. Not only my personal, but also my fellow teachers. Because we are a professional community and we have to learn through co-creation, i.e. when talking, when making decisions, and we must do this based on the principle of consensus. It is a very difficult process, but there are always teacher leaders who take on responsibilities at a specific time and manage to focus all teachers and become united. Therefore, as teachers, strengthening each other, supporting each other and helping each other is a strength (R11).

Teacher leadership through co-creation-based collaborations with students, fellow teachers, and the school community. Teachers' collaborations manifest among the school community, fellow teachers, and students. Collaboration with the community helps teachers strengthen their professional identity. Collaboration with teachers develops teachers' solidarity in seeking a general vision within the professional community and solidifies the professional teachers' community in the school setting. Collaboration with students provides opportunities for both parties to learn from each other, to parlay their professional competences into the development of students' interpersonal skills by strengthening their social skills, and to build mutual trust with students. The co-creation context of teacher leadership becomes evident through the construction of a general vision of the activities within the teachers' community:

At the class level, if they are students or in those classes in which I am a subject teacher. Understanding or not understanding other teachers is very important in this area. If they understand each other, they will help and contribute, and the students will know how to e-mail, chat through Messenger, communicate, and ask for help. If the teacher does not understand this, then it is understood that the teacher is playing with the student and acting at the level of a friend. Cooperation between teacher and student is an important part of co-creation. It motivates students and teachers to do better, more qualitatively. To feel responsible, but at the same time not to feel alone. It's the communal feeling of being in communion. However, there must be equality, openness, trust (R12).

A teacher, in my opinion, should know their own professional mission and the school vision. And all the teachers at school know it, understand it, experience it every day. And we, teachers, know for sure that the community in our profession is strong only when we cooperate, talk, and decide together. When we learn from each other. When we initiate, discuss and support those initiatives among ourselves. When we share innovations with each other. It's better for all of us. That's what it's all about together. On behalf of the teacher, the student, the school. And if you don't do that, there will be no mutual understanding. To live with it, you need to empower yourself and not be passive. The teacher's leadership plays an essential role here (R40).

Teachers and students learned cooperatively, providing evidence of the mutual learning involved in co-creation and teacher leadership in the classroom:

We can learn a lot from each other. Children can learn from each other through mutual relationship building and group work (R32).

Collaboration and cooperation is important when working with students in the classroom. It creates an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect for each other's experience and knowledge. And through this I see how they become more self-confident, more creative, freer. Because a learning community is created in the classroom. So that the concept of "cooperation" between students does not become just a theory, I need to put in a lot of effort to help. This is not the result of one day. This is constant, persistent, and systematic work with students to enable them to learn together, to realize the power of co-creating learning together. To open to personal ignorance and reflect. I see there a lot of my leadership (R41).

Teachers created authentic individual connections with students in the classroom:

Based on my experience, when I talk to students directly and individually, there are completely different results. I see the student in a completely different way, and the students see the teacher in a different way. Actually, they see that the teacher cares about them (R30).

Individual connection and relationship with students is important. But for me, an authentic creative relationship with the entire student group is also important. Except not one. And then it's a big deal. Because I know what I'm aiming for – I'm aiming to create a learning community, to strengthen the culture of co-creation through learning. And the students feel it. They experience the power of learning together. And through learning, an authentic relationship between me and

the student is created. Because we are all learning from each other. And because of that, our growth is also related in the meantime. The more I know and learn, the more I can share and contribute to all knowledge. And this is good. I communicate this philosophy to students. Sometimes they are lucky enough to hear me, sometimes not so much. But still, in the implementation of co-creative culture through learning, and through it I see a unique relationship with students (R35).

Teacher leadership was manifested in the classroom by building mutual trust with students through open reflections on learning and by creating an equal and open co-creation-based relationship with students to achieve common learning goals:

A survey conducted in school showed that most homework was assigned on the Lithuanian language subject. This is me asking: Children, really? Of course, we are three Lithuanian language teachers. When you ask openly, they communicate openly, and they tell you. Then, you talk and tell them straight (R34).

My students trust me because I am their companion. I do not try to be superior to them. Specifically, I emphasize that I am here to help them and that they can help me, too. We will all achieve more together (R38).

We create an atmosphere of mutual trust in the classroom. It means talking openly, making decisions while learning together. It means co-creation. And that relationship between the student, me and the student is created precisely through the co-creation of learning. You will not create this alone or artificially. And this means that when preparing for lessons every day, I think about assignments from various “angles:” how to involve, empower, open, motivate, direct, etc. This is my leadership. I see obvious results – students are more focused, cooperative, able to discuss and make decisions together. And everything focuses on motivated learning, learning achievements and results, student satisfaction with their learning (R17).

The use of learning spaces in teacher leadership through co-creation. Teacher leadership involves finding and creating teaching and learning spaces, aligning them with topics and teaching/learning subjects. This creative action enables teachers to empower themselves to want, initiate, and implement, which requires time and the creative planning of teaching/learning activities. For students, learning outside of school in spaces of nature, science, and art exerts an impact; it encourages learning-related communication and cooperation and increases the motivation for learning.

The closest spaces are all the spaces of the district where we are located. These are parks and district libraries (R15).

They also like going to the labs, but we have problems with that. For example, only ninth graders can come to the labs. Sometimes there is this limit. Eighth graders are still too young. They have to have enough knowledge to come to the lab, but we can find them there too. (R26)

Previously, we moved learning spaces to universities, and the teachers participated. The children went to universities, and our teachers taught them. The subject is taught, but if it is in a laboratory, tests are used. We primarily use the opportunities provided by universities. They are broader and bigger (R2).

Some of the main spaces are museums, various laboratories, and various public spaces in the city where you can come, such as libraries, bookstores, and some theatres (R27).

There are institutions that cooperate with other institutions. These are festivals and events. We travel to institutions. The Quiz Olympiad is held. We go to each other's places (R15).

Outdoor learning is very effective. Through teaching, I implement my creative ideas in various spaces, and at the same time, students realize that learning is possible in various contexts, that there are learning partnerships and networks, that learning is action and empowerment, cooperation and collaboration, sharing and dissemination. Because learning is life itself (R42).

Learning spaces provide opportunities for listening, speaking, expressing opinions, and being a member of a group. In this manner, students acquire skills relevant to everyday life and coexistence in society. The targeted use of school spaces is also important for students to realize that the classroom is an essential environment for their targeted learning and concentration.

I worked with a class in which there was such a project. During the last week of the school year, the teacher went outdoor with the whole class to study in nature. It can be any unconventional place, and you live there like you're at camp. We had been to xx by the sea, and we lived there successfully for a whole week. There are also parental vigils and assistance (R37).

Those spaces were quite large. I try to look at what topics we are covering. If it is related to architecture, then why not go to the city and look around old towns? If we're talking about food,

then we can go to a cafe with the children. The task would be to order while speaking only in English. If it's about sports, we find a space where they can play, such as a basketball court (R40).

These things contribute a lot to the development of students. You can hear it from the students' reflections when they speak. It is an exceptionally interesting activity for them, and they enjoy it very much. Because they can be in a non-traditional environment, their motivation is completely different. This is co-creation through learning. (R29)

Teacher leadership related to modeling the educational process through co-creation practices. The modeling of educational processes in the classroom occurs through the cooperation and partnership of teachers and students in teaching and learning activities.

At the level of lessons, you can really feel it in certain situations in which the students say what they like and what is difficult, but this is through reflection and feedback. (R29)

Cooperation and partnership are actions and performances, understanding and perceiving, hearing, and listening, it means learning co-creation. The tasks given to students have to be reflected on every time in order to stimulate them, teach them to work together in cooperation and learn from each other. Therefore, we create a lot of projects, implement learning in groups and teams, and talk a lot while reflecting. I always provide the students with detailed feedback that includes both the disclosure of strengths and an explanation of limitations. I always emphasize the possibilities, benefits, and value of learning together. I think that this contributes to raising them as citizens, active learners, to the expansion of their tolerance and intelligence. This is the essence of my leadership. (R4)

Teachers and students collaborate in determining the quality of the teaching. This occurs when teachers recognize the need to listen to students' opinions and criticisms and learn from them.

I always think that today is an easy day. Something went well, and I would apply that next time, or something was extremely difficult. And student opinions on teaching, learning, cooperation, collaboration, etc. are particularly important. It is always important for me to hear and listen to the students (R36).

Students are not afraid to tell me my mistakes or help me improve (R42).

Students' criticism is often direct, maybe even rude, but open and honest. Over the years, I have learned to appreciate it very much. Because they say as they feel and understand, which is very true. It is my leadership duty and responsibility to hear what students say and reflect, and then improve and change the educational process, focusing on the students' all-round well-being, in which learning is the essence. Communication and cooperation based on mutual relationships create full-fledged conditions for co-creation of learning for me and the students, to which each of us contributes (E19).

It is important for teachers to overcome their professional "omniscience" and accept help from students, as cooperation based on partnership contributes to teachers' meaningful self-learning and helps forge an equal educational relationship between them and students.

Through students' feedback questions, I see where I seem to have too much or too little of something to change, improve. I believe in the idea that we exchange ideas, attitudes, values, experiences, expectations, hopes, etc. It takes place on a learning partner basis. However, it is my leadership responsibility to start and support this process. That's what I do. For better or worse, I do it because I believe in the idea of self-constructed learning (R12).

You have to constantly improve and realize that you don't know something that your students know. You need to catch up with them, and it's not that easy. Pride affects young teachers who think they know a lot (R22).

I really learned a lot from students because they are very eager and curious. Sometimes, they ask me themselves, and when they discover it, they share it. This is how I encourage the sharing of common knowledge. I'm not the only source of information. We all contribute to common knowledge by 'bringing' our visions, ideas, knowledge, skills to it (R33).

Learning and teaching co-creation occurs every day in the classroom "here and now" when teachers and students cooperate for discovery-based learning and when teachers listen to their students' needs and suggestions.

Projects, presentations, or sometimes education outside the classroom and school is offered to students. And it is effective. Students are interested, engaged, and motivated to learn. Suggestions, yes, but to suddenly have such an idea in the lesson itself and fundamentally change something? Well, maybe not. Maybe tasks are born, maybe a joint project. Or "yes," when I see that I can use ideas "here and in nature" ad hoc and based on my professional experience, I am sure that

it will work in a specific situation. In this context, collaboration and cooperation are particularly meaningful and valuable – students learn by sharing existing knowledge with each other and creating new ones. They create new knowing (R10).

If there are any suggestions, I will take them into account and discuss them, but I still control the lesson and the educational process because I make the decisions myself. I know that one of my duties is to listen to the students, to listen to their expressed thoughts, ideas, and reflections. I do this during every lesson. And educational interactions have developed - we see each other in a different, new, unexpected way. Serendipity. Because you can't plan everything. And I think that this is a process of co-creation, in which most of it is discoveries - learning from others and learning from each other 'here and now' (R35).

Nevertheless, teachers maintain their professional self-esteem by realizing that they are expert leaders in the educational process in the classroom and that they can foster engagement, focus, and parity through co-creation.

I learn a lot from students and fellow teachers at school. We communicate very openly, and they ask, ask, and ask. Sometimes, I really say that this is the first time I'm hearing about it. I take an interest and think that we should all try to explore and discover it together now. My goal is to stimulate, interject, encourage students to learn for themselves and for themselves. and teaching them to learn. And this is possible only by forming mutual involvement in mutual learning (learning co-creation), feeling each other's reinforcement and daring to act through leadership (R41).

It is clear that teaching/learning in the classroom is led by the teacher leadership because she or he knows what the end point should be. And we create meaningful learning co-creation together. But this does not mean that the teacher has a higher status. This means that the teacher is a high-level intellectual and professional who understands the students' learning processes and is able to control them, encourages creativity and knows how to do it. Stimulates students' ideas by encouraging them to be creative (R10).

5. Discussion

Our study contributes to the body of research concerning contextual factors that support teacher leadership through the co-creation approach. By analyzing the contextual factors that support and enhance teacher leadership development in school, we uncovered trends similar to those that have been identified and noted by previous studies. These trends are related to the need to seek more dynamic leadership approaches that allow the whole community to engage in dialogue and accommodate different perspectives in the search for a common solution and a common direction (Andreson, Wasonga, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2019). They also underscore the positive relationship between supportive school leaders and colleagues with the ability to use and experiment with digital technologies (Lucas et al., 2021).

Our study is consistent with the research on school community dispositions in enriching and supporting teacher leadership at school. For example, Anderson and Wasonga (2017) discussed the concept of co-creative leadership in their study on mentoring novice leaders and found it to be a significant concept that enriches organizations with collaborative and collective relationships based on dispositional values, thus opening more possibilities for the mentor and the mentee to develop leadership skills. Wasonga and Murphy (2006) identified seven dispositions that contribute to leadership development: collaboration, active listening, cultural anthropology, patience, humility, trust and trustworthiness, and resilience. The authors emphasized that practicing these values builds high-quality relationships within an organization and contributes to enhancing mutual understanding, thus fostering more open sharing and creating new knowledge. Therefore, teachers are more likely to self-reflect and improve their teaching practice on this basis (Binkhorst et al., 2022). They are not afraid to take risks and apply new teaching strategies; they are more responsive to the diversity of their students; and they plan and prepare lessons more carefully (Chiriac et al., 2023; Espinosa, González, 2023).

In our study, we found that the dispositions of school administrators, as expressed through caring attitudes, such as encouraging teachers to share professional innovations, encouraging teachers to improve their qualifications, delegating teachers to engage in capacity building and competence development, and empowering teachers to take responsibility in decision-making, also contributed to support for teacher leadership at school. It is important to understand that school leadership creates a safe and well-equipped working environment for teachers, helps to determine the effects of their professional activities on student achievement, and outlines the general

direction for improving the education process. Teachers' activities are characterized by reflective dialogue, instructional leadership, and interpersonal relationships (Belchetz, Leithwood, 2007; Çağatay et al., 2022).

Another group of contextual factors related to support for teacher leadership concerns learning formally and informally in different learning environments. This finding extends the discussion of teacher leadership experienced through and due to teacher professionalism (Hargreaves, 2003). It strongly reinforces the idea that teacher leadership is inseparable from a teacher's continuous development as a person and as a professional who is open to new challenges and uncertainties. For example, in learning environments based on the application of knowledge in practice, methods such as case studies, laboratory work, or project-based methods used to solve complex real-world problems may be emphasized. A pragmatic approach to learning environments highlights the importance of combining available resources and is associated with the creation of relevant learning environments (Cambell et al., 2013; Sahlin, 2023).

In our study, we have investigated contextual factors that support teacher leadership through the lens of co-creation at school. We have applied the concept of co-creative leadership proposed by Schieffer (2006), who noted that co-creative leadership does not aim to reconcile all the differences of a community but rather to build a common solution based on the power of different perspectives. This is achieved through collaborative communication and dialogue. The new element highlighted in our study is related to dialogue without students. Our research reveals that co-creation between teachers and students in the classroom takes place "here and now" for both parties to create an educational relationship based on mutual trust in learning. The teachers' openness to the students' opinions, suggestions, and criticisms is important in this context. It enables teachers' self-learning to take place, the essential premise of which is critical self-reflection in realizing one's own ignorance and seeking means to fill this gap through reading and seeking information primarily from students.

The study presented in the article was conducted in Lithuania, where the understanding of teacher leadership is still developing. The studies (Cibulskas, Zydziunaite, 2012) revealed that novice teachers very frequently associate teacher leaders with administrative functions and less with caring about the progress of the organization. Therefore, it is important to further investigate the development of teacher leadership in educational institutions because it positively affects teachers' work, encourages students to become involved in the learning process, galvanizes the organization to improve, and significantly affects students' learning achievements and the results of extracurricular activities (Gumuliauskienė, Vaičiūnienė, 2015).

Psychological environment (Bukšnytė et al., 2022) have also been noted as a significant contributor to teachers' effective job performance, job satisfaction, and motivation, which are also important prerequisites for leadership to emerge. The leadership of teachers must focus on fostering partnership relations; sharing experiences, ideas, support, and assistance with colleagues; and engaging in joint activities (Valuckienė et al., 2015). Teacher leaders serve as agents of change inside and outside classrooms by improving teaching and learning practices through collaborative work with fellow teachers. Teacher leadership in creating diverse learning contexts and environments has also been emphasized in national studies in Lithuania.

It is important to note that the study presented in this manuscript has some limitations. First, the analysis revealed a teacher-leader-centered approach, as it was based only on the schoolteachers' responses. Second, the research only covered the country of Lithuania, and only 42 schoolteachers were interviewed. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering new perspectives regarding analyzing contextual factors that support the development of teacher leadership through the proposed co-creation and leadership framework, which focuses on the person, process, and practice components.

This study can be extended to include studies about schoolteachers, school principals, and students from different countries or regions. It can also be extended beyond thematic analysis by combining qualitative and quantitative research methods.

6. Conclusion

The contextual factors that support teacher leadership in school through co-creation are administrative support, the school administration's attitudes toward teacher leadership, teachers' co-creation-based formal and informal learning of leadership skills, teachers' partnership and

collaboration with the school community, the use of learning spaces, and the modeling of the educational process through co-creation practices.

The techniques and context of the caring leadership of the school administration, such as support, care, openness, recognition, and encouragement, are the key components that support teacher leadership in school. The school administration's attitudes are expressed through its actions by adopting caring leadership through empowering, supporting, and trusting teachers who exercise teacher leadership in school.

Teachers' co-creation-based formal and informal learning in acquiring and developing leadership skills involves the school community, fellow teachers, and students, and it encourages teachers' leadership in school. It is possible to implement teacher leadership through teachers' cooperation with the school community, the professional community of teachers, and the students. Empowering teachers to embrace creativity, initiative, and responsibility to increase students' learning motivation is directly related to the targeted selection of teaching and learning spaces. In this context, empowering teacher leadership becomes relevant. The research results give the message to the global professional community of teachers that the teachers exercise leadership through daily activities. However, this type of teacher leadership is often 'invisible' and 'unrecognizable' in the school environment.

Teacher leadership has emerged from the data as an essential aspect that unites teachers and students as co-creators. Teachers are professionally competent when they know their essential role. While listening to and opening up to their students, they must remain expert leaders, guiding the students' learning toward a clear goal that must be mutually achieved in the classroom during lessons.

References

- Ainscough et al., 2018 – Ainscough, E., Smith, S. N., Greenwell, K., Hoare, D.J. (2018). Findings and ethical considerations from a thematic analysis of threads within tinnitus online support groups. *American Journal of Audiology*. 19(27). (3S): 503-512. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1044/2018_AJA-IMIA3-18-0013
- Ainscow, West, 2006 – Ainscow, M., West, M. (2006). *Improving Urban Schools: Leadership And Collaboration: Leadership and Collaboration*. McGraw-Hill Education, UK.
- Al-Taneiji, Ibrahim, 2017 – Al-Taneiji, S., Ibrahim, A. (2017). Practices of and roadblocks to teacher leadership in the United Arab Emirates' schools. *International Education Studies*. 10(6): 87-99.
- Anderson, Wasonga, 2017 – Anderson, R.D., Wasonga, T.A. (2017). Mentoring emerging leaders: perspectives of mentees on dispositions and conditions for leadership learning. *NASSP Bulletin*. 101(4): 278-298. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636517743566>
- Belchetz, Leithwood, 2007 – Belchetz, D., Leithwood, K. (2007). Successful leadership: does context matter and if so, how? In C. Day & K. Leithwood (Eds.). *Successful principal leadership in times of change: an international perspective* (pp. 117–137). Springer.
- Binkhorst et al., 2022 – Binkhorst, B., Poortman, C., McKenney, C., van Joolingen, W. (2022). Leadership in teacher design teams for professional development: research synthesis and applications for coaches. *Irish Educational Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/03323315.2022.2148264
- Bovill, 2019 – Bovill, C. (2019). A co-creation of learning and teaching typology: What kind of co-creation are you planning or doing? *International Journal for Students as Partners*. 3(2): 91-98. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15173/ijasp.v3i2.3953>
- Bovill et al., 2016 – Bovill, C., Cook-Sather, A., Felten, P., Millard, L., Moore-Cherry, N. (2016). Addressing potential challenges in co-creating learning and teaching: Overcoming resistance, navigating institutional norms and ensuring inclusivity in student–staff partnerships. *Higher Education*. 71(2): 195-208. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9896-4>
- Braun, Clarke, 2006 – Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 3(2): 77-101. DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp0630a
- Buksnyte-Marmiene et al., 2022 – Buksnyte-Marmiene, L., Brandisauskiene, A., Cesnaviciene, J. (2022). The Relationship between Organisational Factors and Teachers' Psychological Empowerment: Evidence from Lithuania's Low SES Schools. *Social Sciences*. 11(11): 523. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11110523>
- Çağatay Kılınc et al., 2022 – Çağatay Kılınc, A., Polatcan, M., Turan, S., Özdemir, N. (2022). Principal job satisfaction, distributed leadership, teacher-student relationships, and student

- achievement in Turkey: a multilevel mediated-effect model. *Irish Educational Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/03323315.2022.2061567
- Campbell et al., 2013 – Campbell, M., Saltmarsh, S., Chapman, A., Drew, C. (2013). Issues of teacher professional learning within “non-traditional” classroom environments. *Improving Schools*. 16(3): 209-222. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480213501057>
- Cassata, Allensworth, 2021 – Cassata, A., Allensworth, E. (2021). Scaling standards-aligned instruction through teacher leadership: methods, supports, and challenges. *IJ STEM Ed*. 8(39). DOI: 10.1186/s40594-021-00297-w
- Chiriac et al., 2023 – Chiriac, E.H., Forsberg, C., Thornberg, R. (2023). Teachers’ perspectives on factors influencing the school climate: a constructivist grounded theory case study. *Cogent Education*. 10(2). DOI: 10.1080/2331186X.2023.2245171
- Cibulskas, Žydžiūnaitė, 2012 – Cibulskas, G., Žydžiūnaitė, V. (2012). Lyderystės vystymosi mokykloje modelis // A model of leadership development in school. Vilnius: UAB „Lodvila“. In LT language. 246 p.
- Clarke, Braun, 2013 – Clarke, V. Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The Psychologist*. 26(2): 120-123.
- Cleland, 2017 – Cleland, J.A. (2017). The qualitative orientation in medical education research. *Korean Journal of Medical Education*. 29(2): 61-71. DOI: 10.3946/kjme.2017.53
- Coenen et al., 2023 – Coenen, L., Hondeghem, A., Schelfhout, W. (2023). The emergence of leadership for learning beliefs among Flemish secondary school leaders. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. 26(5): 854-872. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1850869>
- Cook-Sather et al., 2014 – Cook-Sather, A., Bovill, C., Felten, P. (2014). Engaging students as partners in teaching and learning: A guide for faculty. Jossey-Bass.
- de Souza, Begeer, 2020 – de Souza, A., Begeer, H. (2020). Co-creative leadership and self-organization: inclusive leadership of development action. In J. Servaes (Ed.). *Handbook of communication for development and social change*. Springer. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-2014-3_126
- Deal, Peterson, 1999 – Deal, T.E., Peterson, K.D. (1999). *Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- DeJonckheere, Vaughn, 2019 – DeJonckheere, M., Vaughn, L.M. (2019). Semistructured interviewing in primary care research: a balance of relationship and rigour. *Family Medicine and Community Health*. 7(2): e000057. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2018-000057>
- Demir, 2015 – Demir, K. (2015). The effects of organizational trust on the culture of teacher leadership in primary schools. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*. 15(3): 621-634.
- Espinosa, González, 2023 – Espinosa, V.F., González, J.L. (2023). The effect of teacher leadership on students’ purposeful learning. *Cogent Social Sciences*. 9(1). DOI: 10.1080/23311886.2023.2197282
- Geijsel et al., 2003 – Geijsel, F., Slegers, P., Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. (2003). Transformational leadership effects on teachers’ commitment and effort toward school reform. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 41(3): 228-256. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230310474403>
- Geurts et al., 2023 – Geurts, E.M., Reijs, R.P., Leenders, H.H., Jansen, M.W., Hoebe, C.J. (2023). Co-creation and decision-making with students about teaching and learning: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Educational Change*, 1-23.
- Gumuliauskaite, Vaičiūniene, 2015 – Gumuliauskaite, A., Vaičiūniene, A. (2015). Mokytojų lyderystės raiškos ir jos skatinimo ypatumai bendrojo ugdymo mokykloje. *Mokytojų ugdymas*. 24(1): 24-47.
- Halkoaho et al., 2012 – Halkoaho, A., Pietilä, A. M., Vesalainen, M., Vähäkangas, K. (2012). Ethical aspects in tissue research: thematic analysis of ethical statements to the research ethics committee. *BMC Medical Ethics*. 13(20). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6939-13-20>
- Hallinger, Heck, 2011 – Hallinger, P., Heck, R.H. (2011). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. In *International handbook of leadership for learning* (pp. 469-485). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Hargreaves, 2003 – Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Teaching in the knowledge society: Education in the age of insecurity*. Open University Press.

Harris, DeFlaminis, 2016 – Harris, A., DeFlaminis, J. (2016). Distributed leadership in practice: evidence, misconceptions and possibilities. *Management in Education*. 30(4): 141-146. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020616656734>

Jalali, 2013 – Jalali, R. (2013). Qualitative research sampling. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Health Sciences*. 1(4): 310-320.

Jamshed, 2014 – Jamshed, S. (2014). Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy*. 5(4): 87-8. DOI: 10.4103/0976-0105.141942

Jäppinen, 2017 – Jäppinen, A-K. (2017) Analysis of leadership dynamics in educational settings during times of external and internal change. *Educational Research*. (59)4: 460-477. DOI: 10.1080/00131881.2017.1376591

Jarrett et al., 2010 – Jarrett, E., Wasonga, T.A., Murphy, J. (2010). The practice of co-creating leadership in high- and low-performing high schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 24: 637-654. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513541011080011>

Kaminskienė et al., 2020 – Kaminskienė, L., Žydzūnaitė V., Jurgilė, V., Ponomarenko, T. (2020). Co-creation of learning: a concept analysis. *European Journal of Contemporary Education*. 9(2): 337-349.

Kaminskienė et al., 2021 – Kaminskiene, L., Zydzunaite, V., Juozaitiene, R. (2021). Relationship between factors of teachers' leadership: Positive attitudes, professional activeness, and stress at school. *Journal of Contemporary Management Issues*. 26(2): 197-201. DOI: 10.30924/mjcmi.26.2.11

Kaminskienė et al., 2022 – Kaminskiene, L., Jurgile, V., Zydzunaite (2022). Teacher leadership within the learning co-creation with students: school administration attitudes. *European Journal of Contemporary Education*. 11(2): 408-422. DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2022.2.408

Kaminskienė, Khetsuriani, 2019 – Kaminskienė, L., Khetsuriani, N. (2019). Co-creation of learning as an engaging practice. Society. Integration. Education. *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, Rezekne*.

Leithwood et al., 2010 – Leithwood, K., Patten, S., Jantzi, D. (2010). Testing a conception of how school leadership influences student learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*. 46: 671-706.

Leithwood, Jantzi, 2000 – Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. (2000). The effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions and student engagement with school. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 38(2): 112-129. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230010320064>

Leithwood et al., 2008 – Leithwood, K., Harris, A., Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership, *School Leadership and Management*. 28(1): 27-42. DOI: 10.1080/13632430701800060

Leonard, Leonard, 1999 – Leonard, L.J., Leonard, P.E. (1999). Reculturing for collaboration and leadership. *The Journal of Educational Research*. 92(4): 237-242.

Lincoln, Guba, 1985 – Lincoln, Y.S., Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. London: SAGE.

Liu, 2021 – Liu, Y. (2021). Contextual influence on formal and informal teacher leadership. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*. 2: 100028. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2020.100028>

Lucas et al., 2021 – Lucas, M., Bem-Haja, P., Siddiq, F., Moreira, A., Redecker, C. (2021). The relation between in-service teachers' digital competence and personal and contextual factors: what matters most? *Computers & Education*. 160: 104052. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2020.104052>

MacBeath et al., 2018 – MacBeath, J., Dempster, N., Frost, D., Johnson, G., Swaffield, S. (2018). Strengthening the connections between leadership and learning: Challenges to policy, school and classroom practice. Routledge. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351165327>

Maguire, Delahunt, 2017 – Maguire, M., Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: a practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. 8(3): 3351-33514. [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335>

Marzano et al., 2005 – Marzano, R., Waters, T., McNulty, B. (2005). School leadership that works. McRel.

Mulford, Silins, 2003 – Mulford, B., Silins, H. (2003). Leadership for organizational learning and improved student outcomes—what do we know? *Cambridge Journal of Education*. 33(2): 175-195.

Newington, Metcalfe, 2014 – Newington, L., Metcalfe, A. (2014). Factors influencing recruitment to research: qualitative study of the experiences and perceptions of research teams. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*. 14(10). DOI: 10.1186/1471-2288-14-10.

Nguyen et al., 2019 – Nguyen, D., Harris, A., Ng, D. (2019). A review of the empirical research on teacher leadership (2003–2017): evidence, patterns and implications. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 58(1): 60-80. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-02-2018-0023>

Palinkas et al., 2016 – Palinkas, L.A., Horwitz, S.M., Green, C.A., Wisdom, J.P., Duan, N., Hoagwood, K. (2016). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*. 42(5): 533-544. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>

Rahimi, Khatooni, 2024 – Rahimi, S., Khatooni, M. (2024). Saturation in qualitative research: An evolutionary concept analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Studies Advances*. 6: 100174. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnsa.2024.100174>

Robinson, Smith, 2014 – Robinson, S., Smith, J. (2014). Co-charismatic leadership. Oxford, United Kingdom: Peter Lang Verlag. (date of access: 18.07.2023). DOI: 10.3726/978-3-0353-0570-8

Roby, 2011 – Roby, D.E. (2011). Teacher leaders impacting school culture. *Education*. 131(4): 782-790. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A260137600/AONE?u=anon~3a757c00&sid=googleScholar&xid=8aa444a3>

Sahlin, 2023 – Sahlin, S. (2023). Teachers making sense of principals' leadership in collaboration within and beyond school. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*. 67(5): 754-774. DOI: 10.1080/00313831.2022.2043429

Schieffer, 2006 – Schieffer, A. (2006). Co-creative leadership: an integrated approach towards transformational leadership. *Transition Studies Review*. 13(3): 607-623. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11300-006-0129-5>

Schoenborn et al., 2017 – Schoenborn, N.L., Lee, K., Pollack, C.E., Lee, K., Craig, E., Armacost, K., Dy, S. M., Xue, Q.-L., Wolff, A.C., Boyd, C. (2017). Older adults' preferences for when and how to discuss life expectancy in primary care. *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*. 30: 813-815. DOI:10.3122/jabfm.2017.06.170067

Spillane et al., 2004 – Spillane, J.P., Halverson, R., Diamond, J.B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: a distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 36(1): 3-34.

Timperley, 2005 – Timperley, H.S. (2005). Distributed leadership: Developing theory from practice. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 37(4): 395-420.

Valuckiene et al., 2015 – Valuckiene, J., Balčiūnas, S., Katiliūtė, E., Simonaitienė, B., Stanikūniene, B. (2015). Lyderystė mokymuisi: teorija ir praktika mokyklos kaitai. Šiauliai: Titnagas.

Wasonga, Murphy, 2006 – Wasonga, T.A., Murphy, J.F. (2006). Learning from tacit knowledge: the impact of the internship. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 20(2): 153-163. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540610646136>

Wenner, Campbell, 2017 – Wenner, J.A., Campbell, T. (2017). The Theoretical and Empirical Basis of Teacher Leadership: A Review of the Literature. *Review of Educational Research*. 87(1): 134-171. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316653478>

York-Barr, Duke, 2004 – York-Barr, J., Duke, K. (2004). What Do We Know About Teacher Leadership? Findings From Two Decades of Scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*. 74(3): 255-316. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074003255>