

Abilene Christian University

## Digital Commons @ ACU

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

---

2-2021

# A Case Study of Introverted Leadership in a Suburban High School in Central Texas

Jill Reynolds Hotz  
jxh17f@acu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Hotz, Jill Reynolds, "A Case Study of Introverted Leadership in a Suburban High School in Central Texas" (2021). Digital Commons @ ACU, *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 310.

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

This dissertation, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

**Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership**

*Nannette W. Glenn, Ph.D.*

---

Dr. Nannette Glenn, Dean of  
the College of Graduate and  
Professional Studies

Date: February 3, 2021

Dissertation Committee:

*Antonina Lukenchuk*

---

Dr. Antonina Lukenchuk

*Scott Self*

---

Dr. Scott Self

*Deardra Hayes-Whigham*

---

Dr. Deardra Hayes Whigham

Abilene Christian University  
School of Educational Leadership

A Case Study of Introverted Leadership in a Suburban High School in Central Texas

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Jill Reynolds Hotz

February 2021

## Acknowledgments

This chapter in my life would not be possible without the inspiration and dedication of my friends and family. Though they have all supported me without any expectation of reimbursement, perhaps a shout-out in permanent ink will be appreciated. Certainly, I realize I could not have gotten to this page without them. First and foremost, I thank God, without whom none of this would be possible. He has given me breath, strength, creativity, and intelligence. He has also never left my side, all the way to the finish line.

I would also not be here today if it were not for my parents, siblings, and relatives. Though my dad was never able to see me walk a stage to receive a diploma, it was he who taught me to walk and showed me that every adventure begins with a single step. I appreciate my siblings, Van, Brian, and Meg, who sometimes doubted my intelligence but always applauded my confidence. And I am pretty sure that they each, at one time or another, kept the others from putting me in a pit and selling me to Ishmaelites. Thank you to Aunt Pat, Uncle Johnny, and Randy, who always kept me balanced. Most of all, I want to thank Mom, my inspirational cheerleader who put the completion of my doctorate on her bucket list and daily told me to finish it before she kicked the bucket.

I could never have finished this dissertation and my doctorate without the tireless efforts of Dr. Antonina Lukenchuk, my amazing chair who taught me countless lessons and became my friend in the process. A special thanks also to Dr. Deardra Whigham for serving on my committee and giving me a first-hand look at educational leadership and to Dr. Scott Self for being such a supportive committee member, enthusiast, and an educational marvel with statistics.

Thank you to my school and district family who supported me along the way: Chase, Ed, Doug, Dani, Craig, Jason, Cesu, Kristy, Marcus, Daniel, Barbara, Jeff, Heather, Erin, Cliff,

Austin, David, Sam, Morgan, and Tiffany. I am hopeful that you each know the special role you played in this production, and I applaud you. I would be remiss if I didn't also thank my personal protector and fixer, Farshad. And I owe a debt of gratitude to all the introverted students who I inadvertently neglected; this dissertation would not be a reality without you.

I am most grateful to those who have prayed for me and sometimes held my hand throughout this process. Thank you to Dr. Dulin for showing me how to write like a doctor and who will always be my deeply treasured gift from Kari. Thank you to my ACU brothers Jeff and Dustin; we were The Three Amigos, and they made me smile on this difficult journey. I could not have done this without my dearest friend Charlotte, who was my paper bag when I hyperventilated in panic and never lost the faith. And I appreciate her husband, Dale, and the Journey Group for their frequent prayers.

Finally, my heartfelt gratitude to my household. Thanks to my lazy guard dog, Casey, and Fawkes, the rat-terrier who ruined more than one Zoom meeting and relentlessly growled at me when the light of my laptop disturbed her beauty sleep. Thank you to my practically perfect son, Samuel, who encouraged my progress and kept me humble by re-enacting my nervous breakdown before the start of the first class. Finally, a special note of gratitude belongs to my amazing husband. While I might hesitate to say that his encouragement was constant, there is no denying that he was all-in and stuck by my side each and every step of the way. I could not have asked him for anything more, and I wonder how many other candidates got to sleep with their editor.

Perhaps I could best sum all of this up with the poetic genius of Freddie Mercury:

I've taken my bows,

And my curtain calls.

You brought me fame and fortune, and everything that goes with it.

I thank you all.

But it's been no bed of roses,

No pleasure cruise.

I consider it a challenge before the whole human race,

And I ain't gonna lose. (Queen, 1977, stanza 2)

Thank you, everyone, for supporting me as I left my comfort zone to do the thing I  
thought might just be impossible. Carpe Diem!

© Copyright by Jill Hotz (2021)

All Rights Reserved

## Abstract

Introverted leaders are instrumental in building relationships and teams, setting benchmarks and pursuing academic goals, and planning and strategizing the implementation of performance initiatives. This qualitative case study illustrated how educational leadership has been previously isolated to extraverts and clarifies the need for introverted leadership. The purpose of this study was to explore ways in which high school leaders identify themselves as introverts and demonstrate the strengths of introverted leadership within the parameters of their professional roles. This study followed three introverted administrators at a suburban Texas secondary campus. Participants were observed in their professional settings: in meetings, correspondence, duty assignments, and in the physical design of their office spaces. Semistructured interviews were conducted and, after coding, revealed three themes: introversion through the participant's lens; introverted leadership unraveled; and personal imprints of introverted leadership. One of the major findings of this study was that viewing introverted leadership as a strength, rather than a treatable illness, alters the perspective and allows for the consideration that school leadership may now require more than one leadership personality. The contributions of introverted leaders can be seen in specific circumstances or areas of leadership potential that have not always been effectively utilized. This study filled important gaps in existing research and scholarship in terms of understanding the value of introverted leadership for school administrators while also providing more opportunities for career choices and leadership prospects to introverted leaders.

*Keywords:* introvert, extravert, leadership, secondary, school, administration



## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	i
Abstract.....	v
List of Figures.....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Background of the Study .....	1
Definition of Key Terms.....	4
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Research Purpose and Questions .....	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	7
Introversion: Definitions and Developments .....	7
Overview of the History of Personality Types.....	7
Introversion vs. Extraversion .....	8
Is There a Preference for Extraverted Leaders?.....	10
Educational Leadership: Definitions and Trends.....	12
Defining Educational Leadership.....	12
Trends in Educational Leadership.....	13
Leadership Styles and Introversion.....	16
Charismatic Leadership.....	17
Transformational Leadership .....	20
Authentic Leadership .....	21
Adaptive Leadership .....	22
Servant Leadership.....	23
Team Leadership.....	24
Shared Leadership.....	25
Leadership Based on Personality Types .....	26
Connecting Leadership Styles and Introversion .....	27
Introverted Leadership Through the Lens of Positive Psychology.....	32
Chapter Summary .....	34
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	36
Theoretical Lens: Strength-Based Approach .....	36
Research Design: Case Study .....	38
Site and Participants.....	40
Sources of Data and Methods of Data Collection.....	40
Data Analysis .....	43
Validation Criteria and Ethical Considerations .....	44
Chapter 4: Data Analysis .....	48

Introducing the Participants .....	48
The Meat of the Meetings .....	54
Hairnet On, Eyes Wide Open.....	55
Home Away From Home .....	57
Introverted Leadership: Analysis of the Findings.....	71
Introversion Through the Participant’s Lens .....	72
Early Years of Introversion.....	74
Underdog, Guard Dog, Alpha Dog .....	76
Introversion: Barriers, Struggles, and Self-Doubt .....	79
Introverted Subsets.....	81
Introverted Leadership Unraveled .....	84
Personal Imprints of Introverted Leadership .....	95
To Grow Teachers.....	95
Leaders Eat Last.....	96
In the Corner–Not Antisocial.....	97
Forward-Looking: Features and Strengths.....	98
Summary of the Findings.....	98
 Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations .....	 102
Discussion of the Findings.....	103
Introverted Leadership Redefined.....	103
Introversion: Labels, Strengths, and Self-Analysis .....	108
Positive Psychology .....	111
Limitations of the Study .....	112
Recommendations for Further Study .....	113
Recommendations for Educational Professionals.....	114
Reflections From the Researcher .....	116
 References.....	 118
 Appendix A: Interview Guide.....	 127
 Appendix B: Consent Form .....	 129
 Appendix C: IRB Approval Letter.....	 131

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Sample Signature From Kassidy, Concluding a Two-Page Email .....	49
Figure 2. Sample Email From Kassidy, September .....	50
Figure 3. Sample Email From Miles .....	52
Figure 4. Sample Email From Dennis .....	54
Figure 5. Kassidy’s Office .....	58
Figure 6. Kassidy’s Credenza .....	58
Figure 7. Zen Sandbox on Kassidy’s Conference Table.....	59
Figure 8. Kassidy’s Office Wall .....	60
Figure 9. Miles’s Office .....	61
Figure 10. Miles’s Bulletin Board .....	61
Figure 11. Miles’s Bookshelf.....	62
Figure 12. Miles’s Office Wall .....	63
Figure 13. Dennis’s Office.....	64
Figure 14. Dennis’s Door.....	65
Figure 15. Dennis’s Office Wall and Projects .....	66
Figure 16. Jill’s Office .....	68
Figure 17. Jill’s Shelves .....	69
Figure 18. Jill’s Shelves and Desk .....	70
Figure 19. Three Themes .....	72

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background of the Study

As a high school theatre teacher for the past quarter of a century, I have noted the repetitive pattern of having my classes filled with extraverted students who craved the spotlight and flourished as a result of opportunities to showcase their natural dramatic strengths. Glossophobia, or the fear of public speaking, seems to be pervasive in our society, but one could not prove it by the students in my classes. However, recently I have come to realize that there were students in my class that I failed to notice, precisely because they did not exhibit extraverted qualities. Inadvertently, I overlooked them and did not tap all of their talents. These were the introverted students whom I glossed over and wrongly assumed that their lack of enthusiasm was a sign of participation resistance. I regret that because of a lack of knowledge and awareness, I did not develop their strengths and dramatic talent. In the big picture, it is not the void in a trophy case where an Oscar or Tony Award should rest, but the real loss could be that the introverted individual never assumed a leadership role in the workplace.

In the United States, extraverts are frequently seen as leaders (Stephens-Craig et al., 2015). According to Cain (2013), Paul Buck, Harvard's provost in the 1940s, admitted the school's practice at that time was one of rejecting the "sensitive, neurotic" students in favor of accepting those with more traditional extraverted strengths (p. 28). Ivy League schools contemplated grades as they selected college freshmen, but they also considered the stereotypical personality that businesses considered marketable (TED, 2012). The schools often selected the candidate with a solid B average and a resume full of extracurricular glories. The admissions officers saw little value in the selection of the brilliant introvert. There seems to be a current vogue in U.S. education that favors the extraverted student: group projects (Godsey, 2015). Cain

asserted that introverts need autonomy in the workplace and in the classroom and pleads with educators “to stop the madness of constant group work” (TED, 2012, 16:47). Cain acknowledged the value of teachers teaching students to work together; however, teachers should also be aware of the importance of working in isolation. Cain advocated going to the wilderness to experience quiet, reflective thought, unplugging from the static of the outside world, and listening to the inspiration of silence.

Leadership does not come in a one-size-fits-all description. Introverts make up a third to half of the U.S. population (TED, 2012). The prevalence of this personality type validates the need for understanding and encouraging their unique skills and talents. Kise and Russell (2009) noted the importance of school leaders directing from their strengths. Their concern was that leaders in educational organizations (principals) desire to be perceived as all-knowing; whereas, the reality is that they have more focused talents. Kise and Russell (2009) advocated the assembly of a leadership team by applying the results of a Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator test (Myers & Myers, 1995). After conducting extensive research on the impact of school leaders on educational and student achievement, Kise and Russell (2009) validated their findings in a visual demonstration with school campus administrators. They identified 26 separate roles for school principals and, as a visual aide, would list the 26 leadership roles on a whiteboard. Each leader would be given five red stickers and five green. The red stickers would be placed on the roles with the least appeal, while the green would indicate their five most attractive leadership functions. This visual demonstration showed the roles in the school that were not being addressed. Understanding leadership in the school is about more than advertising success. It is about gauging weakness and finding leadership strengths to fill the void. There are multiple types of leadership roles within a school. Introverted leaders prefer being governed by

their senses and attention to detail, reflecting on their experiences, and balancing structural detail. Goals such as maintaining focus, planning strategies, and implementing innovative curriculum play to their strengths. In contrast, extraverted leaders are more gifted with making necessary changes and promoting the organization's public image. Kise and Russell (2009) presented the possibility that the school principal should no longer need to be the lone ranger of the educational setting, nor should they try to mask their weaker areas. Instead, Kise and Russell advocated for the leader to play to their strengths while discovering the talents of others on their leadership team and within their district. This allows for leadership growth in more than one person and, by sharing responsibilities, other leaders will be empowered and invested in organizational success (Kise & Russell, 2009).

It is argued that if school administrators are predominantly or exclusively extraverted, then not only does it leave a large percentage of underutilized talent, but it also denies introverted students the chance to connect with school leadership personalities that mirror their own (Mestry, 2017; Weiner, 2016). It is imperative, therefore, to recognize the contributions of introverts who bring quiet strength to the job fulfillment of educational administration. Walt Whitman (1892) in his poem, *O Me! O Life*, answers the question that so many introverts must feel when they are regarded as invisible in the classroom or the boardroom: "What good amid these, O me, O life? That you are here—that life exists and identity; That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse" (p. 140). This is the battle cry of the introverts, those quiet creative members of our society and my theatre classes who will hesitate to take the spotlight but who have the analytical mind to write the play that will define us all.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

**Extraversion.** Extraversion is often exemplified by talkative, high-energy individuals who crave attention and gravitate toward the social and professional spotlight (TED, 2012).

**Introversion.** Introversion is often explored in contrast to its polarized differences with the extraverted personality. Introverted individuals have an inclination for a quiet, less stimulated environment. They are known to listen more and talk less and think and reflect before speaking or entertaining the possibilities for risks (TED, 2012).

## **Statement of the Problem**

In U.S. secondary education, the principals and assistant principals hold the leadership role in the school. Much of the daily demands placed on principals, including managing school financial resources, handling student discipline, and resolving campus conflicts with students, teachers, and the community, are extraverted activities (Mestry, 2017). This can leave little time for the areas that emphasize introverted strengths, such as instructional leadership and ensuring that best practices are occurring in the classrooms, which can contribute to state and district academic ratings. Clearly, educational leadership would benefit most from a balance of both extraverted and introverted personalities and skill types (Kise & Russell, 2009).

Introversion is often overlooked as a professional strength for secondary administrators. It is extraversion that has been primarily considered the requisite trait for opportunities in leadership (Stephens-Craig et al., 2015). Some scholars claim that U.S. culture glorifies extraverted leaders, who typically speak well, command confidence, and communicate a clear vision to followers (Stephens-Craig et al., 2015). Psychology research identifies extraversion as the personality trait most often associated with leadership emergence (Green et al., 2019). Mann (1959) documented that people perceive extraverts as superior leaders, while Stogdill (1974)

found that extraverted leaders receive higher ratings of effectiveness from their peers and superiors. Exalting extraverts as leaders potentially denies those opportunities to between a third and half of the population (TED, 2012).

Stephens-Craig et al. (2015) asserted that American society forces the introverted personality to fit in the extraverted mold. Society has often underestimated the important contributions of introverts, potentially causing a waste of talent, leadership, and success (TED, 2012). Cain (TED, 2012) has disputed societal claims that introversion is a second-class trait, somewhere between a disappointment and a pathology.

The American bias toward extraverted leaders has been well-researched. Studies have also been conducted in for-profit companies regarding the capabilities and successes of introverted leaders (Stephens-Craig et al., 2015). However, there is little research into the role of introverted leadership in the nonprofit area of secondary education. Despite our culture's seeming preference for extraverted leaders, some secondary administrative roles such as team building, instructional leadership, and academic improvement are better aligned with introverted administrative leaders.

It is important to shed additional light on the benefits of introverted leadership in secondary education, which this study sought to accomplish. Studies of this nature can be beneficial to both introverted and extraverted school leaders. For instance, introverted leaders can develop a clearer understanding of how their personality strengths align with, and can be used to achieve, professional and academic growth goals. Extraverted leaders can learn positive applications from their counterparts' strengths that can be collected in their own leadership repertoire. In addition, student introverts can be afforded role models in leadership and consider



the idea that quiet leadership is a possibility. Finally, human resource departments can recognize the advantages of hiring introverted administrators.

### **Research Purpose and Questions**

This qualitative case study's purpose was to explore ways in which high school leaders identify themselves as introverts and demonstrate the strengths of introverted leadership within the parameters of their professional roles. This study focused on several self-identified introverted leaders at a public high school in a suburban Texas school district.

The following research questions guided this study:

**RQ1:** How do high school leaders describe themselves as introverts?

**RQ2:** What are the distinctive features that they ascribe to their introverted leadership?

**RQ3:** How do they demonstrate the strengths of their leadership within the scope of their professional roles?

No longer does an individual have to be an extravert to achieve success in administrative leadership. Leaders come in all shapes and sizes with skill sets that align with achieving academic success in secondary education. Introverted leaders may not be the grand marshal of the academic parade, but their personality strengths are key to meeting the school's educational goals. Introverted leadership is more than expanding a traditional definition of leadership. It is fitting an ever-evolving educational organization with a leader who has gifts and talents that differ from the traditional, single-sided view of leadership.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The school principal's day is filled with diverse administrative responsibilities. They are consumed with activities such as scheduling, reporting, managing relationships with parents and community, dealing with learner and teacher issues, and establishing and monitoring academic goals, just to name a few. Overarching all of the daily activities are, perhaps, two main target objectives for secondary administrators: increasing learner achievement and maintaining teacher satisfaction (Mestry, 2017). Psychology research, for instance, shows a preference for extraverted leaders or at least a leader who performs well in extraverted activities (Green et al., 2019). However, there are areas, especially in the secondary school principal's job responsibilities, which would best be handled by an introvert (Weiner, 2016).

This literature review traces the landscape of scholarly contributions across bodies of literature related to introversion and educational leadership. The literature review is structured according to the following themes (a) introversion: definitions and developments; (b) educational leadership: definitions and trends; (c) leadership styles and introversion; and (d) introverted leadership through the lens of positive psychology.

### **Introversion: Definitions and Developments**

#### *Overview of the History of Personality Types*

The terms extraversion and introversion were made popular by Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung (1875–1961) in the early 20th century. Extraversion refers to a personality characteristic that predisposes one toward external events, activities, and people. Introversion is defined as a characteristic that moves an individual toward inner thoughts, feelings, analysis, solitude, and privacy (Jung, 2014). While Jung (2014) found it useful to describe personality typology in terms

of introversion and extraversion, he cautioned regarding the temptation to discount individuality and unique personality characteristics when placing participants in groups.

Hans Eysenck (1916–1997), a German psychologist, spent the majority of the second half of the 20th century studying personality at the University of London. His theory was based on physiology and genetics. As a behaviorist, he regarded learned habits as extremely significant; however, he believed that personality differences stem from genetic inheritance. His interest was focused on temperament. Temperament is the aspect of personality that is grounded in genetics and present from birth. Eysenck's theory entertained the possibility that personality could be learned, but he left this to other researchers.

Eysenck (2017) found that people's personalities could be better understood using the introversion-extraversion neuroticism measurements. He advocated against the association of introversion with low sociability and adopted an objective view that personality type was merely a cluster of correlated traits or tendencies. Eysenck strove to improve the reliability and validity of scales measuring introversion and extraversion and later went on to develop the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire.

### ***Introversion vs. Extraversion***

Preferring his own test, Eysenck (2017) referred to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as a moderately successful example of Jung's original principles. However, the MBTI has become the prevailing tool in determining a person's dominant personality traits. It is a self-examining questionnaire that indicates psychological preferences in how individuals perceive the world. The MBTI is based on the conceptual theory proposed by Carl Jung, who claimed that people experience the world using four psychological functions: sensation, intuition, feeling, and thinking. Jung concluded that one of the functions is dominant for each individual. The four

categories classified in the Myers-Briggs are introversion–extraversion, sensing–intuition, thinking–feeling, and judging–perception. Each person is believed to have one quality from each category, thus producing 16 original types. The MBTI is based on the assumption that individuals have a specific, original preference that influences their experiences, interests, needs, values, and drive (Myers & Myers, 1995).

The MBTI measures introversion–extraversion, in isolation from other features, along a spectrum of situational preferences and functional styles (Myers & Myers, 1995). Briggs and Myers called the preference for introversion or extraversion, attitudes. People who are classified as extraverted draw energy from action and have a habit of acting, reflecting, and acting again. Extraverted energy declines during inactivity and recharges with breaks from reflection. Introverts, conversely, deplete energy with action. Introverted individuals prefer the sequence of reflection, action, reflection.

The introvert’s main interests are in the inner world of concepts and ideas, while the extravert is more involved with the outer world of people and things. . . .This is not to say that anyone is limited either to the inner world or the outer. Well-developed introverts can deal ably with the world around them when necessary, but they do their best work inside their heads, in reflection. (Myers & Myers, 1995, p. 7)

Myers and Myers (1995) used words such as forethinking, observant, questioning, and engrossed to describe introverts, whom they saw as placing the deepest value on the interpretation of life and the quest to promote a deeper understanding. This is in sharp contrast to extraverts, who were more likely to engage in the “promotion and initiation of new enterprises” (Myers & Myers, 1995, p. 81). Susan Cain (TED, 2012) described extraverts as craving large amounts of stimulation while introverts feel the most engaged and capable in quiet conditions.

### *Is There a Preference for Extraverted Leaders?*

American popular culture seems to celebrate the personality traits associated with extraverted leaders (Stephens-Craig et al., 2015). Leadership success is often linked to leaders who speak well, exude confidence, hold their followers' attention, communicate vision, and inspire greatness (Stephens-Craig et al., 2015). The preference for this type of leader can perhaps be traced to the "Great Man" trait theories of leadership (Northouse, 2016, p. 19). The great man theory is a 19th-century idea, primarily attributed to the Scottish philosopher and essayist Thomas Carlyle, that the world is a biography of great men. These heroes, or illustrations of greatness, shape the pages of history through their personal attributes or divine inspiration. A trait theory of leadership based on this idea paints the leader as charming, inspiring, and motivational. It is not difficult to see that these descriptors are more aligned with the extraverted leader than the introverted (Stogdill, 1948). Cawthon (1996) noted six types of heroes: divinity, prophet, poet, priest, man of letters, and king. Cawthon's theory was based on two assumptions: first, every great leader is born with the traits to propel them to lead instinctively, and second, the need for a leader must be great in order to reveal their inherent leadership traits.

Green et al. (2019) found that psychology literature supports a strong positive correlation between extraversion and leadership. Some studies have pointed to the tendency to align success with characteristics that more closely mirror extraverted personalities: talkative, social, and dominant (Crăciun & Sofian, 2015). Extraversion is typically associated with greater sensitivities to reward stimuli, a positive approach to goals, opportunities for development, and self-confidence to help achieve benchmarks. For instance, Wilmot et al. (2019) asserted that extraversion is associated with higher overall job performance, successful job crafting, advocating for organizational change, and seizing career advancement opportunities. Green et al.

(2019) noted that introverts are less likely to be seen as valuable because they lack the ability and motivation to promote their strengths. Also, it is more common for success to be related to the organizational hierarchy; therefore, pockets of excellence are recognized by proven track record, rather than maintaining activities that nurture personality types (Crăciun & Sofian, 2015).

Crăciun and Sofian's case study (2015) found that success is often equated with characteristics that are closely aligned with extraverts, and that introverts are recognized less frequently for their value in professional settings. Crăciun and Sofian's study utilized personality assessment and interviews to provide illustrations documenting a 22-year-old subject's first experience in a managerial position. The participant's personality was determined using the Big Five model, while the occupational experience was documented using an interview format. The highest score in the profile was openness (T = 61.20, percentile = 86.00), which is consistent with being both understanding and cooperative with others. This was closely followed by emotional stability (T = 58.00, percentile = 79.00), which is descriptive of low vulnerability to stressful encounters. The lowest scores were noted in extraversion (T = 48.80, percentile = 44.00), indicating a preference for quiet time and reflection, and lastly, consciousness (T = 42.90, percentile = 24.00). The profile described a strong development in stress management, flexibility, innovation, and independence in the workplace. Lower competencies were found in leadership, motivational skills, and teamwork. The analytical, behind-the-scenes strengths of introverts are still considered secondary qualities by employers and often by the introverts themselves who are in leadership positions (Crăciun & Sofian, 2015). Evidently, the findings of the aforementioned studies underscore the preference for extraverted leaders.

## **Educational Leadership: Definitions and Trends**

### ***Defining Educational Leadership***

Stogdill (1948) noted in a review of leadership research that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have attempted to define it. Although many people have an instinctive interpretation of the definition of leadership, capturing the term with a singular definition has proved to be problematic. Roth (2007, as cited in Northouse, 2016) analyzed materials from 1900 to 1990 and discovered over 200 definitions of leadership. The first three decades of the 20th century defined leadership from the perspective of control and emphasized a centralization of power with notable themes of domination. The 1930s began a shift to define leadership as an influence of behaviors rather than dominant control. The 1940s incorporated the leader's relationship to the inspiration of group activities. The 1950s brought three themes to describe leadership: contingency or group theory, which outlined what leaders do in groups; relationship and shared goals, which focuses on the leader's behavior; and effectiveness, which was a measure of leadership success applied to group motivation. The 1960s found leadership scholars agreeing with the definition that leadership influences people toward the attainment of group goals. The 1970s saw a shift from group focus to the organizational behavior that charged leadership with the objective of initiating and maintaining groups to achieve both group and organizational benchmarks. The 1980s were an explosion of scholarly works on leadership, from which several leadership themes evolved. The first was encompassed by the idea of doing what the leader wishes. This stems from the idea that leadership necessitates getting the followers to climb on board with the leader's vision. The second theme was influence, specifically noncoercive influence. Trait orientation came into vogue during this time, and, as a result, many began to associate a trait with the definition of

leadership. The fourth theme was transformation. This transformation has a positive, reciprocal effect on leaders and followers as the process is designed to raise both higher standards of motivation and moral decision-making (Roth, 2007, as cited in Northouse, 2016).

Most commonly, a school leader is assumed to be one who is responsible for the success of students. Considering the vast number of definitions, there is no consensus on the definition of a school leader (Leithwood et al., 2020). The shift in terms of leadership in the 1990s moved from educational administration to school leadership. At the campus level, there was a departure from knowledge related to schools and systems-based roles to change oriented knowledge and evidence-based performance results. This led to the beginning of transformative leadership that was later applied to the standards of educational leadership. Although the definition of educational leadership is complex, three types of school leadership are noted: transformational, distributed, and teacher leadership. Transformational leaders build lasting relationships with employees and motivate them to achieve their personal and professional best, while distributed or shared leadership creates opportunities for collaboration and experiences that inspire others to assume leadership roles. Teacher leadership is about increasing occasions for teachers to exercise leadership and elevate their voices in decision- and policy-making programs. Transformational, distributive, and teacher leadership all share a common denominator of building relationships, a behavior that is exhibited in either personality type. Leadership has evolved from the property of individuals to the dynamics of relations. Relations in leadership can be accomplished by introverted as easily as extraverted leadership.

### ***Trends in Educational Leadership***

A number of current trends in educational leadership are revealed in school standards. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), comprised of the Council of



Chief State School Officers, determine standards that are incorporated by 40 states and include some of the following descriptors of success: facilitating the development and articulation of a shared school vision, sustaining a school culture, ensuring management of the resources and organization for a safe and efficient learning environment, collaboration with families and community in response to mobilizing community resources, maintaining ethics in all decision-making, and understanding and responding to the political, social, cultural and economic influences of the campus (Korkut & Llaci, 2016).

Another trend in education is the globalization of technology and the necessity for school leaders to embrace big picture thinking. I have seen many changes in education during my 26-year career in the classroom. The iconic chalkboard has been replaced by smart boards, laptops, and computer-driven instruction. Lyons and Voges (2018) discussed the integration of globalization into the educational curriculum. According to the authors, in order to answer the demands of a globalized society, it is essential to get students, teachers, and administration to see themselves as an integral part of a global system (Lyons & Voges, 2018). In other words, students and school employees should begin to identify as a global citizen rather than merely a participant in a brick and mortar classroom. Additionally, Lyons and Voges (2018) discussed the importance of fostering social networks to create opportunities for learners to connect with people who are not like themselves.

School districts are unlikely to adopt globalization into their curriculum without big-picture leadership and global leadership. Big picture leaders, as described by Goleman (2016), do not settle for systems the way they are. Instead, they work to transform the systems into what they can be. They see potential, not for the short term, but for a future that outlives their lifespan. Big picture thinkers have a vision that is not a tunnel but encompasses the welfare of many.

While leaders will always need characteristics such as vision and integrity, Goldsmith (2014) outlined five traits required of global leaders. They must think and plan beyond their physical space and see their business as it is connected to worldwide dynamics. They must have a cross-cultural appreciation and no longer consider diversity solely in terms of racial and gender issues in the local office but also encompass ethnic concerns and considerations of a global market. Goldsmith (2014) called for leaders to be technologically savvy. This does not mean that the leader must be well versed in the inner workings of all things technical. It does, however, suggest that the leader must have their finger on the company's pulse to understand how technological innovations can influence and breathe life into the global market. According to Goldsmith (2014), the fourth attribute of a global leader is the ability to build alliances and partnerships. He pointed out that this can be true even when considering competitors. Just because companies are competing in one area does not preclude them from partnering in other research areas that could positively influence the global market for both. Lastly, global leaders embrace shared leadership. Rather than being governed by top-down formations, managers can work collaboratively with employees who have specialized skills. Instead of being threatened by the expertise of others, they can see how those gifts will impact the global picture of the organization. It will take big picture thinkers to see the possibilities and initiate the changes that will make this generation competitive in a global-focused classroom and graduate students with the potential to make a real difference in the world of tomorrow.

According to Gratton (2016), three social trends have impacted the shape of work: rapid urbanization of the population, the balanced man, and the rise of reflexivity. As of 2010, in many Western countries, more than 75% of people already live in urban regions (Gratton, 2016). It was predicted that innovative clusters would attract a disproportionate number of talented and

educated people to expanding cities such as Rio, Shanghai, and Singapore, in addition to the once-fashionable London and San Francisco. Secondly, the concept of the balanced man stated that men and women of the millennial generation are making trade-offs in their work lives to balance their personal experiences with more time focused on family and children. Lastly, the reflexivity that governs the vast possibilities of configuring workgroups with different dynamics and flexible hours will soon redefine what we consider normal. Educators should open the minds of students to believe that their occupations may include virtual workplaces and competition in global markets. The incorporation and comprehension of these social trends can expand the choice and reduce the limitations of previous time constraints: career and family.

Introverted leadership has the potential for fitting into the trends of globalization. Introverted leadership traits can easily be aligned with virtual classrooms and educational globalization by eliminating the need for face-to-face(s) interaction and allowing the introverted leader time to digest and reflect on questions before responding. Trends, such as the balanced man, can change the face of leadership to include flexible hours with an emphasis on home and family that allows for a more reflective virtual leadership, which is more closely aligned with the introspective behaviors of introverted leaders.

### **Leadership Styles and Introversion**

Leadership styles are unique to each leader, and the style is independent from the personality alignment of introverted or extraverted leadership. Leadership styles can be flexible and varied, depending on professional and personal circumstances. Understanding the various options in styles gives the leader and those examining leadership a comprehensive framework for comparing the merits, pitfalls, and contexts in which they can be most effective. Educational leadership is multifaceted. The surface identifies the leader's personality, while a deeper analysis

can reveal the particular style that is aligned with the individual leader. Leadership styles such as charismatic, transformational, authentic, adaptive, team, and shared have characteristics that can be exemplified by either an introverted or extraverted leader. A closer examination of leadership styles can contribute to a better understanding of the connections between leadership styles and introversion.

### ***Charismatic Leadership***

A charismatic leader appeals to a society that is still enamored with heroes (Conger, 2016). Even adults seem to want to search the horizon for someone to swoop in and save the day, and they quickly, perhaps recklessly, elevate a charismatic person to a position of leadership. Charismatic leadership fills a void but can be detrimental to the development and lasting impact of the organizational goals and utilization of the employee strengths if left unregulated.

According to Weber (1947, as cited in Conger, 2016), the word charisma stems from a Hellenistic word *kharisma*, which translates as a gift, divine favor, or supernatural power. Ancients embraced the idea that the gods gave this gift to prophets, healers, or religious leaders to help them achieve their earthly tasks. Weber observed that charismatic leaders often appeared during times of crisis or stress. He theorized that the attraction of these leaders was based on their perceived acts of heroism, charmed mental proficiency, and exceptional communication abilities.

Conger (2016) further elaborated that charismatic leaders are critical of the status quo, develop a vision for the future, give followers hope, and create a plan of action to fulfill their revelation. The leader's vision enhances the followers' self-concept in three ways. First, it offers an optimistic future that reinforces the significance of the organization's goals. Second, it becomes a shared vision that enables the group of followers to function as a team. The

charismatic leader actively promotes that when the members are linked together this way, the organization is stronger and aligned to tackle incomparable feats. Third, the leader confidently endorses the followers' abilities, which creates a heightened sense of self-efficacy among them (Conger, 2016).

Conger (2016) discovered that followers were attracted to the leader's self-assurance, admired their strong dedication to their vision, were in awe of their ability to take on personal risk, and impressed with their track record of past victories. The approval given by the charismatic leader of the followers' accomplishments was a contributing factor to the followers' self-worth. Receiving approval and affirmation from the leader was key in determining the followers' performance and ability within the organization and led to followers endeavoring to live up to the leader's expectations. Over time, since their self-worth is connected to the leader's expectations, followers can only gain satisfaction by achieving perfection in the leader's eyes.

Sankowsky (1995, as cited in Conger, 2016) discussed the so-called dark side to charismatic behaviors. Since these leaders offer a magnificent vision and encourage followers to achieve it, followers often find themselves in a situation where their performance falls short of the leader's expectations. Initially, the leader will blame the outside world for hindering the achievement of their vision; however, over time, the leader often blames the followers. Since charismatic followers are conditioned to accept their leader's viewpoint without challenge, the followers will blame the insufficiencies on themselves. This results in the destruction of self-worth and creates highly dependent individuals.

Another potential "dark" side of charismatic leadership that results in the destruction of self-worth among followers is the centralization of glory in the leader. With a strictly enforced decision-making process designed always to support the leader's vision, and with all credit for

successes (but no blame for failures) going to the leader, followers lose confidence in their own skills, do not take risks or innovate, and are diminished in their capabilities and contributions to the organization (Conger, 2016).

Vergauwe et al. (2018) found that charismatic people portrayed themselves as talkative, inventive, energetic, and original. In addition, they are also self-proclaimed as good-looking, determined, and imaginative. However, while other people still describe the charismatic leader as talkative, energetic, and original, they do not usually see them as good-looking or determined. This supports the idea that charismatic individuals often have an inflated self-image that is not consistent with how others perceive them (Vergauwe et al., 2018). Vergauwe et al. (2018) explored the relationship between charisma and effectiveness in a study of 300 business leaders. The results showed that self-ratings for overall effectiveness were not consistent with ratings assigned by coworkers. Furthermore, some degree of charisma, neither too much nor too little, was predictive of the highest level of leader effectiveness. Charisma is desirable to give a leader confidence, the ability to motivate others, and to create a close-knit team around a shared vision and hope for the future. However, there can be too much of a good thing. Charismatic leaders that only rely on their own self-evaluation of their performance, rather than employee feedback, can become blind to their own limitations. Organizations need to implement 360-degree reviews as mandatory for everyone, including the leader. Also, organizations need to balance charismatic leaders by pairing them with a humble yet assertive partner. This gives the benefits of the characteristics of a charismatic leader with the combined strength of a realistic decision maker (Vergauwe et al., 2018).

Organizations, particularly in transition and crisis, often search for a “hero” who will save the day, lead with vision, communicate with supernatural flair, and courageously embrace

risks. This leadership style possesses many strengths but can have a negative impact on the followers when leader expectations are misaligned with employee abilities. These leaders need to be paired with a grounded individual who can occasionally stand on their cape. Charisma is a wonderful characteristic that could be a potential game changer in launching educational programs and maintaining a vision for the future (Northouse, 2016).

### ***Transformational Leadership***

While charismatic leaders use their influence to act as a strong role model, earning them the allegiance of their followers, transformational leaders use inspirational motivation to intensify the emotional connection between employees and the company's goals.

Transformational leaders stress intellectual stimulation by challenging employees to find new and creative ways to solve problems. A study by Teymournejad and Elghaei (2017) of the employees at Maskan Bank in Tehran investigated the effects of transformational leadership on intellectual stimulation, motivation, and creativity. The study was applied research utilizing descriptive data analysis collected by the use of questionnaires. The population included 500 bank managers and employees. Teymournejad and Elghaei's study claimed that transformational leadership had a positive impact on the creativity experienced by the Maskan Bank employees. Transformational leadership can influence an organization and create an increase in creativity and innovative strategies. When managers recognize, fund, and reward opportunities for creativity, they will benefit from the motivation and dedication from the innovative employees who are motivated to excel. Transformational leaders must set clear goals and give their employees the creative license to achieve them. When transformational leadership is at its best, members of groups communicate more freely and exchange new perspectives about solving organizational issues (Northouse, 2016).

### *Authentic Leadership*

According to Northouse (2016), authentic leadership focuses on the leader being the real deal. Authentic leaders lead from conviction and life experiences. These leaders participate in a reciprocal process where they affect and are affected by the followers. Authentic leadership develops in people over a lifetime and can grow in response to a traumatic life event. It is a relational process that is created not solely by the leader but also through the response of the follower. Northouse (2016) characterized authentic leaders as having a clear understanding of their own values and an ability to respond to their followers based on the moral codes restricting these values. In other words, they know where they are going and the right actions to take in order to get there. Authentic leaders are described as passionate with a sense of purpose. Not only do they know where they are going, but they are intrinsically motivated about their goals. Authentic leaders build strong relationships. This style of leadership requires the leader to have compassion and heart. Leaders can increase their level of compassion by opening themselves up to the lives of others, thereby connecting and building relationship bonds.

Fusco et al. (2015) explored the link between two areas: group coaching and authentic leadership development. The researchers utilized grounded theory, a qualitative research method. The goal of the study was to create a model of authentic leadership development. The participants were selected by author interviews and represented chief executive officers (CEOs), managing directors, business managers, and human resource directors from industries such as energy, finance, professional service, health care, and manufacturing. Fusco et al.'s (2015) study included 21 members: 12 males and nine females. The researchers used a group coaching approach over three months, targeting senior leaders who were interviewed and required to keep detailed journal logs to document the dynamics of an authentic leadership coaching group. This



empirical study revealed insight into the inner workings of group coaching and the impact of change. However, it was conducted under the bias that authentic leadership is a worthwhile goal that can be developed. The authors assumed that group coaching is a means to achieving authentic leadership. Leaders are required to know themselves, and the study functions best in a small setting where participants are easily required to engage fully (Fusco et al., 2015).

Erkutlu and Chafra (2019) related authentic leadership not only to changing the school's climate but giving the teachers a reason to stay in their jobs. Their empirical study explored the relationship between authentic leadership and employee retention in higher education. Authentic leaders share characteristics of fairness, promote accountability among followers, practice giving and receiving constructive feedback, and encourage psychological feedback by creating a climate of connection. The results of their study showed the positive effects of authentic leadership on all of the measured variables. Erkutlu and Chafra's (2019) study was the first to integrate psychological ownership theory and social exchange perspective to explain the relationship of job embeddedness and authentic leadership. This study illustrated the parallel relationship between authentic leadership and job embeddedness. Further, it showed how organizations, which have authentic leadership, are better able to retain talent. Erkutlu and Chafra (2019) revealed the important strength of using the applied characteristics of authentic leadership to effectively achieve a positive climate that will inspire employees to invest years of service to their roles in higher education.

### ***Adaptive Leadership***

According to Northouse (2016), adaptive leadership is a process approach. Adaptive leadership is not a character or a trait; it is an occurrence that happens between leaders and followers during situations that they face. Adaptive leadership is follower-centered. Follower

involvement is paramount, and leaders provide holding environments so that followers have a safe haven in which to solve complex issues. The core of adaptive leadership is to assist followers with confronting personal values and making course corrections to successfully deal with adaptations and changes. Adaptive leadership provides a prescriptive approach that details the work of the followers and the type of behavior the leader should exhibit in order to complete the work.

Nicolaides and McCallum (2013) described adaptive leaders as moving from the dance floor to the balcony. From this bird's eye, panoramic point of view, the adaptive leader can better see the problems that need to be addressed. Additionally, adaptive leadership involves moving people to face ambiguous challenges that lack available solutions. To do this, participants must challenge their current belief system and behaviors and acknowledge the dynamics of the greater system governing the leadership process (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2013).

### ***Servant Leadership***

Fields et al. (2015) explored the methodological application of servant leadership in training participants with career interests in service or helping professions such as social work and family studies. Servant leadership is an approach that assumes followers will respond positively to a leader who is trying to enable them to be successful and improve. The helping professions embrace Robert Greenleaf's philosophy, which advocates serving clients by assisting them in achieving the best version of themselves (Northouse, 2016). Fields et al.'s (2015) study blended the application of servant leadership into an internship for social work and family studies majors. The participants included 46 students over three years. Participants responded to reflective questions regarding their internship experiences in places such as the Boys and Girls Club, Ronald McDonald House, public schools, and children's shelters. Fields et al. (2015)

studied the reflections, administered a self-evaluation at the beginning and end of each course, and evaluated supervisor assessments regarding students' professional growth. Servant leadership and hope share a connective fiber that is woven in the tapestry of careers in social work and family studies. Fields et al.'s (2015) study yielded positive results advocating servant leadership.

### ***Team Leadership***

In a team leadership model, the leader's job is to monitor the team and then take appropriate actions to increase the probability of team success (Northouse, 2016). This model is a tool for understanding the complex stages of team leadership. It starts at the top with the initial leadership decision, charts leader actions, and ends with focused attention on team effectiveness. The model consists of the problem facing the team plus the environment and organizational factors that define the big picture of team action. The leader develops a mental conception defining the team problem and identifies possible solutions, taking into consideration organizational limitations and resources.

Northouse (2016) stated that the leader needs to be flexible with leadership behaviors to meet the team's diverse needs. Leadership behavior is team-based problem-solving. The leader accomplishes team goals by analyzing both the internal and external situations and applying suitable behaviors. Examples of internal behaviors include goal focusing, structuring for results, facilitating decisions, training, maintaining standards, coaching, collaborating, managing conflict, building commitment, satisfying needs, and modeling principles. External behaviors include networking, advocating, negotiating support, buffering, assessing, and sharing information. Leaders have the task of helping the team be effective. Leaders must effectively choose which problems require focus and intervention and choose appropriate actions. Team

leadership involves sharing the tasks of diagnosing the problem and choosing an appropriate intervention (Smith, 2018).

### *Shared Leadership*

Weiner (2016) found that schools normally follow a singular hero style of leadership where the principal is the primary decision maker. Weiner's study measured the leadership of four charter school principals and found that the principals were resistant to releasing authority to their team members to achieve shared decision-making. Principals claimed to have felt pressure from teachers to show autonomous leadership. Adopting traditional leadership norms would prohibit them from engaging in shared leadership practices. If collaborative leadership is not constructed with care, it can result in resentment between teachers and principals. A key point from Weiner's (2016) study is that no one leader has the time or the energy to lead in isolation. Having multiple voices increases the information that decisions are based on. Shared decision-making in schools allows teachers to communicate critical information and to customize instructional methods that best address their needs. This study revealed the obstacles that principals face when they attempt to let go of the control of the school. Weiner (2016) noted that when shared leadership is done well, it can enhance instructional practice and improve the school's culture.

The various leadership styles discussed above can be relevant to introverted leadership. Clearly, it is impossible to ascribe a particular leadership style to introverted leaders. An introverted leader has the ability to adapt to more than one style. Leaders are expected to be proficient at teaching, guiding, and modeling. All of these qualifications can be fulfilled by an introverted leader. Authentic leaders lead from life experiences and convictions (Northouse, 2016). Reflective traits of introverts are closely aligned with this behavior. Introverted leadership

is also a compliment to adaptive leadership that is follower-centered. Introverted leaders by nature are known to guide from behind and inspire greatness in others through their modeling of quiet strength (TED, 2012). Leadership is not just a title or a brand; it is the ability to work and inspire a collective power by motivating and empowering others to reach their personal best.

### ***Leadership Based on Personality Types***

To be effective, leaders ought to consider how to relate to and motivate followers based on their personality. Smith (2018) estimated that half of the working population in the United States is introverted. Often introversion is wrongly confused with shyness. On the contrary, introversion is a personality style, and shyness is a symptom of anxiety. RoAne (2017) pointed to a suggestion that managers allow introverted employees to have a break from the noise of meetings and office activities. This suggestion implies that introversion is a limitation that needs accommodations. It sends the wrong message and would be a failure of leadership in properly motivating and encouraging employees (RoAne, 2017). If leaders react incorrectly to introverted team members, they risk neglecting a pool of innovative ideas, possible employee turnover, and missing goals due to lack of employee engagement (RoAne, 2017). Lamm et al. (2017) found a correlation between personality and goal orientation. Their study's recommendation was that school leaders should create curricula with different options for different personalities to maximize students' motivation to learn and be successful in the classroom. Smith (2018) highlighted two strategies to improve interactions with introverted employees. The first approach was designed to improve introverts' group contributions.

Introverts are capable of planning contributions in their minds; they are simply hesitant to share in a group setting. Therefore, leaders should send a memo to all participants in advance of the meeting, detailing discussion goals, soliciting written responses, using the responses as

springboards for discussion, and then individually thanking all response contributors one-on-one. Stephens-Craig et al. (2015) proposed that in a society that values go-getters, a trait found in extraverts, other means need to be set up to address the introverts. Smith (2018) suggested creating reverse mentorships by pairing extraverted and introverted employees to learn strengths and best practices from each other.

Leadership in general, and specifically in the field of education, has expanded from focusing solely on dominant control to the dynamics of relationships. Research, studies, and theories have sought to classify numerous leadership styles, such as charismatic, transformational, authentic, servant, and shared. While it is likely that a charismatic leader will display extraverted qualities and an adaptive leader will be more introverted, none of these styles are the exclusive property of either personality. Introverts are known for listening more and talking less (TED, 2012). Listening skills lay the groundwork for building relationships with others. Introverted leaders can make connections with staff members, learn about them through observation, and then reflect on those observations that will reveal how to inspire the best outcomes from the staff to meet school standards. As organizational hierarchy becomes more relationship-based, and educational leadership goals focus more on sharing a vision, sustaining a culture, ensuring safety, and maintaining ethics, it is apparent that there may be a need for a more balanced or mixed form of leadership. No matter the leadership style or leader's personality, the expectation for excellence is consistent as it spans different time periods and addresses cultural trends such as technology integration and globalization.

### ***Connecting Leadership Styles and Introversion***

Cain (2013) disputed societal claims that introversion is a second-class trait, somewhere between a disappointment and a pathology. Cain noted that American society has often

underestimated the important contributions of introverts, potentially causing a waste of talent, leadership, and success. Parveen and Razman (2013) studied the link between creativity and personality, whether introverted or extraverted. Their study was conducted to identify introverts and extraverts, find the connection between personality and creativity, and discover the relationship between creativity and introversion and extraversion. The results of their study revealed that there was a very low relationship between creativity and extraversion but found a positive correlation between introverted personality and creativity. Cain (TED, 2012) illustrated this point in her assessment of Theodor Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss. He was able to write classic children's literature but was completely afraid to read his masterpieces to the children. Does this make him any less of a leader? Despite not being able to speak publicly and project confidence, Dr. Seuss obviously succeeded at communicating a vision and inspiring greatness. As we all know from his story, *Horton Hears a Who*, "a person is a person no matter how small" (Geisel, 1954, p. 5). Leaders come in all shapes and forms and represent more than one personality type.

A new or expanded definition of leadership is possible if one entertains the idea that school leadership can successfully be achieved by introverted as well as extraverted leaders. Because American culture currently embraces a definition of leadership that is predominantly made up of extraverted qualities such as speaking well in public, showing confidence, and communicating a clear vision to followers, introverts are pressured into masquerading as extraverts (TED, 2012). Stephens-Craig et al. (2015) asserted that American society has forced the introverted personality to fit in the extraverted mold. According to the same authors, this practice denies one half to one-third of the population the freedom to develop their skills as

leaders. Substantial arguments have been made cautioning against having introverts pretend to be extraverted to elevate themselves in the working world (Jacques-Hamilton et al., 2019).

Introverted leaders have traits that are positive and can give confidence to the followers in an organization. Characteristics of introverted leaders include a preference for fewer meetings, considering all information before giving directions, working behind the scenes, being hard to get to know, and highly analytical (Stephens-Craig et al., 2015). Introverted leaders are seen as businesslike and calm in decision-making (Farrell, 2017). These traits are positive and have the possibility of giving confidence to the followers in an organization. Extraverted leaders often discount the need for reflection before action; however, organizational leaders benefit from being analytical and methodical, traits that are characteristic of introverts. Professor Adam Grant of the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School found that, when comparing introverted and extraverted leaders, the introverts were more likely to motivate followers to run with their ideas while extraverted leaders were more prone to putting their stamp or mark on new ideas (TED, 2012).

A study by Stephens-Craig et al. (2015) showed the valuable contributions of introverted leaders in the workplace. Their qualitative study's purpose was to connect the positive traits of introverts, such as analytical thinking, organization, and strength in decision-making, and to form a new definition of a leader. Their study population was 31 voluntary participants based on knowledge and position. The study included 11 males and 20 females, ages 29 to 70. Participants were interviewed face-to-face, by phone, and with a written response. All interviews were recorded, and the researchers were able to use keywords to develop themes. The results found that both personality types could successfully hold leadership positions.



According to Finkle (2019), there is no doubt that introverts can be successful in the professional world. They are able to utilize strengths such as concentration, listening, observing, and generating creative decisions to problems (Finkle, 2019). Introverts have talents that align with their roles as secondary administrators. Not all of the job requirements place a leader in the spotlight of center stage. Roles that incorporate talent management, academic goal attainment, and community support can all be done with the careful planning and attention of introverted leaders. Most importantly, hiring committees need to understand that fulfilling all the job requirements calls for more than one leadership personality. Ongoing research is necessary to ensure that the strengths of introverted leaders are perceived, understood, and utilized.

Not only do introverts have leadership skills and abilities not always recognized by society, but extraverts may perform poorly in areas where they would be expected to excel. For example, Bendersky and Shah (2012) discovered at least one surprising area where extraverts underperformed as leaders: group projects. Extraverts are considered dominant and offer positive performance expectations at the beginning of group projects. Extraverts at the onset of group activities are talkative, assertive, and often desire interpersonal dominance. However, it has been discovered that extraverts are often poor listeners and resistant to others' input. These traits cause extraverts to fall short of initial group expectations, which can result in them losing status within the group. Groups with high populations of extraverted leadership are often less effective due to heightened competition and the potential for conflict (Bendersky & Shah, 2012).

Cain (TED, 2012) stated that maximizing talents is achieved by finding the stimulation zone that matches the personality. A strengths-based approach, as advocated by Clifton and Harter (2003), maintains a focus on employee talents. Clifton and Harter (2003) argued that investments in individuals should scaffold knowledge on top of their skills. The key is to identify

the talents (Clifton & Harter, 2003). When more people are aware of their strong points, it is both a personal and professional win. This focus on strengths parallels the consideration that introversion is a positive trait with the potential to contribute significant value to the organization.

Turaga (2017) noted that different solutions warrant the use of varied styles of leadership. A crisis may demand a task-oriented leader, while the scenario of high stress lends itself to the governing of a more people-oriented leader (Turaga, 2017). Gonzalez (2016) found quiet leaders to be the invisible force behind the educational learning process. Their efforts are seldom acknowledged and rarely recognized, yet without them, our educational institutions would no longer function. According to Gonzalez (2016), leadership is viewed not just front and center in the spotlight but from the necessary position behind the scenes. Introversion can have a competitive advantage, such as better listening skills and greater focus (Wilmot et al., 2019).

Grant et al. (2011) studied situations when extraverted leadership contributed to higher group performance. When groups are not proactive, extraverted leadership sparked productivity; however, when employees were proactive, extraverted leadership was associated with lower performance. Whether to choose introverted or extraverted leadership is situational and depends on the needs of the specific organization or school. Both personalities have their strengths and weaknesses and can prove to be advantageous in obtaining goals within the school. According to Daresh et al. (2000), the leadership complexities of the principalship require leaders to utilize more than one leadership style. Russell (2008) noted that there are a variety of traits associated with effective school leadership. Of all the vast possibilities, five principal traits have consistently appeared in the literature: collaboration, communication, high expectations, community building, and ethics. These traits are not unique to either extraverted or introverted

personalities. Clearly, there is a need for both personality types to be taken into consideration when determining educational leadership to meet goals that improve the school's culture and overall success.

### **Introverted Leadership Through the Lens of Positive Psychology**

When the definition of leadership is expanded to include the influence of personalities and perhaps even broadened to incorporate a better definition of how to lead, it is possible to see the strength in introverted leadership rather than perceiving it as a weakness. Kahnweiler (2018) noted that the successful leadership model needs to be expanded from a prototype that celebrates extraversion to one that includes the talents of introverts. Kahnweiler (2018) observed that quiet people have loud minds. Seeing introversion as a strength rather than a weakness is the first step in opening the door to viewing this personality trait as an opportunity rather than an obstacle (Kahnweiler, 2018).

Positive psychology emerged as a movement to counterbalance the once believed negative angle of using science to cure an illness (Walters & James, 2020). It sheds light on affirmative experiences and well-being. Positive psychology is based on the work of Martin Seligman (Skidmore, 2020). Seligman's vision was to use psychology to focus on inherent strengths instead of weaknesses. Unlike traditional psychology, positive psychology investigates what is right in the client's world rather than making assumptions based on what is wrong (Walters & James, 2020). Positive psychology differentiates between various types of well-being. Deci and Ryan (2006) made a distinction between *hedonia* and *eudaimonia*. Hedonia describes positive moods and pleasure, while eudaimonia relates to ideas regarding the engagement in prosocial activities and focused talent achievements in the workplace. Allen and McCarthy (2016) attempted to answer the question, Are happy people successful? Lyubomirsky

et al. (2005) found, in a comprehensive meta-analysis, that happiness is not only associated with success, it is also a predecessor for success. People with a high sense of positive well-being are more likely to excel in interviews, be evaluated positively by their supervisors and coworkers, and handle job responsibilities more effectively. Estrada et al. (1997) illustrated the power of positivity by conducting an experiment with physicians to measure the positive effect on clinical reasoning as applied to patient protocol.

In Estrada et al.'s (1997) study, physicians were assigned to one of three groups: a control group, an affect-induction group (that was rewarded with candy), and a group that read medicine-related statements. The study's goal was to measure the speed at which each group provided a correct diagnosis and resisted the inclination to anchor their ideas in inflexible thinking. The findings revealed that the physicians in the happy group diagnosed twice as fast as the control group and showed a propensity for creativity and flexibility in the entertainment of new ideas. Amazingly, only a small offering of candy, not high praise or cash incentives, was needed to prime the physicians for positivity.

Positive psychology is not solely based on happiness. Happiness is a fleeting emotion that relates more closely with mood. Positivity is an understanding and a method to increase well-being. Carol Dweck (Skidmore, 2020), one of the leading researchers of emotional development, discovered that individuals who believe their talents can be nurtured through diligent work, good strategies, and consistent feedback are employees with a growth mindset. The polar extreme describes those with a fixed mindset. Fixed mindset people believe that their talents are inborn. Growth mindset people worry less frequently about the appearance of intelligence and instead focus their drive on the act of learning (Skidmore, 2020).

In terms of leadership behavior, positive actions can increase efficiency, motivation, creativity, and productivity (Achor, 2011). Praise that is specific and deliberate is more motivational than monetary rewards because praise meets basic psychological needs (Deci, 1996; Maslow, 1943). Positive psychology does not view introversion as a disorder to be cured but as a strength to be developed. Studying introverted leadership from a strength-based perspective can be indispensable in terms of identifying distinctive features that make introverted leaders successful in various fields of practice, including educational leadership.

### **Chapter Summary**

The aforementioned studies presented an abundance of diverse perspectives related to the perception of introversion, the emergence of trends and styles in educational leadership, and advantages and dilemmas surrounding the introverted personality trait and introverted leadership. Early trait literature showed a preference for the positive aspects of extraversion and glossed over the strengths and qualities of introverts. Debates surrounding extraversion versus introversion continue to stir both controversy and excitement for inquiry. Furthermore, even though more studies are entertaining the idea of introverted leadership in organizations, there is little or no research about how this personality fits in the framework of educational leadership.

Due to the lack of studies focusing specifically on introversion and educational leadership, it is important to ensure that attention to this type of leadership remains at the forefront of professional considerations. Introverts do not need to masquerade as extraverts. Educational leadership calls for leadership diversity to meet the needs and challenges of the current school system. Introverted characteristics provide a strong foundation for building relationships and working on instructional goals that help teachers and students achieve

academic and educational excellence. Schools have many variables and staffing considerations; one brand of leadership is not the one-size-fits-all solution for leadership.

The face of educational leadership needs to expand to include introverted leaders. Continued research into the lived experiences of introverted educational leaders, particularly through qualitative inquiry, can yield invaluable insight into their identity, leadership styles, and the advantages of introversion to engender positive outcomes for the students, the staff, and the community. The stage seems to be set for this study to fill in the gap in the existing literature on introversion and school leadership, thereby aiming to shed new light on the introverted leaders serving secondary education.

As stated previously, little research has been specifically conducted to study the contributions of introverted leaders in secondary education. Without such research, it is possible that the perceived stigma surrounding introversion may be restricting the candidates with this personality type from being considered for leadership. This qualitative study intended to make a case for introverted leadership considered through the lens of a strengths-based approach.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

This study was guided by research questions that examined the self-concept, distinctive features, and expressed strengths of introverted leaders. By design, this qualitative case study explored ways in which high school leaders identified themselves as introverts while investigating the strengths and talents that they utilized within the parameters of their professional roles. This chapter focuses on the theoretic lens, research design, data collection and analysis strategies, validation criteria, and the study's ethical considerations.

#### Theoretical Lens: Strength-Based Approach

Seeing the introverted leader through a positive lens incorporated and illustrated the observation made in 1999 by Martin Seligman, who was at that time serving as the president of the American Psychological Association. He noted that psychology was *half-baked* since only the portion devoted to mental illness was fully developed while the other side, the side dedicated to showcasing strengths, was considered to be *unbaked*. The core of the strengths-based philosophy, which is rooted in positive psychology, is the belief that all individuals have strengths and resources. The focus is on the skills of the individual and their system of support. The strengths-based approach identifies what is going well, adds to it, and builds upon it. One way to foster leadership development within an organization is to support the identification of individual strengths and the application of how they connect with the workplace. Strengths are defined as natural talents that work in combination with knowledge and skills (Welch et al., 2014). Awareness of the strengths-based approach has popularized the use of strengths assessments. Clifton's StrengthsFinder has been used by more than 7.8 million people (Rath, 2007). Rath (2007) noted that from the "cradle to the cubicle," more time is devoted to shortcomings than strengths. In 1998, Rath worked with a team of Gallup scientists led by

Donald. O Clifton, the father of strengths psychology. The team's mission was to develop a global conversation that focused on what was right with people instead of what was wrong. Noting that society focused on shortcomings instead of strengths, the researchers discovered that people have more potential for growth when they concentrate on developing strengths rather than correcting areas of weakness. The research team used Gallup's 40-year study of human strengths as the foundation for developing a collection of the 34 most common talents incorporated in the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment. Participants in the assessment identify their top five themes of talent.

Ongoing studies have indicated that those who focus on their strengths are six times as likely to be engaged in their jobs and three times more likely to enjoy an exceptional quality of life in general (Rath, 2007). Rath (2007) noted that books, movies, and folklore are filled with stories that celebrate the underdog who is able to emerge victorious despite one-in-a-million odds. This unlikely hero, the triumphant underdog, is now seen as the epitome of the American Dream. Unfortunately, this popularized ideal leads to disappointment because simply trying hard does not always guarantee the ability to achieve absolutely everything. Rath (2007) noted that 77% of parents in the United States fixate on a student's lowest grades, giving them additional time and attention, but reward high marks with apathy. This leaves strengths underdeveloped and underutilized and potentially denies a child's opportunity for greatness. Gallup research upholds that each person has the greatest potential for success in a few specific areas, and the key is to identify and build on those areas (Rath, 2007). Michael Gembola (2014) noted that we live in a value system that celebrates the extraverted personality of spotlight-seeking, alpha, gregarious risk-takers. He cautioned that by commending one personality, we are persecuting another. Cain (2013) found this truth in all levels of society. Political figures Barack Obama and Mitt Romney



were criticized for introverted strengths, while George Bush and Bill Clinton were elevated based on their crowd-pleasing, extraverted charisma. Cain (2013) noted that the problem is not that society places a higher value on the extraverted ideal; the problem is introversion is viewed as a stigma or pathology.

Utilizing a strength-based approach to the study of introverted leadership within the K–12 settings added value to existing research and scholarship on the subject of introverted leadership and uncovered unique features of it through lived experiences of school leaders who are self-identified introverts. It was a strength-based approach that assisted in shaping this study's research purposes and questions.

### **Research Design: Case Study**

This research employed a qualitative case study as the most appropriate design for the study of introverted leadership. The varying perspectives of those who discuss the use of case studies in literature can lead to slightly different definitions or emphases. Punch (2014) brought different views of case study together under an umbrella definition centered around the achieved understanding.

The basic idea is that one case (or perhaps a small number of cases) will be studied in detail, using whatever methods seem appropriate. While there may be a variety of specific purposes and research questions, the general objective is to develop as full an understanding of that case as possible. (Punch, 2014, p. 144)

This study looked at a select number of introverted leaders in great detail so that a complete understanding of the lived introverted experience of a secondary school leader was presented. Qualitative research studies individuals in their natural settings and attempts to make sense of or interpret phenomena in relation to the meanings that people equate with them

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). I studied self-identified introverted leaders in their natural school settings as they engaged in daily routines with their colleagues and students. Qualitative research gets below the surface and focuses on the what, how, and why questions rather than the statistical mathematical data of quantitative studies (Fitzpatrick & Boulton, 1994). This study went beyond data that can be measured in numbers or predicted with formulas; it was about people, not percentages, and could be used to categorize traits and characteristics. Yin (2013) noted that case studies do not just answer the what, they also discover the why and how. Yin distinguished between explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive case studies. Explanatory case studies are used to investigate causal links beyond the scope of surveys or experimental stages. Exploratory case studies are used when the case being evaluated has no clear set of outcomes. A descriptive case study attempts to describe the phenomena within the context where it occurred (Yin, 2013). This case study followed both Yin's exploratory and descriptive categories. The introverted leadership study was not designed to have a predictive outcome; therefore, it was exploratory. This study was descriptive in nature as it tried to portray and understand the phenomena of introverted leadership.

Stake (1995) noted that a case study is designed to capture the complexity of a single case through the examination and comprehension of its activity within a particular circumstance. Stake (1995) identified three main types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental, and multiple or collective. Intrinsic is selected when the researcher wants to understand better a particular case. Instrumental is utilized when the examination of a particular case provides clarity on the restructuring of a generalization. Multiple or collective case studies are used to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition. This introverted leadership study closely echoed

the description of the intrinsic case study in its quest to understand the case of introverted leadership better.

### ***Site and Participants***

The site for this study was a public high school in a Texas suburb where I currently serve as the head theatre teacher. Artists often paint what they see, and authors write from their personal experiences. As a researcher, I planned to study from my professional setting and use the observation and insight from the participants to understand better the potential for introverted leadership. The high school student population where I work is diverse, with a fairly proportional representation of White, Hispanic, Asian, and African American students. The study site was selected based on the convenience of the geographic location to the researcher and the access to potential participants. Considering the uncertainties of an on-going pandemic, the site for this study also included the flexibility of a virtual setting.

The main participant was the school's principal: a female, African American, and self-identified introvert. I know the principal personally, which provided me with direct access to the participant. Additionally, I recruited two more participants who hold leadership positions in the same school and identified themselves as introverts. Explicit intentionality and convenience of choosing the site and participants for this study validated purposeful and convenience sampling strategies in qualitative research (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). In the interest of confidentiality, the names of the participants have been changed.

### ***Sources of Data and Methods of Data Collection***

Qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of data sources such as interviews, observations, documents, artifacts, and visual materials that reflect rich experiences of the individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). I received verbal permission to reprint

images from each participant's office. This study relied heavily on observations and interviews. I shadowed the participants as they followed through with their encounters, issues, and mandates of day-to-day activities. I recorded these experiences with detailed field notes. I followed with interviews to better understand introverted leadership from the participants' lived experience.

The utilization of multiple sources ensured data triangulation. Triangulation is the collection of data from at least three different sources to give greater breadth to the data or to verify its accuracy (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The application of triangulation, or multiple sources of data, enhanced validation of the study findings. Denzin (1970) referred to triangulation in terms of data sources, people, time, and space. Denzin further explained that methodological triangulation is accomplished by using multiple collection methods such as interviews, focus groups, and observations in a qualitative case study to look at the data from different angles. Fusch et al. (2018) noted that triangulation adds depth to the data and is instrumental in providing a guide for participants to use to frame their world.

**Interviews.** Semistructured interviews played a key role in this study's data collection. The interview's purpose was not to evoke simple yes or no responses but to obtain a description of an episode, linkage, or explanation (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The researcher typically comes ready with a predetermined list of questions, suggested topics for discussion, or allows the interview to evolve based on the questions and responses of the interview participant (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Interviews are more than simply asking questions, and it is an art to formulate questions that render detailed responses (Stake, 1995). An interview guide (see Appendix A) was developed to conduct semistructured interviews for this study. In crafting the questions, I wanted to make sure to approach the topic from the side without leading the participant in a certain direction and create follow-up, probative questions (Kennedy, 2006). The interviews were audio-

and video-recorded with the participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and sent to participants to verify accuracy. A consent form (see Appendix B) was developed according to the protocol of conducting research with human subjects. All interviews were conducted with Zoom video communications. This made recording the sessions convenient for referral and transcription.

Saldaña and Omasta (2018) stated that the interviewer's most important job is to listen attentively, analyze the data, and take notes that can potentially change the course direction of the interview. Interviewing was my opportunity to learn without talking, ask without interjecting, and discover through the process instead of relying on my impressions to help me find the answers. The interview procedure led me in directions that I never imagined and uncovered more truths than I expected.

**Observations.** Saldaña and Omasta (2018) noted that one way to analyze life is to observe it, taking in and pondering the rich details. Participant observation requires watching and listening as people act, react, and interact in everyday situations and specialized events. These observations are documented as they participate in daily routines and rituals. I made observations of the participants on campus, pending that it was open for operations. I scheduled observations multiple times during the week on my scheduled off periods. Throughout this study, I kept detailed notes and records of face-to-face encounters and observations collected from shadowing the introverted administrators. Yin (2013) advocated utilizing field notes to manage and organize the evidence and advised being mindful of schedules when determining accessibility. If the pandemic circumstances had prevented me from making participant observations, this source of data would not be considered for the study.

**Documents and Artifacts.** I gathered several forms of organizational documents and artifacts that the participants provided without compromising institutional confidentiality.

Documents and artifacts provided tangible evidence that validated the study. Documents and artifacts could include “newspapers and school improvement plans as a measure for the case” (Yin, 2013, p. 68). Documents and artifacts have the capacity to “corroborate evidence from other sources” (Yin, 2013, p. 107). For this study, I used samples of memos and correspondence and accessed Google calendars to measure the frequency and duration of meetings.

### ***Data Analysis***

Qualitative data analysis covers a vast array of approaches and methods. Coding is the term often associated with qualitative data analysis (Saldaña, 2013; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). I employed several cycles of coding to find themes within the interviews and other data. Coding is a cyclical process of organizing and sorting data (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Coding is the foundation for developing the analysis. Codes allowed me to summarize, synthesize, link, and interpret data. Saldaña and Omasta (2018) described four different coding methods: in vivo, process, emotions, and values. In vivo coding is Latin for “in that which is alive.” Codes extracted using this method originate organically and have a natural quality. An interview using in vivo coding would only consider the participant’s responses not the questions generated by the interviewer. Process coding uses gerunds or “ing” words as codes. This method identifies forms of participant actions and reactions. Emotions coding is defined as “a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological state, and range of propensities to act” (Goleman, 1995, p. 289). Emotions coding involves highlighting the specific emotions revealed within the interview and what seems to be triggering them. Value coding notes the value, attitude, or belief that a participant assigns to a particular subject. Value coding is appropriate for almost all qualitative studies, but specifically those that explore cultural values, identity, and actions in a case study. Value coding can be applied to interviews, field notes, and artifacts such as diaries or journals.

The first step in coding the data is to transcribe the interviews. During this data transfer process, the researcher needs to maintain integrity, possess the ability to resist bias, and exercise a willingness to refrain from prejudgments (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Saldaña and Omasta (2018) noted that coding is not a precise science. It is an interpretation unique to the individual researcher. After the interviews were transcribed, I read each interview multiple times. In the margins, I assigned prospective themes. As I looked at the next participant's transcript, I could see the emergence of similar patterns. These patterns were consistent across all three interviews. After coding the initial interview, I sent the transcript to my chair. She coded the interview and, in the weeks that followed, we discussed and compared notes. Not surprisingly, we agreed on the coding outcomes.

Probst (2015) cautioned researchers about the importance of confidentiality. Research participants may be concerned that sharing their thoughts and ideas could damage their professional reputations. This is one reason that I offered a signed confidentiality agreement with the participants and agreed to change their names to protect their identities. All of my references to the school were generic descriptors of size, without mentioning the name or location.

### **Validation Criteria and Ethical Considerations**

Anything that is unreliable, questionable, or invalid is perceived as having low or no value and considered worthless. Research that is worthless is said to lack rigor (Amankwaa, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that the value of research study is made stronger by its measure of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness involves the establishment of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is the truth of the findings. Dependability is the capacity for the findings to be repeated within the same context, whereas transferability demonstrates that the results can be successfully applied to other contexts.

Confirmability shows that the study's findings are shaped by the responders and not influenced by the researcher's bias, motivation, or interest. I remained completely honest and transparent in my collection and analysis of data. My goal for this study was to adhere specifically to the criteria of credibility and confirmability.

Reflexivity is a safeguard against potential researcher biases. Reflexivity is the awareness of the researcher's influence on the topic and the participants who are being studied. Researchers should engage in active self-reflection and analysis of their own preconceived ideas, assumptions, or biased thoughts precisely because researchers can exert unintentional influence on people or the topic being studied (Probst, 2015). To become aware of my biases, I kept a journal of self-reflections by exploring my assumptions, emotional reactions, and cultural positions throughout the research process.

Data triangulation also helps in mitigating any researcher bias. Hearing and comprehending the perspectives of other people poses a dilemma for the researcher. Fusch et al. (2018) noted that the more versed the researcher is in recognizing his or her personal view of the world and acknowledging the presence of lenses, the better he or she will be at listening to and interpreting the behavior and reflection of others. Conducting research on introverted school leadership required that I put aside stereotypical views of extraverted leadership and observe without that bias clouding my perspective.

Member checks are a means of enhancing the validity of the research findings and can establish trustworthiness and credibility (Thomas, 2017). The most common definition of member checks refers to the process of sending participants transcripts of their own interview, copies of emerging findings, and a draft copy of the research report so that they can verify the statements being made. I used member checks throughout the process of my study, knowing that



the participants would ultimately verify the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) elaborated on the effectiveness and necessity of member checks in the following quote: “The investigator who has received the agreement of the respondent groups on the credibility of his or her work has established a strong beachhead toward convincing readers and critics of the authenticity of the work” (p. 315).

This credibility of the researcher’s work is seen in what Lincoln and Guba (1985) described as thick and rich descriptions, a means of achieving a type of external validity. The process of describing the phenomenon in great detail allows for the evaluation of the conclusions and determines whether they are transferable to other times, situations, or individuals. Rich and thick are two adjectives to describe data. Rich data refers to the quality of the data and thick describes the quantity. My goal in this study was to have both rich data with many layers of detailed documented experiences and discoveries and thick with the vast amount of usable information.

Prior to data collection, I applied for permission to conduct the study through the Abilene Christian University (ACU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix C). In preparation for the institutional review process, I completed the Protecting Human Research Participants training course through Abilene Christian University’s website. Institutional review boards serve to ensure appropriately and ethically conducted research and to protect the rights of human subjects. In relation to research, “ethics is the justification of a researcher’s actions as well as how those actions affect participants, participants’ families, the researcher, the research community, public research consumers, and hopefully, beneficiaries” (Lahman, 2018, p. 3). Informed consent (see Appendix B) details this study’s research goals, ethical principles, and participants’ rights. While it is absolutely necessary to comply with mandatory codes of ethics, to

me, it is equally important to develop a personal ethical research stance that stems out of my “personal aspirational beliefs” (Lahman, 2018, p. 27). In this regard, I made an effort to allow room for my growth as a researcher. To Lahman (2018), such growth is inextricably related to reflexivity, which means to examine deeply one’s own beliefs about what is good and bad, one’s cultural and familial backgrounds, personal identity, religious and political beliefs, and multitudes of assumptions that can be unintentionally carried on to the research process.

I am a self-proclaimed extravert, and my personal opinions and feelings are always foremost in my mind. Therefore, I was mindful of ensuring the authenticity and trustworthiness of my research. I have a deep passion for what I do and what I plan to investigate. The passion for research is fueled by the hope of advancement and the improvement of social interactions (Baumann et al., 2019). Finally, one of my deepest personal aspirations was to embark on this dissertation journey. It has led me through uncharted territory, twists and turns in data collection, and analysis of perspectives that afforded me a novel view of introverted leadership. Throughout this process, I looked at education through a new lens and contrasted it with my own unique experiences in the educational profession.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis**

Conducting in-depth interviews, logging in hours of observations, and analyzing written correspondence and behaviors in a professional setting yielded fascinating results. Surprisingly, considering the introverted personality type of the participants, they each opened up to share their emotions, feelings, and experiences and were transparent in revealing details from their past. Following these lines of inquiry, I used interview questions to explore the participants' backstories, chronicled their personal and professional reflections, and shed light on their unique perspective of the introverted leadership experience on a secondary campus. This study has begun the assembly of building blocks to develop a case for introverted leadership in a secondary school. This chapter introduces the three participants, each of whom is an introverted administrator on a secondary campus, and presents the study's findings through a thematic analysis of the data comprised of interviews, documents, artifacts, and visual materials.

### **Introducing the Participants**

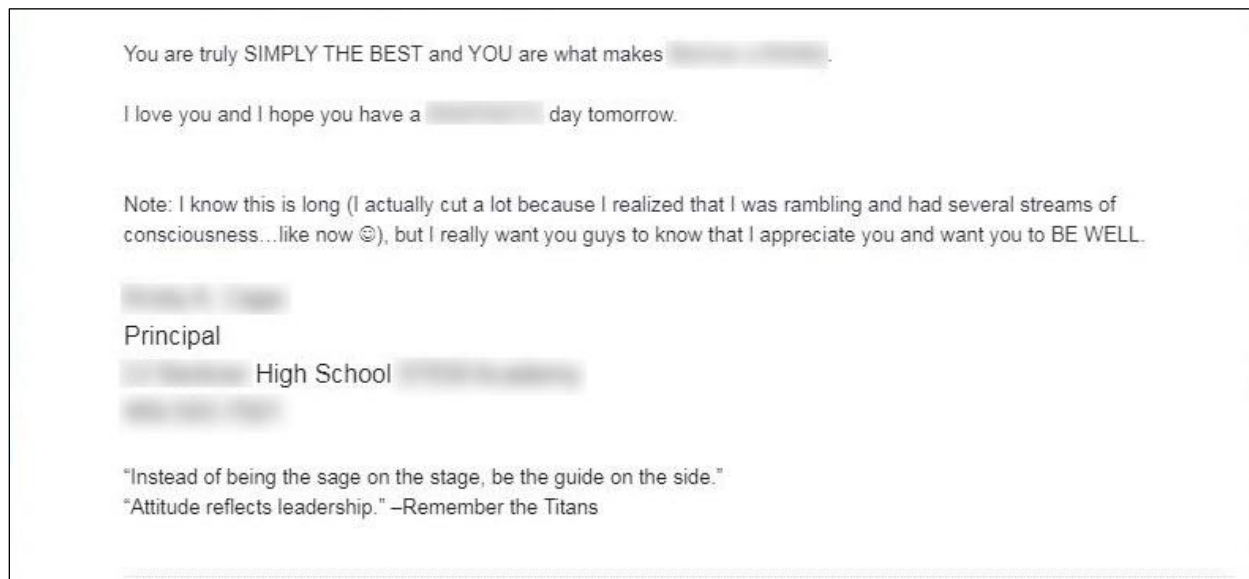
The three leaders who participated in this study, whose names have been changed, responded to interview questions with transparency regarding their childhood experiences, their thoughts and opinions on introversion, and how their personality type has hindered or promoted their personal and professional advancements. To gain a deeper insight into the lived experiences of these introverted leaders, I also observed how they interacted with students, teachers, and fellow administrators. These observations were made using different vantage points, such as the configuration of their offices and their behaviors in both cafeteria duty and staff meetings. Through the interviews and observations, I gained a deeper understanding of three individuals that I had previously only known on a surface level. Although common themes emerged, each

participant offered unique views and perspectives of the introverted leadership experience; each of them has a unique personality.

Kassidy is the head principal and the first female in her minority group to hold this position in our school district. Kassidy leads with heart and passion. She builds relationships and team spirit and is always willing to listen. She sends emails that are informational and inspirational. The all-school correspondence can be verbose and is always connected with a relationship component. Her tag line is almost always cinched with two inspirational quotes from *Remember the Titans* (Yakin, 2000): “Instead of being the sage on the stage, be the guide on the side” and “Attitude reflects leadership” (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

### Figure 1

*Sample Signature From Kassidy, Concluding a Two-Page Email*



## Figure 2

### Sample Email From Kassidy, September

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** Friday, September 25, 2020 at 4:21 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** DEVOLSON and Self-Care

[REDACTED]!

We have made it through the first full week of Face-to Face Instruction! Much to my surprise and delight, this week has gone relatively smoothly (key word...RELATIVELY). Yes, schedules are still changing; but, the students are actually going to class. Yes, COVID-19 is still here; but, the students are following the mitigating measures of wearing their masks, using their desk shields, and complying with the "street" signage. Yes, progress reports/grades are due to be updated today and we have crossover grades galore due to the schedules changing; but, the kids are (for the most part) showing up to class/zooms and haven't caused (m)any discipline problems.

A month ago, I sent out a DEVOLSON email (I have it copied below if anyone missed it). While it felt like we were in the midst of DEVOLSON, it has really just begun (Dark, Evil Vortex of Late September, October, and November... DEVOLSON). I've noticed this week that I've started getting in bed at 8:30 and asleep by 9:15. I am TIRED y'all...and I can't imagine how tired you all are...physically, mentally, and emotionally. I cannot begin to express how much I want you all to take care of yourselves. **You all do so much for others; I do not want you to neglect yourselves.** I have attached a handy document that I taped into the back of my planner last year and complete forgot about until recently. It provides some self-care strategies for the top 10 signs of being overwhelmed. If any of these signs apply to you (and if they don't, then please come tell me how you are managing that cause I need some tips...lol), please read over and utilize these self-care strategies (see attached). Additionally, here is a video you can watch regarding the district's Employee Assistance Program ([Taking Care of Yourself - EAP Information](#)).

Considering EVERYTHING that's going on in the world, in the country, in the state, and in our lives, EYE (spelled out for emphasis) think we are doing pretty good. We received good feedback from our parents regarding Meet the Teacher Night. We've received praise from upper admin on how well things are going. We received THANK YOUs for all of the mitigating measures we have put in place in the building. We have a football game AND a volleyball game tonight. We have smiles and laughs with our students and colleagues. We have students in the building. We have students in the building. We have students in the building. We have a principal who sincerely loves her school and genuinely cares about the well-being of those inside it.

PLEASE (pausing for dramatic effect) take care of yourselves and do at least one thing for YOU this weekend. Something that makes you smile. Something that makes you laugh. Something that takes your mind away (if only for one minute) of all the craziness.

If I haven't told you/shown you lately, please know that I appreciate you. BE WELL.

[REDACTED]

Kassidy does not crave accolades or the spotlight but has built lasting relationships with her students and staff as she inspires others to fulfill their professional and personal potential.

Miles is one of the assistant principals on campus. He is calm and intelligent. He is not easily angered but is extremely witty and sarcastic when someone takes the time to get to know him. He does not lead with a booming voice but makes thoughtful, big-picture decisions that follow a logical, clear-thinking order. Miles is hardworking, detail-oriented, and leads by example. He is well respected and dependable.

Miles is prone to emails with lists of daily tasks to be accomplished. These daily to-do lists are kept short, formal, and professional. He “signs” each email with his full name and doctoral title in a green script font (see Figure 3). His inspirational quote at the end is, “Every child deserves a CHAMPION! An adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be” (Pierson, 2013).

### Figure 3

#### Sample Email From Miles

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Friday, October 2, 2020 at 8:06 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Action Items for 10.2.2020

Good morning [REDACTED] ! Happy Friday!

Click [HERE](#) for this week's buzz! (9/28-10/2)

Some upcoming action items:

- Complete the daily screener in [REDACTED]
- Report to your [assigned duty station](#) no later than 8:30 AM. If you have a F2F 8<sup>th</sup> period class, that is your duty station.
- Continue working on your [Weekly Activity Log](#) – there is a tab at the bottom for the week of 9/28-10/2  
 \*\*REMEMBER – this is only required for virtual sections AND you only have to document the activity for students who are PRA\*\* **Please submit no later than Monday 10/5 at 4:30pm (if you take attendance for any virtual class period/section, this pertains to you!)**
  - **PAST DUE!** Employee handbook [receipts](#) from all employees due to your evaluator by September 30 - Upload [HERE](#)
  - Employee Assistance Program- Please take a few minutes and watch this video on [Taking Care of Yourself - EAP Information](#)
  - RSVP Today! [REDACTED] Paint & Sip Party – [RSVP HERE](#)
  - Complete the [Professional Learning Form](#) for our upcoming PD Day on 10/9

Please let me or your evaluator know if you have any questions! Thank you so much for all that you do!

*Dr. [REDACTED] PhD*

Assistant Principal  
 [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED]

*"Every child deserves a CHAMPION! An adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be." – Rita Pierson*

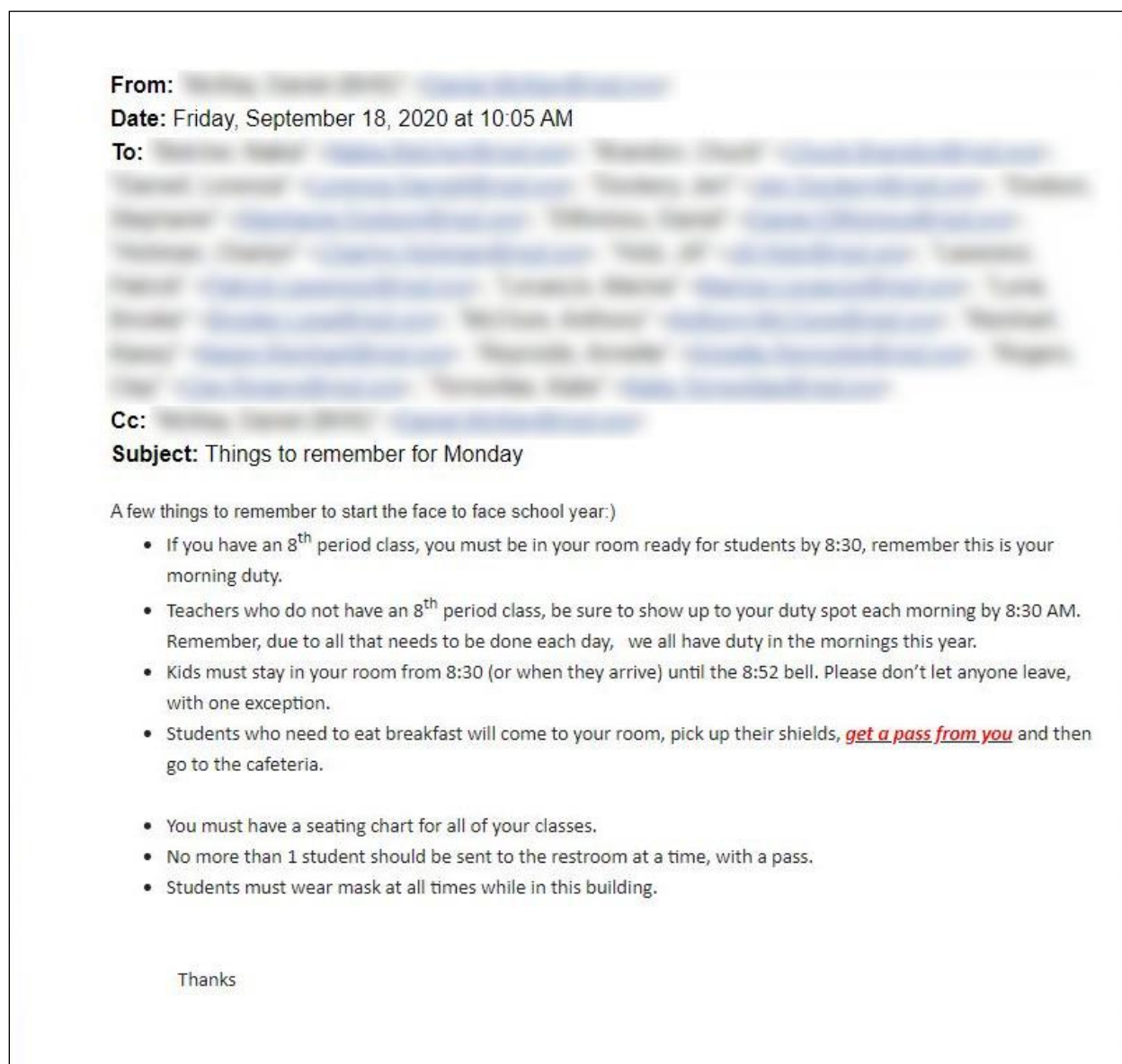
Dennis is the kind of leader popularized by Teddy Roosevelt, the kind who talks softly but carries a big stick. He is often seen riding a golf cart through the halls to chase down students skipping class and uses his “wheels” to monitor the security of the building and parking lots. His catchphrase when encountering students in the hall is, “where are you headed?” I have witnessed stunned, culpable students search for hall passes only to discover that Dennis is actually more interested in using the opportunity afforded by the encounter to ask questions about their plans and career goals. In his spare time, Dennis writes children’s books and donates the proceeds to buy new prom clothes for special-needs students. Dennis’s leadership is all about his heart and love for people.

Dennis rarely sends out emails. He does not flood everyone’s inbox with institutional fluff. When he does send one out, they are no-frills and get right to the point. Dennis is very organized and deliberate with all of his communication. He normally generates a to-do list and emphasizes the importance of getting the jobs done. Due to the rarity and brevity of his messages, employees are more prone to read and adhere to them (see Figure 4).



## Figure 4

### *Sample Email From Dennis*



### *The Meat of the Meetings*

The three introverted administrators show obvious similarities during monthly staff meetings. As a result of COVID-19, faculty meetings are held via Zoom. Cassidy leads the meeting and is supported by the assistant principals. She follows an outline and stays focused on

the topic and on the clock. She does not speak for the joy of hearing herself talk but gives information with interjections of humor and heart. She is famous for looking deep into the camera and using a dramatic pause to emphasize key details. She has also been known to turn off the recording feature so she could share her uncensored feelings on any given topic. Miles is always available to share information and insight, but he does not volunteer to take the stage. He is content to observe from the back and provide information only when it is requested. Dennis is often not present for faculty meetings. He is usually handling campus security. When he is in attendance, he provides feedback when requested but seems content to observe quietly.

### ***Hairnet On, Eyes Wide Open***

Due to COVID-19, teachers at my school are being asked to assist with jobs that go beyond instructional responsibilities. One of my extra assignments is cafeteria duty. This involves making sure the kids use their phones to scan the QR codes so their seats can be traced in the event of an outbreak. It also means spraying and wiping down all tables between lunches. Administrators rotate the responsibility of making announcements on the microphone. This duty assignment has afforded me the opportunity to observe how each principal interacts with students, handles maintenance chores, addresses large groups, and uses their downtime.

Kassidy uses lunch duty as an occasion to connect with small groups of students or teachers that need to ask her questions. She uses her turn at the microphone as a time to connect with students. She gives the students advice and relays all the necessary campus information. Then she dismisses the tables and reminds students which doors to exit. As they leave, she tells them to enjoy the rest of their day. As the students exit, she starts spraying and wiping tables, encouraging her side of the room to beat the other side in a cleanliness competition. Kassidy uses her competitive spirit to turn a horrible assignment into a game instead of a chore.

Miles tries to keep a low profile in the cafeteria. He has a computer table stationed at one of the doors with the least amount of foot traffic. He spends most of the lunch period answering questions from individual students and responding to emails. Cleaning the tables, he tends to like to spray them down rather than wipe. This allows for the least amount of contact. When he is required to use the microphone for his rotational duty, he gives the information without needless elaboration.

Dennis has stationed himself in the back hallway behind the cafeteria. He uses a rolling cart to hold his laptop, and he monitors the restrooms. He interacts with students on a one-on-one basis. Because of his remote position, he has managed to ensure that he is never asked to make announcements on the microphone. Sometimes he is so busy with monitoring the restroom and hallway that he is unable to assist with cleaning the tables. The way Dennis maneuvers this duty assignment might qualify him as a genius. However, his fellow administrators are quick to evaluate his isolation as resistance to the demeaning chore of cleaning tables. Their banter seems to indicate that they view his presence on the perimeter as a failure to be a team player.

All three participants approach the microphone aspect of cafeteria duty differently. Kassidy uses the opportunity to share information and connect with students. Miles minimizes his time on the microphone by relaying important information only. Dennis avoids the experience completely. Cafeteria duty has also given me the chance to compare the introverted subjects to other, more extraverted administrators. One extraverted associate principal is thrilled with the chance to be the voice of the school and the broadcaster in the cafeteria. She inserts humor and personality into all of the announcements, taking additional time to deliver the necessary information with a healthy dose of humor and style. She has been known to take extra turns on the microphone and clearly thrives on the chance to be in the spotlight.

### *Home Away From Home*

Much like Superman, introverts probably appreciate having a Fortress of Solitude where they can go to be alone and recharge. The expectation would be that an introverted leader's office design would fulfill the need for a retreat from chaos and crowds, a place that encourages mental productivity and privacy to rejuvenate. An introvert's ideal office space might therefore have softer, less harsh lighting, options for solitary relaxed seating, muted colors, and natural elements that encourage reflective thought. Additionally, some way to shut out or be separate from the rest of the office would be anticipated in an introvert's office.

Studying the three offices of my participants contributed to the understanding of their professional lifestyle. Although the three offices were distinctly different, there were some overlapping similarities. Kassidy, the head principal, has a much less cluttered space and seems more focused on having everything in its proper place (see Figure 5). The other two assistant principals have more cluttered work areas, but that could result from their offices being physically smaller. Kassidy has switched from institutional overhead lighting to a more calming collection of floor lamps (see Figure 6). Her conference table has a Zen garden display (see Figure 7). However, because she seems to like everything in its proper place, she discourages playing with the sand and getting grains on the table. Her desk faces the window to the main hallway, which also faces the library, but the blinds are often adjusted for privacy (see Figure 8). During a recent remodel, Kassidy advocated for the library to have a window wall so that her office had a view of quiet learning rather than a solid tiled wall.



**Figure 7**

*Zen Sandbox on Cassidy's Conference Table*



**Figure 8***Kassidy's Office Wall*

Miles has an office that reflects his personality (see Figure 9). He has a built-in desk that faces the door. There is a bookcase to the right of the desk filled with educational journals, books, and materials (see Figures 10–12). To the left of the door are two inspirational posters. These posters are clearly placed in Miles's direct view. He is in the process of covering the overhead lighting so that the mood will feel less institutional and sterile.

**Figure 9**

*Miles's Office*



**Figure 10**

*Miles's Bulletin Board*

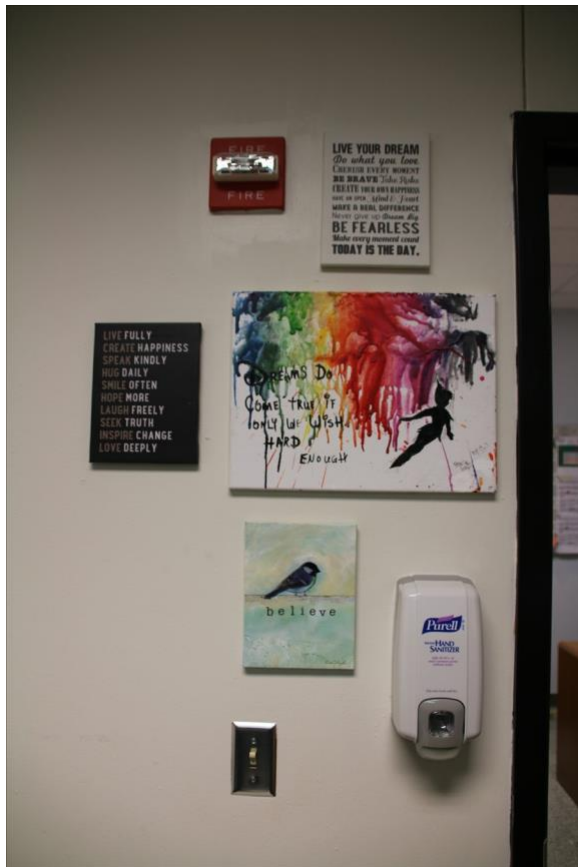




**Figure 11**

*Miles's Bookshelf*



**Figure 12***Miles's Office Wall*

Dennis has a much smaller office that is isolated in the building, away from high traffic areas (see Figure 13). This allows for the opportunity to distance from the madness that often comes with secondary schools. Even so, he has covered much of the window in his door to isolate himself further (see Figure 14). Finally, in response to COVID-19, a Plexiglas shield has been placed to protectively screen Dennis from his visitors. The office is restricted in size, and the furniture is set with the desk facing the hallway door. The office has projects neatly stacked so that they can be distributed efficiently (see Figure 15). However, unlike the other two, his space is pure business and lacks personal artifacts.

**Figure 13**

*Dennis's Office*



**Figure 14**

*Dennis's Door*



**Figure 15***Dennis's Office Wall and Projects*

These three offices differ from each other, but they all point to solitude and the creation of a calm workspace that offers an escape from the madness of secondary education. Another interesting observation is that all three participants do not feel the need to change the physical arrangement of the decorations or furniture. Cassidy and Miles find security in the assignment of a proper place for everything. Dennis is more free-spirited and functions happily with organized clutter.

In contrast, I am more extraverted, and I believe my office has a different vibe that can be experienced even from a photograph. I have a red accent wall, a small couch, a fridge, and

shelves that contain conversation pieces and artifacts from past productions (see Figures 16–18). I like to think of my office as party central. My overhead light is a chandelier, and the traditional concrete floor has been covered with black and white checkerboard tiles. My desk faces the couch and the fridge with my back to the door. Students and teachers love to visit and often collapse on the couch and treat themselves to a popsicle to combat the stress and pressure of the high school experience. Although my office is similar in size to a prison cell, it has been known to hold as many as 15 students. The office seems to serve as a magnet for kids to come and relax and share their dreams, struggles, and ambitions. I will change the office arrangement sometimes as frequently as once a semester. Unlike my introverted colleagues who find comfort and peace in having permanently arranged their offices in the “best” layout, my inclination for renovation keeps me mentally stimulated with the excitement of having a new place to work.

**Figure 16**

*Jill's Office*



**Figure 17**

*Jill's Shelves*





**Figure 18***Jill's Shelves and Desk*

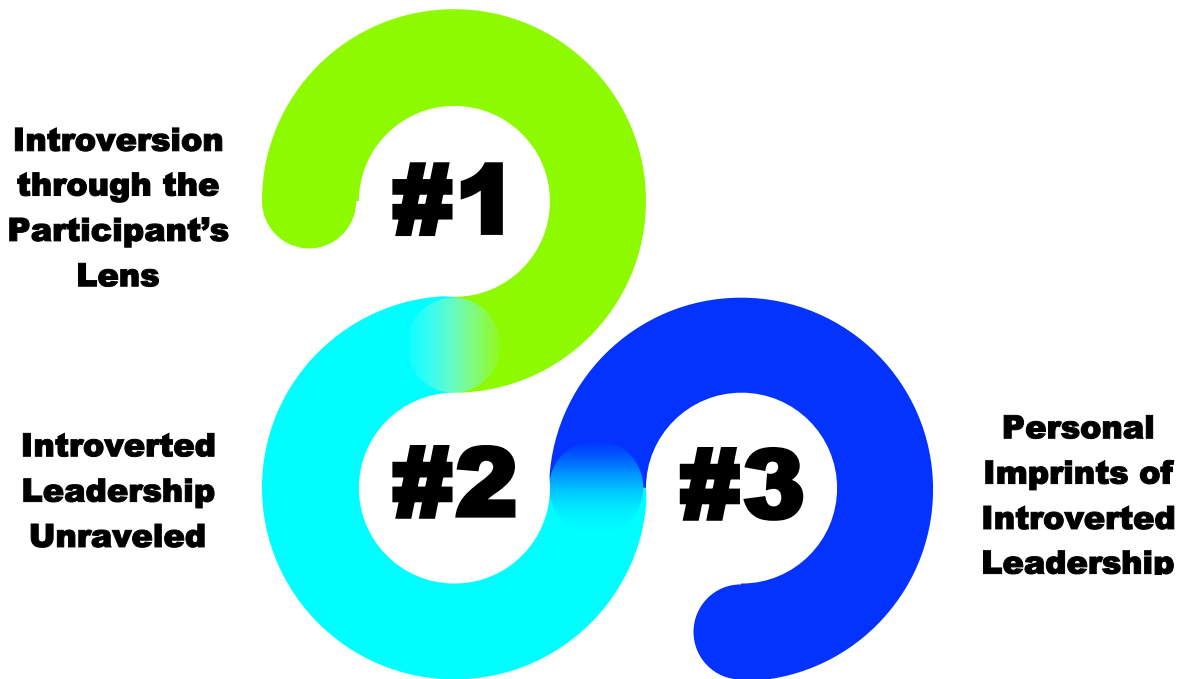
The introverted office spaces of the three participants have a common thread of offering a retreat from the chaotic climate of the secondary campus. Cassidy and Miles have gone to great lengths to establish safe havens that inspire quiet reflection and an environment to recharge their batteries. Dennis uses his office as more of a bomb shelter, with a small peephole on the door that affords him both privacy and isolation. In contrast, my office welcomes crowds and distractions and is seen as a social congregation chamber and a place to connect with colleagues and students.

### **Introverted Leadership: Analysis of the Findings**

Clarity into the introverted leadership personality was harvested from a thorough examination of the participants' techniques in school-wide digital communication, leadership behaviors in the cafeteria, and habits observed during staff meetings. Additionally, each participant left their hearts completely unguarded as they shared private details of their formative years and showed some societal battle scars gained from defending their own strengths. This unique insight was gained through the interview experience that led to the discovery of common themes.

Saldaña (2013) defined a code as a word or phrase assigned to capture meaning from interviews, field notes, journals, emails, or observations. Coding was utilized in the analysis of the interview transcripts. Each contributor participated in an hour-long, semistructured interview. Their responses were assigned a descriptive code from which emerged commonalities among all involved. These mutual codes became themes when the participants' responses were compared and contrasted to see how their answers aligned with the research questions and fit within the study's larger view.

Three major themes emerged from several iterations of coding the interview transcripts and additional data sources: introversion through the participant's lens, introverted leadership unraveled, and personal imprints of introverted leadership. With each successive interview, it became obvious that there existed both common denominators and stark differences between the introverted participants. The participants' responses made a clear case for expanding the leadership definition to include both introverted and extraverted talents.

**Figure 19***Three Themes*

*Note.* I created this image.

### **Introversion Through the Participant's Lens**

One of the goals of this study was to uncover how the participants understood themselves as introverts. Dennis revealed that, from childhood through young-adulthood, he and others considered him to be very shy or too shy. He equated introversion with shyness. He stated, “Initially what comes to my mind is a nonleader personality; a nonleadership personality. Because, in the past, introverted was, in my history, it really was more of a ‘too shy to do the job’ description of a person.”

However, this label appears to have motivated him to rise above and find success to prove wrong those who doubted that he could succeed. Dennis seems to have now expanded his definition of introverted leadership by stating, “I do believe that introverted leadership is just thoughtful leadership, instead of responsive leadership.”

Miles echoed the association with shyness and ponders the possibility that introverts are also reclusive when he stated, “I think kind of reclusive or someone who’s shy. That’s what I’ve always thought about as an introvert.”

Kassidy, unlike the other two participants, shows a comfortable acceptance of introversion and expresses it as a preference instead of an insult or a characteristic in need of justification.

When I hear introvert, I think of a person who prefers to not be in the midst of a lot of people; who prefers intimate gatherings or intimate, meaning fewer than, well, I’ll say 10 people, gatherings. They are reserved, I’ll call it inside thinkers. People who don’t like being in crowds of people, who are not necessarily social butterflies. People who prefer their own company to potentially the company of a whole lot of other people. If there’s a small, close-knit group of people that are always together, then that’s one thing, but not necessarily the person who’s always going to all the parties or always hanging out with a bunch of people or going to a bunch of different activities, but quiet evenings at home, small dinner party type deals.

Miles and Dennis reveal in their understanding of introversion a restriction of potential. The phrase “too shy” and the label of “reclusive” place a negative spin on the description of the personality. Dennis goes on to add the feature of introversion as “thoughtful, rather than responsive leadership.” This shows an advocacy for the personality and how it aligns with the pattern of thinking and contemplating before responding. Taking steps to reflect and consider is a positive characteristic of introverted leadership. Careful planning and prescriptive response can easily be aligned with introversion and successful school leadership. Kassidy is confident and sees the positives of the introverted definition and application. “Inside thinker” and the ability to

be comfortable in solo situations showcase a personality strength. Her understanding of introversion demonstrates the positive term of preference, showing that introverts have a choice in predicting their outcomes and levels of success. It is interesting to note that even those who identify themselves as introverts will still define introversion with a negative interpretation. It seems that Miles and Dennis have accepted this societal brand even though it comes with potentially unflattering connotations. This acceptance calls into question the possibility that the undesirable label could potentially become a self-fulfilling prophecy within the realm of introverted leadership.

### ***Early Years of Introversion***

Each of the three participants enumerated their personal journey with the introverted label. Dennis viewed it as a negative classification that had the potential to prevent him from being a leader. Miles discovered his introverted nature when he compared himself to his more extraverted siblings. Cassidy embraced introversion and was comfortable with the characteristics that give her the strength to do as she pleases without the worry and pressure of conformity.

Dennis reflected on how the term introvert was not applied to his personality until college; however, he was branded as shy from childhood. This brand was more of a stereotype and was used to foreshadow obstacles to a future career in leadership. Dennis asserted, "I don't think I understood or really heard the word introvert until I got into college. At that time, it was actually stated that I would be too shy to teach because I was so quiet."

Being considered quiet is tantamount to being invisible, according to the influential people in Dennis's life. Shyness was clearly viewed as a negative trait but, via unintended reverse psychology, inspired Dennis to do more than anyone ever expected from him.

I had one of my doctorate professors tell us ... that introverted people should never be in positions of authority. ... He just said, "In my opinion, introverted people don't really belong in positions of power. You're more of the 'do what other people tell you to do' kind of people."

Dennis was able to rise above and achieve success despite the detrimental predictions from his past. The end result was success; however, he had to overcome the stigma of being labeled and having his possibilities for future achievements restricted. Dennis had to defy the odds and find the courage and motivation within himself to be the leader that no one thought he could be.

Miles remembers a traumatic family life and considers the possibility that his home environment contributed to his introverted nature. When comparing himself to his older siblings, Miles saw a significant difference in his personality:

Definitely. Early childhood, for sure. I come from a very blended family. Both of my parents were married and had children before they married one another and had myself, and I have one younger sister whom I share the same mom and dad with. All of my older siblings, seeing them growing up, the oldest 18 years my senior, very different personalities, many of them. Whether or not they considered themselves extraverted, I always considered them certainly much more extraverted than I. I was always shy.

Miles views introversion as a defense mechanism. This acceptance of his personality, which was so different from that of his older siblings, provided a coping strategy that allowed him to deal with the pressure of life with his own sense of style. Cassidy also found her introversion useful as something of a shield in social settings, as she relates:

I'll say that probably my entire life, I've been an introvert. I always had a group of friends, but even within that group of friends, I was never the outgoing one. I was the one

that just hung around with them. [laughs] I would engage in conversation when I felt like I could contribute, but for the most part, I was the real quiet one. I went to parties or went to gatherings, and anytime I felt uncomfortable, I would leave. I wasn't the type of kid who you could peer pressure me into staying somewhere [chuckles] that I didn't want to be at. "I'm going. I don't like this. This is giving me a bad vibe. I'm leaving." I would leave.

Introversion is not always aligned with confidence. Cassidy, however, is clearly in a league of her own. She is accepting of her own nature and is unwavering in her inclinations to do only the activities she selects. She does not feel a need to receive the acceptance of those around her in order to fit in or be a part of their social group. Peer pressure has no power due to her strength and self-direction.

### ***Underdog, Guard Dog, Alpha Dog***

Dennis openly relayed his experience with introversion as a label obtained in college that was far from a compliment. His father made a negative prediction that he would perhaps be "too shy" to do anything. His college professor declared that introverts have no place in positions of leadership. It was not until Dennis started tutoring his classmates in science that he discovered that teaching and guiding others was an introverted strength that gave him a sense of purpose. Before that time, he was the epitome of the underdog, and all of his success was related to rising above negative labels and brands.

Miles openly shared the skeletons from his closet as he reflected on his early years. He was the product of a blended family and had significantly older siblings from his parents' previous marriages. He often kept to himself as a safeguard against family turmoil. The word trauma resonated throughout his childhood memories. Introversion was a shield that prevented

Miles's family from affecting his inner core. Instead of hiding in his room, he hid within himself.

To Miles, introversion became a means of combating a challenging childhood:

It's a little different for everyone. There's always this some type of trauma. I don't say that negatively like they've always, it's child abuse or anything that they necessarily have physically experienced, but a lot of my story was built on the household that I grew up in and just personal experiences. There's always an underlying factor, and I would say trauma in the sense of you're exposed to physical abuse in the household, whether it's directed to you or parent on parent, a parent on another sibling, or sibling on sibling, whatever.

Miles reflected that his childhood identification with his introverted personality was the result of "trauma." The abuse was not overt, but the friction in the household forced him to escape and learn to find peace inside himself rather than rely on his family. Although still introverted, Miles has been able to rise above some of the challenges of his childhood:

Confidence, your self-perspective is big, and I consider myself a very confident person, but certainly that has not always been the case. No matter how confident I am today, that lack of confidence from yesterday and days prior just leading up to that have shaped who I am as an introvert.

Miles suggested with passion that the confident man we see today is quite different from the insecure young man of yesterday. He clearly observed that his childhood events played an important part in contributing to his introverted personality. Those events were detrimental but shaped him as a leader and made him more understanding and compassionate of other people and their personal challenges. He has gone from being guarded to being a guard dog.



Miles is motivated to live a different life than the one of his childhood. He saw education as a stepping stone to close the door on his early years and leave the painful memories in his rearview mirror. He has found liberation through acknowledging who he is and using those talents to be successful in leadership positions. However, even though he readily promotes introverted strengths, Miles still recognizes and is jealous of the societal ease that extraverts experience. Given a choice, he would switch:

Certainly, I've longed to be an extravert because I feel like a lot of times you think about them as being more fun people and that, at times, can be true. I've never struggled with accepting that I'm an introvert. Definitely. I've never even questioned it because it's always been there. If I could pick one or the other, it would be the other, just in seeing how much ease there is with the comfort level of my peers, and my colleagues, and even my own spouse, and having those conversations, and joining different sports leagues, and stuff like that. It doesn't even matter if I think I could be any good. That's never anything that I would ever even consider doing because, "What if I'm not," or "What if I slip and fall as I'm running that first base and I get an out and I looked like a loser?"

Miles is concerned about how others perceive him. He can deal with personal failure but has avoided team sports because a failure there could cost him the acceptance of his teammates.

By contrast, during Cassidy's formative years, both peer pressure and societal pressures bounced off of her as if she had a protective shield. She was comfortable being who she was and not easily influenced to make bad choices to gain popularity from her peers. Cassidy considers herself to be a natural-born introvert:

I've always worn that as a badge of honor. I know that a lot of people aren't really comfortable being by themselves. I think it says a lot if you like yourself enough that

you're comfortable being with just you. On the flip side of that, I do think sometimes I can be too much for me.

Kassidy is unique in that she has found strength in something others consider a debilitating weakness. It is possible to spend a lifetime striving to achieve her level of self-assurance and confidence. She feels no pressure to be anything other than who she is.

I think that it is impossible to ignore the influence of our DNA. It seems that as we grow older, we start to see our parents and grandparents when we gaze into the mirror and hear their words come out of our mouths. However, it is not just nature but also nurture that determines who we become as adults. Personality traits develop in response to our parents and childhood families. Dennis was discouraged from his dreams of leadership by harsh words and limiting predictions. Miles retracted away from his perceived overcrowded family in order to find himself. Kassidy was nurtured and accepted. Her introversion was noticed but was considered to be a valuable distinction, unique to her personality. Two of my participants had to overcome the low expectations and lack of understanding. One was applauded for her differences, and that became her source of strength.

### ***Introversion: Barriers, Struggles, and Self-Doubt***

The study participants candidly shared their experiences of barriers, struggles, and self-doubt. Dennis recognized that the traditional ideal for leaders is an extraverted personality; however, he strongly believes that introverts make better leaders because they are able to listen to and develop their followers. For Miles, introversion is the result of a negative experience that causes the individual to retreat from the spotlight. Kassidy views introversion as a springboard for defying the odds and achieving success. She is confident to use what some would consider a disadvantage as a strength.

Miles also noted the advantages of introverted leadership. He focused on the balance of listening skills and communication as an introverted leadership asset. Miles elaborated:

I feel like people make that assumption falsely that just because you're extraverted, you're going to be better at leadership because I don't feel like that's always the case. I feel they're more easily heard sometimes because it's hard to miss them, but I feel the message and the communication from an introvert can be just as good, if not better, oftentimes than not of their extraverted peers.

Similarly, Dennis noted that although extraverts are often considered the model, introverts have skills that need to be utilized in order to achieve organizational and professional success.

Dennis observed the difference in outward and inward focus of extraverts and introverts and recognizes that extraverts more readily fit the ideal for success. However, he entertains that introverted qualities are equally impressive; they are just buried deeper beneath the surface.

Dennis stated:

Because it still seems that there is—maybe it's an unspoken assumption—that you must really be a bold, outgoing person to be a good upper-level leader. I don't know if that's what our district thinks or if it's just something that happens. You know, in an interview, the person who speaks the boldest, you know, maybe is more impressive than the person who is more thoughtful and—And if you dig deeper into that person, you might see the leadership qualities that you, that you may not even see in the bolder, outspoken person. But you have to be willing to look deeper.

Dennis admitted that leadership is more often associated with the societal extraverted ideal. However, he affirmed that introverted leadership has its strengths and is able to help complete the big picture of campus leadership. Dennis observed that titles are really worthless.

For him, the compassion, willingness, and skill to promote excellence in others are far more important than a flashy gold name on the door that an extravert might need to feel significant:

I think that the upper leadership does tend to lean toward more of an extraverted personality. ... Yeah, it has probably held me back a little bit. But, on the other side of that, my philosophy is: if it holds me back, that's probably not where I'm supposed to be. If I'm a good fit for my teachers and my building right now—if this is where I can do the best work, regardless of the title that I have, then this is where I want to be.

Kassidy goes against the norm of introverted stereotypes and the other two participants. She is the product of nurturing, supportive parents who identified her personality and helped her establish her strengths, and elaborated with the following:

It's interesting. I think that there is probably a preconceived notion that introverted people cannot move up the ladder, I'll say, and be successful, but in my head, in my opinion, that's obviously not true because here I am.

Clearly, Kassidy has climbed every rung of the ladder and is comfortable balancing on the top step. She is confident and seems to credit introversion as a treasured feature of her resume rather than a detractor. This could perhaps stem from the affirmation of her family, who was willing to accept her personality and regarded it as part of her unique chemistry.

### ***Introverted Subsets***

Kassidy embraced the idea that introverts are seen as quiet and reserved. She used terms such as “choice” when she described introverted behaviors. She believes that there are varying degrees of introversion. On one end of the spectrum might be someone considered private, while at the other end could be phobic. She used the term “subset” to specify the level that an introvert

may claim. According to Kassidy, the degree of introversion is not predetermined, it is chosen by the individual. It is, according to her, a preference and not a prison sentence:

I typically find that introverted people are quiet and reserved. Another thing that I found in some groups of introverts, and I don't know that I'm necessarily like this, but some introverts that I have met are really, not necessarily—I feel like I'm choosing to be an introvert. I don't want to be around people all the time. Some people that are introverts are afraid to be around people. It makes them nervous, too many people. There's a phobia when you're around large groups of people. I can't remember what it's called, and a lot of introverts are like that. Like, "I don't like people. I don't want to be around people. I don't want to talk to you. I don't want to talk to anyone." That's a whole different, I guess, a subset of introverts.

Kassidy observed that introversion can be experienced in many degrees. One cannot assume that all introverts are clones of each other. Each individual has the potential of experiencing introversion uniquely. Although they may share common characteristics, no two introverts are necessarily the same.

Dennis is guarded and does not seek opportunities to dance at spirit events or host talent shows. He is completely comfortable with addressing large groups of people if the subject is something that he is interested in or passionate about but does not crave the spotlight. The introverted inclination keeping him from engaging in some activities aligns with his philosophy. He is not fascinated with fancy titles but takes his job seriously. Dennis feels that he is in the right place if he is able to be instrumental in initiating growth and leadership in others.

Well, I think that because I'm not loud or—that's not the right—because I'm not someone who puts myself out there, you know as, you know, like for example I'm not

going to dance to the music in front of the whole school or in front of the whole school board like we've done in the past. If I don't do that, I'm not noticed.

So—and that's not unique to me. I mean, honestly, it's—there are those of us who are probably still a little bit shy about dancing in front of a group or about, you know, getting up and singing in front of a group. Don't have any problems speaking in front of a group.

Dennis highlighted the performance feature of administrative leadership. Oftentimes, the principal is seen as the personality of the school. This omits responsibilities such as setting and achieving academic goals, building collaborative teams, and developing leadership qualities among teachers and department heads on campus.

Miles continued by stating that his guarded facial expressions are sometimes misconstrued as a lack of enthusiasm. This validates the idea that introverts are often misread and misunderstood. People misjudge their outward expressions as a representation of their internal desire. Miles stressed that quiet does not mean unenthusiastic. The facial expressions of some introverts may not always mirror their inward excitement. This has the potential to mislead audiences and have them wrongly predict the interest of introverts:

I do feel that a lot of times, and I'm not saying that I feel I'm overlooked, but I feel a lot of times, even in my facial expression, you might not see a cheerleader. That's not who I am as a person. That doesn't mean that I'm not going to be the greatest cheerleader that you've ever had, but I'm certainly not going to be the loudest one in the stands. That's okay. I think as you know me, you appreciate that about me because while I may not be the loudest, I'll always be the first one there and the last one to leave. That's how I show up.

Miles noted that his inward, reflective nature sometimes masks his excitement. His face does not always reflect the enthusiasm that he feels on the inside. This can send a mixed message to those he works with and the teachers who report to him. His inability to be loud does not take away from his passion or dedication to stay the course and work with those in need of support and encouragement.

Introverts are often so inwardly focused that they often neglect opportunities to promote themselves for jobs and opportunities in leadership. Louder, more gregarious employees steal the focus as they push themselves into the limelight. Introverted skills are no less impressive; however, they are less advertised and rely on others to discover them.

### **Introverted Leadership Unraveled**

Each participant had a unique motivation for choosing a career in educational leadership. Kassidy recognized the opportunity to expand her circle of influence beyond the classroom door. Dennis was propelled by the opportunity to help others. From his first day, Miles had dreams of becoming a superintendent. Kassidy quickly realized that if instead of restricting herself to a single subject, she enlarged the place of her classroom and led a school, her impact would be greater. She took a risk and set her sights on administration, applying her skills in building relationships, developing collaborative groups, and sharing her heart and passion:

I felt like I could make a bigger impact if I was not in my own classroom, in my own world, which is my comfort zone, being in my own space with my own kids was very much a comfort zone for me. I didn't have to worry about what anybody else is doing. I started noticing that kids from other classes who weren't in my class would either be sent to me, [chuckles] and these were usually the kids who had behavior issues or would come

to me of their own accord for a variety of reasons. I felt like I was missing a group of kids that I could help because I was inside the classroom.

Kassidy would have limited her influence if she had remained in the classroom. Her decision to move into administration allowed her to influence and motivate thousands of students and teachers rather than hundreds. Like Kassidy, Dennis saw the bigger picture of expanding his leadership beyond the classroom doors. He views his leadership role as an opportunity to help others grow. He inspires the teachers under his direction so that, in turn, they motivate and develop their untapped potential of their students. As administrators, they influence the teachers who impact the students; this expands the scope of their effect. Dennis asserted, “That’s what I—when I—that was my main rationale for moving up into administration. Because if you help teachers become better teachers, you’re helping students be better students and that was it.”

While Kassidy and Dennis have their sights set on improving relationships within their school, not just their classroom, Miles has his sights set on improvements at the district level. Miles is very goal-oriented. Introversion is a part of his inner being at the same level as goal attainment and personal motivation. Miles aspired to upward leadership from the very first day of his career. He is persistent and fixated and is unshakeable in his desire to lead a school district:

I’ve always looked for the ultimate. I want to be a superintendent. I knew that before I ever set foot into the classroom, and it wasn’t about the title. It’s never been about the title. It’s about where can I be to make the greatest change possible for the most number of students and staff. Am I qualified to be a superintendent now? No, [chuckles] no. I have the credentials, but I do not have the experience to be successful in that role. Everything’s a stepping stone.



All three participants have chosen a career in educational leadership based on a drive and a dream. Dennis wants to make teachers better because he realizes that is the only way to change the climate of the school. Building relationships that foster trust with the teachers allows the administrator to work shoulder-to-shoulder with them to improve the school and advance professional and academic success. Miles has been intensely focused on moving to the level of superintendent. Each new position and degree he earns moves him closer to achieving this goal. He believes that his greatest influence will be from the top, where he can impact students, teachers, administrators, and an entire district. Cassidy realized, at the end of her teaching service, that her classroom door was about to open up to building relationships with students beyond those taking her class. Other teachers began to see her gifts in working with discipline issues and began to fill her seats with those who needed extra attention and a readjustment of their moral compass. Cassidy is a relationship builder and uses her heart and passion to change the lives of those she encounters.

Dennis separates the leader's personality from their leadership style and recognizes that an introvert could gravitate toward any of the many different leadership brands. He uses an example from a movie based on actual events to illustrate his perspective:

I think that they [leadership styles] can all have some introversion to them. Because introversion is not—it's more of a personality than a leadership style, and you can apply it to all of them, whether it's transactional—although, if you think about the transactional leadership style, it's—if you remember that movie that they came out with—was it in LA?—the gentleman who took over a school and locked out all—he used transactional leadership. He had to get something done. He had to change, you know, he had to. But even in that movie, *Lean On Me*, the principal didn't give up on the teachers that were

willing to stay and fight the fight with him, and he found the value in that. And he supported them. And he came to their rooms and said, “You know what? Good job. You know. Thanks for fighting this fight with me.” So, I think that introversion can apply to every different leader, except for the bureaucratic leader. Maybe that’s my bias because of that first year, but I don’t know if it can. But transactional and transformational, definitely. And probably several of the others. If they can see through your quiet shyness and see that you would fit up in that spot.

Since introverted individuals prefer spending time by themselves, it seems logical that they would have an inward-focused perspective. It is probable that they would spend more time on personal reflections, critiques, and feelings. As a result, the inward focus of introverts makes them susceptible to the severity of personal evaluation. It appears that introverts often saddle themselves with high expectations and are often more critical of themselves than they are when evaluating others. Extraversion, on the contrary, is characterized by the need for external praise and applause. Extraverts thrive in the spotlight and are motivated by public recognition. They are energized by glowing reviews and words of praise. Having their accomplishments noticed can spur them to achieve excellence, while being overlooked or ignored can be demoralizing.

Each of the participants revealed how they struggle with self-doubt. Cassidy uses overplanning to reduce the risk of failure. Dennis regrets the inhibition that keeps him from dancing in public but justifies it by believing it keeps him from being seen as foolish. Miles sees that his reserved countenance can falsely indicate a lack of enthusiasm when in reality, a book cannot be correctly judged by its cover. Cassidy believes that both extraverts and introverts second-guess themselves before major events. While it is possible she does not really understand the extraverted viewpoint, it is likely that most people are nervous before public speaking or

major events such as weddings. Cassidy is an advocate for overplanning to lessen the chances of error because advance planning and trouble-shooting are instrumental in identifying problems before program implementation:

I think everyone, as you go from position to position, you wonder, “Am I going to do this well?” Those people who don’t have that, then I commend them, but that to me speaks a little bit to overconfidence and maybe a little bit of arrogance. I think that it is because I have a sliver of doubt in practically everything that I go above and beyond to make sure that I can do it. It’s like I have to find all the kinks to it. I use that doubt to say, “Okay, why are you doubting this? What could potentially happen? All right, how can you fix that before it happens?”

I don’t know that that has anything to do with me being an introvert, I think that that’s just probably who I am. The day before the first day of school, I’m nervous, it doesn’t matter. I’ve overplanned. My dad said, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail,” so I overplan, look for any type of issues and loops. You always have hindsight, [which] is 20/20. There are always all these things that pop up or hiccups, as they call them, but I go over everything and marinate in my head about all the different types of scenarios that it could be. I use that doubt to do that so that everything can be like I wanted.

Kassidy’s practice of “marinating” or mulling things over is an introverted characteristic descriptive of one who will think before they speak. Being cautious can give comfort to followers because they know that the leader is not tempted to make decisions in haste. Quick decisions have a place, such as how to exit in the event of a fire. However, most long-range instructional campus decisions can be made after considering multiple options or giving the leader the opportunity to “marinate” on the prospects.

The leadership style that all three participants aligned with was servant leadership. This leadership style is easily observed in each of them as they fulfill their campus responsibilities.

Dennis justified a connection he sees between transformational and servant leadership:

Well, I think that servant leadership follows right in line with transformational leadership. I mean, because you're changing the narrative of leadership. You know, "I make all the rules. You follow my rules without question" to "I am here to assist you. I'm working for you. I'm your observer, your evaluator, maybe your leader, but my goal [or] job is to help you become a better you." And that is transformational.

Miles described himself as a systems thinker. Systems thinking is a means of considering a broad perspective that includes seeing the big picture, patterns, and cycles of the organization rather than focusing on a singular aspect within the school. Miles stated:

One is servant leadership for sure. I don't know that I attribute that specifically to introverted leadership or my introverted personality. I definitely feel like a big part of who I am as an introverted person allows me, and gives me the opportunity, to listen. A great component of servant leadership is listening certainly before speaking, listening before reacting. I use the word 'follower' just synonymous to the term 'leader.'

What do those who you're leading need? How and when do they need it?

Transformational leadership. I'm definitely a systems thinker. If there's anything that I feel can be more organized, or deliver more effectively, those are things that I feel I transform both within my role as an assistant principal. I certainly did that as a testing coordinator and even as a classroom teacher. While I didn't necessarily transform anyone else's systems, I did transform my own based on what I saw and the needs of my own

students. What worked best for this group of kids in fourth period might be different than what my kids in sixth period needed.

Miles identifies himself as a servant and transformational leader. He assesses the needs of students and transforms his leadership to inspire them to creatively fulfill their potential. Cassidy leads from behind and focuses on the needs of others. She illustrates by her actions rather than empty words:

I think I'm very much a servant leader. I think that me being an introvert, too, probably leads to that or leans to that because I'm very much used to doing things myself. As a servant, I think you are doing the things yourself and with the hope, and the idea, and the philosophy, that other people will follow you because you are the person that is doing it also, and so I will then do what I see my leader doing.

All three participants identified with servant leadership. Characteristics such as leading from behind and thinking of others first equate easily to the introverted personality. Each participant clearly displayed the heart for service and students. Each of them is willing to go the extra mile and utilize their quiet leadership to build relationships and share their passion for their profession. Miles highlighted the importance of thinking and planning before implementing. The quiet time of reflection is not wasted time. The solitude often holds the key to finding issues before they arise. To Miles, this minimizes failure and embarrassment:

I think one of the greatest advantages of introverted leadership is, "Think first, act second." I think a lot of times, we act before we complete the thinking process.

Specifically, for me, because I do have so much quiet time within my own head, I'm thinking about what's going to work best before I act because I hate to rework something that could have been done more effectively the first time. I'm very cognizant of what is it

going to look like from point A to point Z and double-checking that system before it's implemented. Then as it's implemented, what is that going to look like, and what can I make to change it immediately or as immediately as possible.

Miles plans programs much the same way a pilot creates a flight plan. Seeing the obstacles between destinations allows for detours and redirection. This propensity for preplanning gives confidence to both teachers and fellow administrators. Kassidy also applies excessive planning to the daily operations and implementation of school programs. Some might view this as a lack of confidence, but she uses it as a trial run to troubleshoot potential issues. Kassidy has an open-door policy in her school. She is approachable and practices active listening with her students, staff, and community. If the issue is not easily solved, she will devote more time to finding a solution. In Kassidy's words:

I'm not a big talker, I'm a good listener. When people have a concern, then they will come, and I welcome that, to come and express your concern to me, and I will listen to it, work with you through it. See if I can't find a solution right then, I'll marinate on it, which again, I think is the part of me being an introvert is because I'm a big thinker sometimes to my own detriment, or I think it is anyway. [chuckles] I think being a good listener is an advantage ... I think that's my third one. Good listener, lead by example, and a good problem solver.

Dennis described the positive aspects of introversion, such as being a thoughtful listener. Organizations need leaders who listen more than they speak. When a leader is mesmerized with the sound of their own voice, they often fail to hear and understand the needs of others. Dennis clearly believes in spreading leadership around so that others may develop their strengths. He

shows aspects of servant leadership as he elaborates on his philosophy of sharing the glory and giving everyone a chance to find success:

Somebody who is a thoughtful listener, slow to react, (and) considerate of other opinions. One of the terms I like to use is a servant—servant leader. Noncondemning. And I'm not saying that we're perfect because we're absolutely not, but we are so slow to make negative judgments about other folks.

Leadership is not necessarily—not mean that you know everything. In fact, in schools today, there's nobody who can know everything. With all of the things around—all the social expectations that educators and leaders in education have to go—have to deal with now. You can't be that all bureaucratic leader that you were 25 years ago. You have to delegate, and you have to trust who you delegate to. And I think that introverted leaders do that easier than extraverted leaders.

Dennis noted the impossibility for one type of leader to fulfill all the multiple leadership areas present in any school. This advances the idea that there are a vast number of jobs that need to be accomplished, and they are impossible to meet with only one type of leader. It is not just a matter of delegation, it is the art of knowing which person can handle and grow from the different opportunities in leadership. As Miles grows older, he is more comfortable being classified as an introvert. He noted that he is more contented with being thought of as quiet. He speaks only when necessary but does not lack confidence. That is a major difference between the inhibition of being shy and the selective nature of being quiet. Miles stated:

You always consider an introvert shy or quiet. That's not always true, but certainly, for me, it is in the beginning and may not be that I'm shy, but in so you know me, and we've had an initial conversation for sure. You're definitely going to think I'm quiet. Even still

true today, you can see in the admin, it's very rare that I speak, and it's not because I consider myself shy. I'm, I'm totally comfortable. I just don't regularly speak out of turn, and I don't speak unless I'm spoken to typically, especially in something in a professional study.

Listening more and speaking less is an introverted characteristic. It keeps the employees engaged and shows them that their needs and talents are integral to the smooth running of the campus. Leaders who deliver inspirational speeches are often credited as gifted orators; however, they can fail to build professional relationships that inspire greatness and buy-in from others within the organization. Speeches frequently spur employees into action; they motivate and render rapid change and impressive results. However, introverted leaders invest time in nurturing relationships and forming bonds as they work shoulder-to-shoulder in the trenches to make real change. This goes beyond words of inspiration; it is a visual illustration of the leader's belief in others and their perseverance and dedication to inspire the ranks. When more people actively support an organization's vision, the chances of success increase exponentially for the individual and the organization. Dennis reflects on the willing spirit to lend a hand to others. He has discovered that leadership is not about dominance but, in the field of education particularly, it is about growth and improvement, academically and professionally:

Just the willingness to assist. The willingness to delegate and to see the value in others.

To understand that your role isn't to dominate but to teach and to help others grow.

Maybe that's the biggest one, right there. You're helping others grow into their position.

Dennis believes that introversion is the ability to be slow to judge and willing to help others find their personal and professional strengths. He thinks that because introverted leaders are more reflective, they build sincere relationships with their followers. Those who they direct are



uninhibited because the leader's heart is made known, and the mission of working together as a team is obvious. Dennis stated:

If my leadership style is not quick to judge you because I don't believe there's any teacher that ever wants to fail—my leadership style is to talk to—about what's going on and see if we can fix it together. What strategy—what I can do to help you. What I can do—how I can direct you to the training that will help you. My biggest—I think the biggest complaint that I've gotten from upper leadership is that I refuse to give up on teachers. I mean, that sounds like a catchphrase, but that's actually the truth. It's a "Why do you want this person to stay around?" Because they're growing. They may be growing slow, but they're growing, and I know they're going to get there, and I'm not going to give up on them. ...I didn't want people to give up on me. When they thought, "there's no way he's going to be able to stand in front of a classroom and teach kids; he's just way too shy." They could have convinced me that that was the truth, and I would have backed away. But instead, no, I didn't give up, and I'm not going to give up on teachers just because they're struggling.

And I think that the advantage of that introverted leadership is that you do gain a major trust with your teachers, with the people you work under. Because they know you want them to grow, and they know that making a mistake is not a death penalty.

Dennis illustrates the importance of building a relationship and a sense of trust with his employees. When the teachers see his intentions, they become comfortable and desire to do whatever it takes to achieve professional growth. Assisting struggling teachers is a partnership, and Dennis is willing to invest the time, energy, and knowledge to help them find success. Dennis pointed out other introverted strengths, such as being a good listener, being

noncondemning, and having the ability to delegate power and responsibility. These are all positive attributes of effective leadership. Cassidy sees introversion as a need to recharge her batteries with solitude and reflection. Her interpretation is the preference of introversion, never the burden. She explored the idea that some introverts would rather be in smaller crowds, while others have a more serious phobia of interaction and will avoid those situations at all costs. Miles understands that people will view him as quiet. However, he does consider himself to be shy, is completely comfortable being who he is, and views speaking specifically as better than spewing out verbose fluff. Introverted characteristics are different from their extraverted counterparts. They are not better or worse. Understanding the positive aspects of each can help rethink long-range plans and the outcome of future hires.

### **Personal Imprints of Introverted Leadership**

All three participants provided a brief narrative to showcase the benefits of introverted leadership that are often glossed over in favor of the more traditional extraverted candidates. These introverted advertisements highlight the strengths that may have been previously overlooked by employers seeking to fill openings in educational leadership.

#### ***To Grow Teachers***

Dennis leads with his heart and places the needs of others above his own. He clearly illustrates this passion for bringing out the best in his subordinates with the quote below. His endgame is not to be a legendary leader but to provide opportunities for others to achieve the best versions of themselves:

If your goal is to grow teachers, and other employees, into the best employee, teacher, [or] educator they can be, you can't do it with force. You can't force anybody to grow; you have to show them how they can grow, and where they can go to get that growth, or

how you can help them to grow. But, when you try to force them [into] working—intimidate them into doing something—they might do what you ask them to do. But they're going to do it unwillingly, and therefore they're not going to grow for you. It's going to be, "I have to do this." But if you are the servant leadership that you're supposed to be, you're going to find that working with them, as a colleague instead of working above them as a boss, is much more effective in growing teachers. And, we all know that the only way that students do better is if teachers do better. You know? Administrators—we have our role. But in that classroom, which is where all the real action happens, it's those teachers. And, if they're not growing, those students aren't growing. And, if I can't help the teacher grow, then I'm not in the position I'm in because I'm not effective. And who wants to be noneffective?

Dennis stresses the importance of growing teachers as a priority of the profession. Stagnant teachers are ineffective in motivating students. Student academic growth is the most important goal of the school. The growth of teachers, students, and administrators is paramount for making academic gains and collaborating as an effective team.

### ***Leaders Eat Last***

Miles values the needs of others above his own. His adopted slogan, "leaders eat last," is the epitome of taking care of those who follow behind, illustrating that we are stronger together and the needs of one impact the success of all. Miles stated:

I think the biggest thing for me is, like Simon Sinek says, leaders eat last. So, I'm always very much so about feeding others and understanding what they need. My students, my staff, our parents, the community—what can we do to help you thrive so that ultimately our society can continue to thrive? As an introverted leader, I definitely believe in the

value of voice and choice and knowing that we have to first understand what it is that they need and what they want. Then we have to finalize how we can provide that to them within the realities of the resources that we have at our disposal.

Miles advocates placing the needs of others before his own. He sees the value of listening in order to determine the needs and wants of those he serves. He then evaluates how he can grant requests based on available resources. Miles demonstrates that the heart of an introverted leader is best seen in the development of listening skills.

### ***In the Corner–Not Antisocial***

Kassidy advises those considering hiring an introverted leader not to underestimate their potential. Introverted leaders have the talents and capacity to surpass their extraverted peers when given the opportunity. Patrick Swayze, in the 1987 classic, *Dirty Dancing* (Ardolino), has a line that is the culminating cry of introverts: “Nobody puts Baby in the corner.” Kassidy noted that although introverts may be perceived as quiet and reserved, they are far from incapable and should never be condemned to a corner. Introverts, according to Kassidy, have the power and potential to out-shine the extraverted candidates:

I don't know how this is going to come across, but I would say, do not underestimate an introverted person. [laughs] Just because someone is quiet and reserved and maybe, I'll say, in the corner by themselves, does not mean that they are 100% antisocial, does not mean that they are not 100% capable of doing whatever it is that you are doing. Not to sound arrogant, but maybe better because we've thought about it and thought through it, so maybe a little bit better. Because one of the things about me is I'm not an off-the-cuff kind of person. Some things may seem off-the-cuff but, in my brain, it's always going. I

guess at the end of the day, I'll say, "Don't underestimate nor overlook an introverted person." Those can be, and I dare say will be, your best leaders.

### ***Forward-Looking: Features and Strengths***

Each of the three participants focused on a different facet of introversion and how it made them a stronger leader. Cassidy espoused the idea that introversion comes in layers. She noted that some introverts choose to minimize their exposure to people while others suffer from a phobia. Miles highlighted the advantage of thinking before acting and explained that this is why he is seen as quiet in meetings. Similarly, Cassidy noted the introverted strength and power of being a good listener and a thoughtful problem solver. This was echoed by Dennis, who also talked about introverts being thoughtful listeners with a slow reaction time. Dennis also emphasized the ability to delegate and build leadership in others. All of them see a definite advantage to being an introverted leader. All three participants showed a common bond of caring for those in their circle of service. Dennis relishes the opportunity to help those around him grow and become the best possible version of themselves. Miles spoke of the value of voice and choice and taking the time to listen and understand the needs of followers. Cassidy cautions against underestimating the introverted professional. She noted that the introvert could potentially be the best fit for the job.

### **Summary of the Findings**

Data analysis revealed interesting insights into introversion and introverted leadership. Each of the participants shared their passions, heart, and stories, enabling a better understanding of this leadership personality. It was fascinating to note that early years and parental influence played such a major role in shaping the introverted leader. One saw childhood as a traumatic event, while another saw introversion as a brand to overcome, and the third embraced

introversion as a sacred feature of herself. These formative experiences impacted their definition and understanding of introversion. To different extents, they all accept the notion that introverts are shy and reclusive. It is troubling that they accept and continue to use negative stereotypes, though thankfully resisting the most troubling label that was applied by an authority figure: a nonleadership personality. While each of the introverts saw their own leadership strengths, they were still complicit in accepting being pigeon-holed with negative descriptions. Do introverts need to become more assertive and active in throwing off stereotypes in order to be recognized by others?

Correspondence reveals a great deal about the personality of the author. Some emails are glorified to-do lists, while others reach out to establish relationships and show the heart of the superior. Examining the emails of the participants highlighted their unique sense of style and delivery. Each of the participants has varying communication styles, illustrating that no two introverted leaders are exactly the same. Some use campus email to deliver heart and reassurance, while others use the platform to communicate responsibilities and keep employees aware of upcoming action items. There was not an obvious pattern to introverted correspondence or noticeable difference with extraverted emails.

While all three participants exhibited quiet strength in their outward behavior during cafeteria duty, each handled the chore with a different approach. Kassidy used the opportunity to connect with others and build a friendly staff competition. She led by example; even when injured (a fractured collar bone) and in obvious pain, she still did the manual task and even cheered on the others before the beginning of the next lunch. Dennis manned the hallway outside of the cafeteria and policed the restrooms. This assignment isolated him from both other people and cleaning tables. It is hard to say whether he was more motivated by introversion or

germaphobia, and perhaps it was an awesome synergy. Miles's station was inside, but he still found a spot at the least used door and uses the time to answer emails and other written administrative responsibilities. However, he was willing to interact and build meaningful relationships with students, as long as it was one-on-one. The participants demonstrated the same behaviors in staff meetings that they did in cafeteria duty. They each had a different level of comfort and participation.

The participants' offices all reflected the need for personal space, separate from the school, where they could have quiet reflection. However, each space also reveals differences in their work personalities. Cassidy uses her office to reflect a calming, meditative mood. Miles uses his office as a retreat to showcase his accomplishments and to display affirmative quotations. Dennis's nest is smaller and more cluttered and has very few personal artifacts. His space is more of a hideout than a hangout. Though they may make some minor tweaks to their office arrangement and décor, they believe they have found the best arrangement and find comfort in sameness.

The three guiding research questions for this study probed at how introverts define themselves, identify with the features and parameters of introverted leadership on the school campus, and utilize the strengths of this personality, which may be largely unrecognized as a natural fit for educational administration. The study's thematic tapestry unraveled the exploration of the introverted experiences from their perspectives, the origins of introversion as surveyed through their formative childhood to young professional encounters, their clashes with societal barriers and self-doubt, their motivation to choose a career in educational administration, rationalization of their leadership style, professional strengths, and the lasting effects of their influence on their colleagues, students, and community.

The thematic analysis supported and was guided by the research questions. Interview questions were created so that they aligned with the research questions that steered the study. The first theme, introversion through the participant's lens, is in response to the research questions of how high school leaders describe themselves as introverts. The research question regarding the distinctive features that they ascribe to their introverted leadership is explored in the second theme of introverted leadership unraveled. Personal imprints of introverted leadership, the third theme, reveal how they demonstrate their leadership strengths within the scope of their professional roles. Additionally, this study was constructed using the plumb line of positive psychology. Introversion was once seen as a deficit but is now beginning to emerge as a viable leadership personality. The introverted strengths of careful planning, the formation of teams, setting and meeting academic goals, and building relationships create a positive contrast to the once solo consideration of extraverted leadership.

As education evolves, it only stands to reason that leadership should follow suit. Learning is expanding to virtual platforms, and learners, educators, and administrators are connecting from computers as well as face-to-face class experiences. This unlocks the door for introverted leadership to meet the needs of future educators and students. Students are being prepared for jobs that did not exist 20 years ago, and that could benefit from a different type of leader, the introverted leader. Educational leadership no longer requires a stage personality, and introverts could play a role in lessening the leadership gaps within the school.



## **Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

This study has revealed the strengths of introverted leadership that has so often been relegated to last-picked-for-kickball status on the team of secondary administration. School leadership requires a vast array of strengths and skills, and not all of those can be met by a single personality type. Although American society often force fits the introverted personality into an extraverted mold (Stephens-Craig et al., 2015), the need for diversity in secondary school leadership dictates the necessity to explore the benefits of introverted leadership in its own right. This qualitative case study was guided by the investigation of how introverted leaders describe themselves, define personal features of introverted leadership, and portray their introverted strengths within their professional roles. The study unearthed some interesting truths regarding the introverted experience of the three participants. To dig deeper into the lives of the introverted leaders, I used semistructured interviews, observations, and documents. This study began with my desire to ease my guilty conscience regarding my past oversight of introverted students in my theatre classroom. This motivation springboarded into a desire to understand how introverts experience leadership in a professional setting. The results were surprising, and the participants opened up and shared very private details regarding their childhood experiences and professional self-worth. The fear was that their introverted nature would prohibit the transparency of candid, full disclosure. I was wrong; the interviews resulted in an amazing banter that was a mixture of laughter and tears. This study exceeded my expectations in much the same way that society often benefits more from introverted leadership than it assumes possible. Revealing the strengths of introverted leadership exposes the fallacy in the traditional notion that one leadership style will fulfill all needs or that all leaders must be extraverts. This chapter presents the discussion of the study's findings, its significance and limitations, and recommendations for future studies.

## **Discussion of the Findings**

One of the methods for understanding this study's results was by overlaying it with various segments of leadership theory. These included leadership definitions and developments, trends in educational leadership, leadership styles, and introverted leadership as seen through the lens of positive psychology. Overlaying the findings in this way enables the reader to understand the leadership capabilities of introverts in smaller, more manageable sections. The contributions of introverts can be seen in specific circumstances or areas of leadership potential that have not always been effectively utilized.

### ***Introverted Leadership Redefined***

Extraverted leaders often claim the spotlight, as they have characteristics most closely aligned with the societal standard of success. Leaders who speak well, capture the attention of followers, and boldly communicate a vision can be traced to the "Great Man" trait theories of leadership (Northouse, 2016, p. 19). Stogdill (1948) noted that these characteristics are most often used to describe the extraverted personality. Crăciun and Sofian's (2015) case study strengthened the argument that success is often attributed to extraverted leaders. Green et al. (2019) found that psychology literature supports a strong positive correlation between extraversion and leadership and that introverts are less likely to be associated with success because they lack the drive or fail to see the necessity to promote their strengths. This lack of personal advertisement skills has created a gap in interpreting the value of introverted leaders.

Participants in this study used common descriptors such as shy and quiet to describe introversion. However, introversion is not a social anxiety like shyness. Instead, it is intended to define a personality that recharges itself in solitary, reflective environments rather than energizing in a congregation and the company of others. When using this information as a

definition, one-third of the population can be categorized as introverted (TED, 2012). All three participants noted that the introverted label offered something to conquer rather than an accolade to embrace. The label of introvert still holds a societal stigma. Green et al. (2019) noted that introverts are less likely to be seen as valuable because they lack the ability and motivation to promote their strengths. Crăciun and Sofian's (2015) case study supported the claim that success is more often aligned with extraversion than with introversion. As a result, introverts are recognized less frequently for their value in a professional setting. The constraints of this label serve as a potential barrier that even the most successful introverted leaders must overcome. It goes beyond the inability to self-promote or advertise personal strengths; it is a stereotype that can cause an introvert's professional skills, leadership, and potential to be ignored. Successful introverted leaders often have to prove others wrong first, though this response to negative labeling can fuel the fire within themselves to gain attention and respect, both professionally and personally. These are battles that are unique to introverts and are steps omitted or skipped by extraverted professionals.

Dennis was grouped as an introvert and was predicted to be unworthy of leadership opportunities based on his personality. His college years were defined by the need to prove that he offered leadership, not in spite of, but because of his introverted talents. Miles also has adopted the belief that introversion is shyness or reclusiveness. Certainly, his childhood was marked by a desire to be isolated from his family. Cassidy had a positive personality affirmation from her supportive father but, even with her secure sense of self from childhood, she still had to prove her leadership style. Rather than exhibiting the supermodel status of the more traditional extraverted leader, Cassidy's style craves one-on-one relationships and the establishment of collaborative teams.

**Trends.** A common rubric for measuring school standards and success includes creating a shared school vision; having a welcoming and inclusive culture; carefully managing resources; maintaining a safe learning environment; communicating in a timely and constructive manner with staff, students, and community; and developing clear decision-making strategies that are influenced by political, social, cultural, and economic realities (Korkut & Llaci, 2016). A final measurement of success is globalization. Educational organizations and learners that look outside of their school box are able to see a bigger picture, collaborating with instructors and students across the planet and preparing pupils to enter a world economy. One of the keys to globalization has been technology, which has compressed distance and made location less relevant. It has also created a less intimidating forum for the introverted educators and leaders to reach their audiences. Not only do online interactions provide the flexibility for the introverted leader to meet with colleagues and community from isolated locations, but it also allows these leaders, previously expected to have a commanding stage personality, to receive equitable recognition and credibility from the keyboard of a computer as they would from the microphone on a podium (Lyons & Voges, 2018).

Miles communicates a shared vision and, as a big picture thinker, is able to plan events and projects that incorporate the entire campus. Dennis is a champion for security and creates detailed plans for everything, including natural disasters, parking lot protocols, and building maintenance. Cassidy uses her campus perspective to set educational goals and work collaboratively with teachers and students to surpass scholastic benchmarks from previous years. Dennis establishes a welcoming culture for the school and consistently plays to his strengths in motivating teachers and students to achieve their classroom goals. Miles likes to deal with people on a one-to-one basis, but he is always motivational, utilizing his ability to engage and inspire

students and teachers to leave their comfort zones and take educational risks in the pursuit of future planning and higher learning. Cassidy is always willing to listen and offer support and wise counsel. She networks with students and staff and builds relationships that empower and inspire them to do and achieve goals that they never imagined they could accomplish. All three participants are well-versed in technology and have a clear vision of how to connect the campus, staff, and students as a collaborative team with a global trajectory that has the potential to bond the knowledge base of the home campus with educational potential on a global scale.

The participants in this study were able to share a common vision with those who follow behind them. As introverted leaders, they are keenly attuned to the needs of others. They build relationships and use listening skills to survey needs and create adaptive plans to benefit all those connected with the educational organization. Leading from behind supports the followers and expands the leadership potential within a larger group. The introverted leaders are detail-oriented, big picture thinkers and are able to implement effective strategies that function within the financial parameters and school and community expectations.

**Leadership Styles.** Leadership styles are unique to the individual and cannot be used to describe collective groups of introverted or extraverted leaders universally. In other words, depending on the leadership characteristics exhibited, an introvert may be classified as charismatic, authentic, adaptive, transformational, team, shared, or servant. Interestingly, all leaders in this study identified most closely with servant leadership. Servant leadership is an approach that assumes followers will respond positively to a leader who is trying to enable them to be successful and improve. The helping professions embrace Robert Greenleaf's philosophy, which advocates serving clients by assisting them in achieving the best version of themselves (Northouse, 2016). Characteristics, such as leading from behind and inspiring leadership

qualities in others, were clearly visible in the observations and interviews of all three participants.

Servant leadership was evident in all three participants from observations within the school setting. It is difficult to separate whether they are servant leaders because of the giving nature of educators or the propensity to refocus the spotlight descriptor of introverts. Each participant appeared to be comfortable with leading from behind, committing to the service of others before self, and building relationships to support the leadership potential of those surrounding them. Delegating responsibilities to those around them creates empowerment within the organization and allows leadership to be freely distributed. This is consistent with the introverted leader rarely being a glory hog and instead readily sharing the spotlight so that others can develop leadership. According to Gonzalez (2016), introverted leaders tend to be the invisible force working behind the scenes rather than being center stage in the limelight. Unfortunately, the focus is usually on the star of the show. Weiner (2016) found that schools normally follow a “lone hero” style of leadership where the principal is the primary decision maker. In warning against the dangers of leadership autonomy, a key point from Weiner’s study was that no one leader has the time or the energy to lead in isolation. Having multiple voices increases the information that decisions are based on. Shared decision-making in schools allows teachers to communicate critical information and to customize instructional methods that best address the school’s needs. The fundamental point is not more leadership but leadership diversity that allows for the showcasing of introverted, as well as extraverted, leadership in the school. Weiner (2016) noted that when shared leadership is done well, it can enhance instructional practice and improve the school’s culture. Introverted leadership is necessary to fill the gaps and

disbar the belief that the extravert's shoulders are wide enough to support the vast diversity in any school.

### **Introversion: Labels, Strengths, and Self-Analysis**

Stephens-Craig et al. (2015) asserted that American society has forced the introverted personality to fit into the extraverted mold. Jacques-Hamilton et al. (2019) further noted that there are substantial arguments showing that introverts do not receive any benefit, in the form of higher positions in the working world, from pretending or assuming extraverted characteristics. It appears that none of the three participants has felt the need to act like an extravert and all have achieved success in educational administration. Nevertheless, two of the three believe that extraverts are more likely to be promoted.

These two participants spoke of early introverted identification as a negative. They described the adverse effects of labeling by parental figures in their lives, which resulted in their adopting an underdog mentality. They each felt the need not only to find success but prove their parents wrong. The label of the introvert was extremely negative in both situations, and the two participants used this damaging label as a reason to rise above rather than an excuse to avoid professional and personal opportunities. The third participant had a parent who totally accepted and embraced her introverted personality as a child. She reflected on a childhood story in which a neighbor observed her talking to herself. The neighbor reported this unusual activity to the father, and he responded that he was not concerned unless his child answered in response to her own conversations. Ironically, a week later, the neighbor observed that the child was indeed responding to her own questions. When reported to the father, he laughed and applauded the blessing of having a child with the creativity to maintain both sides of the conversation. The father not only accepted introversion but embraced it as a strength. The evidence of this parental

approval can be seen in a mature adult who is comfortable in her own skin and treats her introversion as a gift she can use to lead the campus more effectively. The other two candidates are equally successful; however, their success came as a conscious effort to overcome a label and validate, to a doubting audience, that they could achieve success despite being an introvert. It is concerning that only one sees introversion as a step to get them closer to their accomplishments.

There was a triangulated, confirmed theme of the importance of listening to others and reflecting before acting. Each saw that the introverted characteristic of listening made them a better leader who is able to answer the needs of their followers rather than advance their own personal agendas. According to Finkle (2019), introverts can be successful in the professional world when they utilize and apply strengths such as concentration, listening, observing, and generating creative decisions to problems. This reflective leadership is seen as the type of leadership appropriated by all three participants as a strength that hinges on exemplary listening skills. This reflective characteristic of listening before acting makes those within the organization feel a sense of self-worth and empowerment since decisions are made based on their needs. This listening skill has the potential to motivate and inspire others to follow future opportunities in leadership. Listening carefully enables leaders to make better-informed strategic plans that are implemented only after consideration of obstacles and pitfalls and also facilitates troubleshooting. The simple act of having a leader listen validates the employee's worth and importance within the organization.

**Restrictive Self-Analysis.** All of the participants mentioned the power of labels and echoed that introverts are often considered too shy to hold leadership positions. This self-embraced societal doubt can potentially prevent introverted individuals from pursuing positions in leadership. Perhaps, all three of the study participants have found a way to rise above societal



brands and, as a result, have achieved professional success. The participants in the interview process were able to share their backstories and, in the arena of self-analysis, were able to see their valuable contributions to the leadership of the school that is uniquely attributed to introversion. Introverts build relationships in small circles, inspire collaborative teams, and are methodical and scholarly in applying the data to meet course and academic goals for student advancement. All three participants recognized their own introverted strengths and contributions to the successful running of the campus; however, it was also unanimously agreed that introverted leaders are not considered first and foremost in recruitment. Gonzalez (2016) found that introverts are the quiet leaders, and their efforts are rarely celebrated.

**The Power of Words, Brands, and Labels.** Despite the children's rhyme about sticks and stones, words often do hurt. Brands and labels restrict talent and deny opportunities. Almost as tragic as the hurtfulness of name-calling is the helplessness of being ignored or not credited with ideas and behind-the-scenes work hours that are often necessary to launch projects and initiatives. Gonzalez (2016) noted that quiet leaders are the invisible force behind the learning process of educational organizations. More is going on in school than the activities and planning that are seen by the public. Wilmot et al. (2019) noted that the introverted leadership skills of listening and building relationships could have a major impact on academic planning and scholastic success.

According to Clifton and Harter (2003), the win for all involved comes from identifying the leader's talents and having a clear idea of their personality. When leaders have a realistic sense of self, a credible understanding of their individual talents and strengths, and a working knowledge of which personality type best aligns with their leadership style, professional and personal gain can be achieved. Russell (2008) found that there are a variety of traits associated

with effective school leadership: collaboration, communication, high expectations, community building, and ethics. These traits are not used to describe all introverted or extraverted leaders. Obviously, there is room for both personality types in meeting the multilayered needs of the educational organization.

According to Kahnweiler (2018), the model of successful leadership needs to be expanded from a prototype that celebrates extraversion to one that includes the talents of introverts. Educational leadership does not need to be limited to one leadership personality. The needs of the school are vast and require more than one leadership personality to address all of the issues and necessities. This study was not just a means to glorify the underadvertised introvert through the interviews and observations. This study's findings support the big picture of the needs of the school calling for more than one leadership personality. There is room for both introverted and extraverted leadership, and the strengths of both are necessary for the smooth running of the organization.

### ***Positive Psychology***

Positive psychology is the vision of Martin Seligman (Walters & James, 2020), who believed psychology should focus on what is right in the world instead of the traditional view of psychology as a means to curing an illness (Skidmore, 2020). Positive psychology does not view introversion as a disorder; instead, it celebrates introversion from a strengths-based perspective. Studying introversion through this lens can help identify the distinctive features that can be used to determine levels of administrative achievement. All three study participants were able to see beyond the unflattering definition of the introverted brand. Dennis was able to achieve and do more than his family's prediction. His success was instrumentally motivated by the quest to prove them wrong and corroborate that he was not too shy to lead. Miles retreated into an

introverted shell to escape the pressures and turmoil of his blended family. He never lacked confidence; he just preferred solitude and longed for a place of peace where he could recharge his batteries beyond the judgment of others. Cassidy accepted introversion as a unique aspect of her genetic composition. She used the introverted adjective as an affirmative descriptor in a way similar to describing oneself as tall, thin, or attractive. Introversion was void of shame and simply set her apart from mainstream leadership.

Positive psychology allowed this study to be viewed with a new lens. Martin Seligman's vision was to use psychology to focus on inherent strengths instead of weaknesses (Skidmore, 2020). This study takes steps in applying the vision. Introverted leadership will perhaps no longer be seen as an ailment needing a prescription; instead, it will be potentially viewed as a strength that needs to be utilized. Seeing introverted leadership through the lens of positive psychology changes the focus from correction to celebration. Introversion from a strengths-based approach will move the focus to the benefit of these previously marginalized leaders. The three study participants are more than key figures in a qualitative case study; they are the living examples that introverted leadership is not just possible but is necessary to the successful running of the educational organization.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study clearly illustrated the applied strengths of introverted leadership on a secondary campus. The small number of participants, all from the same school, made interviews and observations convenient. However, it would be interesting to see if similar results could be replicated with a larger target population from more than one secondary school. In addition to expanding the number of participants, future studies could include a diverse socioeconomic student population and use varied geographical locations that included rural and urban schools. It

would perhaps yield interesting results in private, as opposed to public schools. Primary schools could offer different results as easily as same level schools when traced throughout the nation. How would these varying factors affect the leadership style of the introverted administrator? Would servant leadership still be dominant, or would leaders gravitate to authentic, charismatic, or perhaps another style based on location. How would leaders from different areas across the map define introversion? Would introversion be considered a strength or a weakness? How would the early years of introverted leaders from diverse regions and populations define introversion and measure the impact of the formative years on the present leadership trajectory? Clearly, the possibilities are endless, and this current study has merely cracked open the door to countless possibilities for future studies.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

The timing of this study of introverted leadership is fascinating. In the current situation with the ensuing pandemic in the United States, American society has seen a shift toward online shopping. This is just one feature of the move from the traditional brick-and-mortar, face-to-face customer experience of previous generations. In the last decade or two, and recently resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, circumstances have pushed us online in other areas such as work, worship, and school. Schools are doing a balancing act between face-to-face students and virtual classes. In some cases, classes are hybrid and may include in-person learners as well as virtual students. If, or as, the face of education transforms, perhaps the dominant personality of leadership may change as well. School was once defined by brick-and-mortar buildings with students who changed classes based on a dedicated bell schedule. Now, school and advanced degrees can be earned virtually, as well as face-to-face. Further study may hinge on the following questions: How does virtual education affect introverted leadership? How are the jobs

and responsibilities defined by introverted assistant principals in a school lead by an extraverted head principal? Does extraverted leadership support or hinder the development or promote the motivation of introverted campus leadership? The participants in this study all identified with servant leadership. An opportunity for further exploration may entail a study that focuses specifically on the various types of introverted leadership. Additional studies may be conducted on more than one campus, district, city, and state. Studies could be piloted in other countries to see if the results would be similar or different. There is power in numbers, and with quantitative or mixed-methods studies on a similar subject, the attention may potentially change the direction of the tide regarding the strengths of introverted leadership within professional leadership positions.

### **Recommendations for Educational Professionals**

Hiring teams and staffing departments, who in the past may have hired a traditional, extraverted administrator, can use this study to evaluate a broader range of candidates. Extraverts have their place in school leadership, but they are unable to fulfill all of the jobs that are required for organizational success. Collaboration, planning, team building, and fostering relationships are more closely affiliated with introverted leaders. Furthermore, if the current, pandemic-necessitated move to virtual classrooms continues, it will provide a playing field more suited to the introverted personality. Hopefully, this study can open the eyes of those in the position of hiring and provide more opportunities for a brand of leader that has been underadvertised until this point.

Regardless of their personality type, teachers should realize from this study the need to engage introverted students. These students in the years to come may potentially assume leadership positions. The consideration in the curriculum to nurture introverted talent most likely

will not have an immediate result, and the payoff will be years in the future. Former introverted students may potentially have the tools, courage, and belief system to apply for jobs that introverts from past generations did not risk attaining. I cannot neglect my classroom instructional mistakes of failing to notice the introverted students while the extraverted ones were content to volunteer and claim every opportunity to be the stars of the show. Introverted leaders resisted sharing the obvious classroom performance requirements and kept their directorial and planning strengths well concealed. Hopefully, teachers of every subject and grade level can tailor the course curriculum to develop leadership in the introverted and the extraverted students. According to Cain (TED, 2012), one-third to half of the population is introverted, and ignoring this percent of the population will leave an obvious, avoidable void in educational leadership for years to come. The big picture reveals that change does not need to be compartmentalized to the leaders at the top. If teachers in the classroom notice and cultivate the talents of those learners who may not be waving their hands to volunteer or participate, the skills and leadership of those students have the potential to unlock previously closed minds and open doors to the future that will include introverted leaders.

This study can serve as a springboard for teachers to instruct students and develop their leadership potential. It can also inspire confidence in introverted classroom teachers to justify their strengths that fall outside of the traditional, extraverted ideal. Additionally, this study can encourage parents and student support groups to see the value of introverted leadership rather than its limitations. Finally, this study can fill in important gaps in existing research and scholarship in terms of understanding the value of introverted leadership for school administrators, providing more opportunities for career choices and leadership prospects of introverted leaders.

## Reflections From the Researcher

This journey began with my desire to right a wrong in my professional career as a theatre teacher. I spent nearly 30 years tailoring lessons and devoting countless hours of rehearsal time to cultivating the talents of the extraverts in my classroom, while the introverted learners were either forced to adapt or left in the shadows. Susan Cain's Ted Talk (TED, 2012), *The Power of Introverts*, opened my eyes to a population that I had previously not noticed. As I later discovered, ignoring introverts was not just a syndrome of the drama classroom, it happened in other areas as well. As the proposal for my study began to form, I noticed that the oversight of introverted leadership in education was creating a void. It seems that American mainstream culture readily recognizes extraverted leaders. Extraverts are seen as the face of the school and the star of the organization. However, there are more responsibilities that need to be addressed in order for a school to run smoothly and successfully. Areas such as team building, instructional leadership, and incentives for academic improvement can easily be obtained through the leadership of introverted administrators.

To be totally transparent, I dreamed of myself playing the leading role in a superhero movie and that this dissertation would change education in classrooms across the country. But the results of this study are unlikely to save the world. Perhaps, careful consideration of this study's findings could change someone's world. An introverted leader may be given a chance to fill an administrative position and use that professional placement to impact students, teachers, and the community to address areas that require their special brand of guidance. The dynamics and roles of educational leaders are constantly changing and adapting. Introverted leaders are needed to fulfill very specific roles such as collaboration, team building, and the attainment of academic goals. These objectives would be daunting if left to the leadership of one personality

type. Clearly, there is room for the utilization of more than one type of leadership personality to satisfy the needs of numerous campus, teacher, and student configurations.

Maybe this study will open the eyes of not just those charged with filling leadership positions but also the introverts themselves, who never felt that they identified with the world's definition of leadership. Hopefully, this study inspires introverted individuals to leave their comfort zones and embrace their leadership potential. Leadership does not come in a one-size-fits-all definition; running an educational organization takes more than one type of leader to address the needs of more than one type of student and staff member. Change is inevitable, school is evolving, and educational leadership needs more than a singular variety of leadership personality to address the needs of the future. It is the sincere prayer of this researcher that introverted leaders may finally be given an honored place at the table so that everyone can appreciate the attributes of their talents and quiet strength.



## References

- Achor, S. (2011). *The happiness advantage: The seven principles of positive psychology that fuel success and performance at work*. Broadway Books.
- Allen, M. S., & McCarthy, P. J. (2016). Be happy in your work: The role of positive psychology in working with change and performance. *Journal of Change Management*, 16(1), 55–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2015.1128471>
- Amankwaa, L. (2016). Creating protocols for trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 23(3), 121–127. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29694754/>
- Ardolino, E. (Director). (1987). *Dirty dancing* [Film]. Great American Film Limited Partnership.
- Baumann, J. R., Johnson, B. L., & Lane, N. J. (2019). Doing better: Quality improvement for human subjects research protection programs. *Journal of Health Care Compliance*, 21(6), 21–26.
- Bendersky, C., & Shah, N. P. (2012). The downfall of extraverts and rise of neurotics: The dynamic process of status allocation in task groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(2), 387–406. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0316>
- Cain, S. (2013). *Quiet: The power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking*. Broadway Books.
- Cawthon, D. L. (1996). Leadership: The great man theory revisited. *Business Horizons*, 39(3), 1–4. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0007-6813\(96\)90001-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0007-6813(96)90001-4)
- Clifton, D. O., & Harter, J. K. (2003). Investing in strengths. In K. Cameron, J. Dutton, & R. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline* (pp. 111–121). Berrett-Koehler.

- Conger, J. A. (2016). Charismatic leadership. In G. Hickman (Ed.), *Leading organizations: Perspectives for a new era* (3rd ed., pp. 87–104). SAGE Publications.
- Crăciun, A., & Sofian, N. M. (2015). Introversion and management – between classical barriers and opportunity of the upgraded perception. *Romanian Journal of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Hypnosis*, 2(1), 1–9. [http://www.rjcbth.ro/image/data/v2-i1/V2I1\\_A Craciun & NM Sofian\\_RJBTH.pdf](http://www.rjcbth.ro/image/data/v2-i1/V2I1_A Craciun & NM Sofian_RJBTH.pdf)
- Daresh, J. C., Gantner, M. W., Dunlap, K., & Hvizdak, M. (2000). Words from “the trenches”: Principals’ perspectives on effective school leadership characteristics. *Journal of School Leadership*, 10(1), 69–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460001000105>
- Deci, E. L. (1996). *Why we do what we do*. Penguin.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2006). Hedonia, eudaimonia, and well-being: An introduction. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9018-1>
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). Introduction. The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed., pp. 1–26). SAGE Publications.
- Erkutlu, H., & Chafra, J. (2019). Leader psychopathy and organizational deviance: The mediating role of psychological safety and the moderating role of moral disengagement. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 12(4), 197–213. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJWHM-12-2018-0154/full/html>
- Estrada, C. A., Isen, A. M., & Young, M. J. (1997). Positive affect facilitates integration of information and decreases anchoring in reasoning among physicians. *Organizational*

*Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 72(1), 117–135.

<https://doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1997.2734>

Eysenck, H. J. (2017). *The biological basis of personality*. Routledge. (Original work published 1967).

Farrell, M. (2017). Extrovert and introvert leaders. *Journal of Library Administration*, 57(4), 436–443. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2017.1300455>

Fields, J., Thompson, K., & Hawkins, J. (2015). Servant leadership: Teaching the helping professional. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 14(4), 92–105.

<https://doi.org/10.12806/v14/i4/r2>

Finkle, J. (2019, June). From behind the curtain to center stage. *Association for Talent Development*, 72–74. <https://www.td.org/magazines/td-magazine/from-behind-the-curtain-to-center-stage>

Fitzpatrick, R., & Boulton, M. (1994). Qualitative methods for assessing health care. *Quality and Safety in Health Care*, 3(2), 107–113. <https://doi.org/10.1136/qshc.3.2.107>

Fusch, P., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2018). Denzin’s paradigm shift: Revisiting triangulation in qualitative research. *Journal of Social Change*, 10(1), 19–32.

<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/jsc/vol10/iss1/2/>

Fusco, T., O’Riordan, S., & Palmer, S. (2015). Authentic leaders are ... conscious, competent, confident, and congruent: A grounded theory of group coaching and authentic leadership development. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 10(2), 131–148.

<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2015-48361-003>

Geisel, T. S. (1954). *Horton hears a who! and other sounds of Dr. Seuss*. Random House.

- Gembola, M. (2014). Quietness: A lost virtue in a loud world. *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 28(2), 39–52.  
[https://www.academia.edu/8600826/Quietness\\_A\\_Lost\\_Virtue\\_in\\_a\\_Loud\\_World](https://www.academia.edu/8600826/Quietness_A_Lost_Virtue_in_a_Loud_World)
- Godsey, M. (2015, September 28). When schools overlook introverts. *The Atlantic*.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/09/introverts-at-school-overlook/407467/>
- Goldsmith, M. (2014, October 7). *Five qualities of the leader of the future: Coaching for leaders* [Video File]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Xsu4eOk9Dg&feature=youtu.be>
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (2016). Leading for the long future. In G. R. Hickman (Ed.), *Leading organizations: Perspectives for a new era* (3rd ed., pp. 56–60). SAGE Publications.
- Gonzalez, A. (2016). A quiet leader. *English Leadership Quarterly*, 38(3), 10.  
<https://library.ncte.org/journals/elq/issues/v38-3/28006>
- Grant, A. M., Gino, F., & Hofmann, D. A. (2011). Reversing the extraverted leadership advantage: The role of employee proactivity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(3), 528–550. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.61968043>
- Gratton, L. (2016). Workplace 2025: What will it look like? In G. R. Hickman (Ed.), *Leading organizations: Perspectives for a new era* (3rd ed., pp. 34–45). SAGE Publications.
- Green, T. C., Jame, R., & Lock, B. (2019). Executive extraversion: Career and firm outcomes. *Accounting Review*, 94(3), 177–204. <https://doi.org/10.2308/accr-52208>
- Haber-Curran, P., & Tillapaugh, D. (2013). Leadership learning through student-centered and inquiry-focused approaches to teaching adaptive leadership. *Journal of Leadership*

*Education*, 12(1), 92–116. [https://journalofleadershiped.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/12\\_1\\_Haber-Curran-and-Tillapaugh.pdf](https://journalofleadershiped.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/12_1_Haber-Curran-and-Tillapaugh.pdf)

Jacques-Hamilton, R., Sun, J., & Smillie, L. D. (2019). Costs and benefits of acting extraverted: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 148(9), 1538–1556. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000516>

Jung, C. G. (2014). *Collected works of C.G. Jung, volume 6: Psychological types*. Princeton University Press

Kahnweiler, J. (2018). *The introverted leader: Building on your quiet strength*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Kennedy, M. (2006). *A guide to interview guides: Guidelines and policies*. Michigan State University, Digital Advisor.

<https://msu.edu/user/mkennedy/digitaladvisor/Research/interviewing.htm>

Kise, J., & Russell, B. (2009). You can't do it all! A sensible way to distribute school leadership roles. *Principal*, 89(2), 36–40.

[https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/resources/2/Principal/2009/nov/N-D\\_p36.pdf](https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/resources/2/Principal/2009/nov/N-D_p36.pdf)

Korkut, I. C., & Llaci, S. (2016). School leader self-development. *Journal of Science, Innovation and New Technology*, 1(15), 19–26.

Lahman, M. K. E. (2018). *Ethics in social science research: Becoming culturally responsive*. SAGE Publications.

Lamm, K. W., Sheikh, E., Carter, H. S., & Lamm, A. J. (2017). Predicting undergraduate leadership student goal orientation using personality traits. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 16(1), 18–33. <https://doi.org/10.12806/v16/i1/r2>

- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management*, 40(1), 5–22.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.
- Lyons, L. M., & Voges, S. N. (2018). Shift happens—Transitioning into a global mindset in the first-year through reflective experiential learning. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*, 9(1), 17–29.  
[http://www.ijonte.org/FileUpload/ks63207/File/ijonte\\_2018.1\\_complete.pdf](http://www.ijonte.org/FileUpload/ks63207/File/ijonte_2018.1_complete.pdf)
- Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9(2), 111–131.  
<http://sonjalyubomirsky.com/wp-content/themes/sonjalyubomirsky/papers/LSS2005.pdf>
- Mann, R. D. (1959). A review of the relationships between personality and performance in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 56(4), 241–270. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0044587>
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.  
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0054346>
- Mestry, R. (2017). Principals' perspectives and experiences of their instructional leadership functions to enhance learner achievement in public schools. *Journal of Education (University of KwaZulu-Natal)*, 69, 257–280. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2520-9868/i69a11>
- Myers, I. B., & Myers, P. (1995). *Gifts differing: Understanding personality type*. CPP Books.
- Nicolaides, A., & McCallum, D. C. (2013). Inquiry in action for leadership in turbulent times: Exploring the connections between transformative learning and adaptive leadership. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 11(4), 246–260.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1541344614540333>

- Northouse, P. G. (2016). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. SAGE Publications.
- Parveen, S., & Ramzan, S. I. (2013). To study the relationship between creativity and personality among high school students. *Journal on Educational Psychology*, 6(3), 50–55.  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1101806>
- Pierson, R. (2013). *Rita Pierson on supporting students* [Video Photograph]. PBS TED Talks Education. <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/ted-talks-education/photos-2/-slide3>
- Probst, B. (2015). The eye regards itself: Benefits and challenges of reflexivity in qualitative social work research. *Social Work Research*, 39(1), 37–48.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svu028>
- Punch, K. F. (2014). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Queen. (1977). We are the champions [Song]. On *News of the World*. EMI.  
<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/queen/wearethechampions.html>
- Rath, T. (2007). *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. Gallup Press.
- RoAne, S. (2017, May 22). *How to bring out the best in introverts*. Society for Human Resource Management. <https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/employee-relations/Pages/How-to-Bring-out-the-Best-in-Introverts-.aspx>
- Russell, J. F. (2008). Enthusiastic educational leadership. *Florida Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 1(2), 79–97. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ902992.pdf>
- Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. (2018). *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*. SAGE Publications.
- Skidmore, B. (2020). Applications of positive psychology toward leadership in early childhood education. *Exchange*, 251, 20–24.

<http://www.childcareexchange.com/article/applications-of-positive-psychology-toward-leadership-in-early-childhood-education/5025120/>

Smith, D. F. (2018). Mining the gold that is your introvert employee. *Journal of Financial Planning*, 24–25. <https://www.financialplanningassociation.org/learn/journal>

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications.

Stephens-Craig, D., Kuofie, M., & Dool, R. (2015). Perception of introverted leaders by mid to high-level leaders. *Journal of Marketing and Management*, 6(1), 62–75.  
<https://search.proquest.com/openview/ed6b7acf7b58636f8e8393fb4f66f223/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2032031>

Stogdill, R. M. (1948). Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature. *Journal of Psychology*, 25(1), 35–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1948.9917362>

Stogdill, R. M. (1974). *Handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research*. Free Press.

TED. (2012, March 2). *Susan Cain: The power of introverts* [Video file]. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0KYU2j0TM4>

Teymournejad, K., & Elghaei, R. (2017). Effect of transformational leadership on the creativity of employees: An empirical investigation. *Engineering, Technology & Applied Science Research*, 7(1), 1413–1419. <https://doi.org/10.48084/etasr.765>

Thomas, D. R. (2017). Feedback from research participants: Are member checks useful in qualitative research? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 14(1), 23–41.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2016.1219435>

Turaga, R. (2017). What maketh an effective leader. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, 11(4), 65–75.  
[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3220394](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3220394)



- Vergauwe, J., Wille, B., Hofmans, J., Kaiser, R. B., & De Fruyt, F. (2018). The double-edged sword of leader charisma: Understanding the curvilinear relationship between charismatic personality and leader effectiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *114*(1), 110–130. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000147>
- Walters, V., & James, T. (2020). ANTS and POTS: Do they change lives? Students' perceptions on the value of positive psychology concepts. *Student Success*, *11*(1), 46–54. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.v11i1.1461>
- Weiner, J. M. (2016). Under my thumb. *Journal of School Leadership*, *26*(2), 334–364. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105268461602600206>
- Welch, D., Grossaint, K., Reid, K., & Walker, C. (2014). Strengths-based leadership development: Insights from expert coaches. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *66*(1), 20–37. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000002>
- Whitman, W. (1892). O me! O life! In W. Whitman (Ed.), *Leaves of grass* (pp. 139–140). David McKay Publications.
- Wilmot, M. P., Wanberg, C. R., Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., & Ones, D. S. (2019). Extraversion advantages at work: A quantitative review and synthesis of the meta-analytic evidence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *104*(12), 1447–1470. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000415>
- Yakin, B. (Director). (2000). *Remember the titans* [Film]. Jerry Bruckheimer Films.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

## **Appendix A: Interview Guide**

### ***Self-Identification as an Introvert:***

- You identify yourself as an “introvert.” What does it mean to you?
- When and how did you identify yourself as an introvert?

### ***Probing and Follow-Up Questions:***

- Tell me a little about your childhood. What was it like to grow up in your family?
- Did education play a role? If so, who or what encouraged you to pursue education? Did you need encouragement?
- Thinking back about your childhood, what kind of child were you? Were you shy? Did you easily build friendships? Were you active in participating in class activities? Was it easy for you to express yourself?
- Would you share any of your experiences in high school that are relevant to your self-concept?
- How did you make the decision to pursue higher education? Was it your own decision? Did you need encouragement?
- When an undergraduate student, how did you conceive of your identity? That is, being an introvert or an extravert? Please explain and provide examples.
- Similarly, when a graduate student, how did you conceive of your identity? That is, being an introvert or an extravert? Please explain and provide examples.

### ***Introverted Leadership:***

- What does leadership mean to you? Similarly, what does introverted leadership mean to you?
- How do you think you demonstrate introverted leadership?
- What are the strengths of introverted leadership?

### ***Probing and Follow-Up Questions:***

- What was your path to this leadership position? Were there people or events that were instrumental in your choosing or attaining this position? Please explain and provide examples.
- Can you identify yourself with any particular type of leadership? If so, which one? If not, why not?
- What does it mean to you to be an introverted leader? Please elaborate.
- Speaking of introverted leadership, can you identify with any known, to you, leadership types that explicate introverted leadership? If so, then what are they? Please elaborate.
- Thinking about your day-to-day professional responsibilities, could you identify specific features of your leadership that make you an effective leader? Please explain.

- Can you identify these features as your strengths? That is, the strengths of your introverted leadership? In other words, when it comes to your professional practice, how do you identify yourself as an effective introverted leader?

*Concluding Questions:*

- If you are to address a broad audience of educational leaders, what would you like to tell them about your experience of introverted leadership?
- Is there any additional information that you would like to share with me?

## Appendix B: Consent Form

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Jill Hotz, and I am a doctoral student at Abilene Christian University. As part of my degree program, I am conducting a dissertation research project, A Case Study of Introverted Leadership in a Suburban High School in Central Texas.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore ways in which high school leaders identify themselves as introverts and demonstrate the strengths of introverted leadership within the parameters of their professional roles. This study focuses on several self-identified introverted leaders at a public high school in a suburban Texas school district.

The following research questions guide this study:

- How do high school leaders describe themselves as introverts?
- What are the distinctive features that they ascribe to their introverted leadership?
- How do they demonstrate the strengths of their leadership within the scope of their professional roles?

You are invited to participate in a semistructured qualitative interview. At the time of the interview, a set of questions pertaining to your experiences as an introverted leader will be asked. The approximate length of the interview will be between 60–90 minutes, if not longer, which is a characteristic of narrative interviews.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and you can withdraw from it at any time with no consequence to you. Follow-up interviews may be requested depending on the research needs and purposes. The interview will be audio-recorded. It can also be video-recorded only with your consent. The interview will be transcribed verbatim, and the transcript of the interview will be submitted to you for verification of accuracy.

To ensure full confidentiality, the interview transcripts and all files and data of your participation in this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet for three years following the completion of the research and then destroyed. All computer files for the study will be kept on a protected server.

The interview will be given an identification code, and a pseudonym will be assigned to you to keep your name and personal information fully confidential. Excerpts from the interview transcript can be included in the dissertation report or future publications. Nonetheless, under no circumstances will your name or any identifier appear in these writings. In the future, if biographical information were needed for a publication, an additional release form would be sent to you for review.

There are minimal potential risks to participate in this study. Such potential risks may include uncomfortable feelings shared by the participants about their past or present experiences. However, as a researcher, I will make an ultimate effort to create an ethically appropriate, welcoming, and comfortable atmosphere for participation in this study.

The benefits of this study will be the satisfaction of sharing information and revealing potential strengths that may open professional doors for future introverted leaders.

This study is being conducted in part to fulfill my doctoral requirements for the EdD program at Abilene Christian University. It is approved by the ACU IRB. I would be extremely appreciative if you would sign this form on the line below to show that you have read and agreed to the contents of the study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at [jill.hotz@xxxx.org](mailto:jill.hotz@xxxx.org). Additional questions can be directed to my dissertation chair, Dr. xxxxx xxxxx, [xxxxx@xxx.edu](mailto:xxxxx@xxx.edu). If you have concerns that need to be addressed with someone not connected with the study, you may contact Dr. xxxxx xxxxx, ACU IRB Chair, at [xxxxx@acu.edu](mailto:xxxxx@acu.edu).

Please confirm with your signature below your agreement to participate in this study.

Thank you,

Jill Hotz

**I consent to participate in this study.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[ Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date]

**I give my permission to videotape this interview.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[ Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date]

## Appendix C: IRB Approval Letter

### ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

*Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World*

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103  
325-674-2885



September 1, 2020

Jill Hotz  
Department of Education  
Abilene Christian University

Dear Jill,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "A Case Study of Introverted Leadership in a Suburban High School in Central Texas",

(IRB# 20-125 )is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

*Megan Roth*

Megan Roth, Ph.D.  
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs