

National College of Ireland  
Project Submission Sheet

**Student Name:** Juan Pablo Jimenez Salazar

**Student ID:** 20235054

**Programme:** MSc in Management (MSCMGMT2) **Year:** 2024

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**Lecturer:** Michael Cleary-Gaffney

**Submission Due Date:** 10 Aug 2024

**Project Title:** A study of introverts and their perception of informal leadership and introversion

**Word Count:** 11000

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**Date:** 10 Aug 2024

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# AI Acknowledgement Supplement

## Research Methods and Dissertation

### Dissertation

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	Have you clearly presented the problem or issue which is to be addressed in the opening paragraphs of the introduction?	
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	Does each paragraph just outline what someone else has written? For example, does it only contain one reference (albeit multiple times) to the same piece of work? <b>If so, please revisit.</b>	
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	Have you provided summaries of each possible research method without ever linking it to your own work? <b>If so, please revisit.</b>	

	Have you been able to link your methodological approach to other research, e.g. in terms of adopting a similar approach?	
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	What did you do with what you collected? Offer data analysis, i.e. how you treated the data. This is NOT what they actually said – that comes in the next section! Here you want to be clear about how you treated the data not necessarily exactly what you found.	
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	Does your methodology section address your research's ethical considerations? Have you built upon the <i>Ethical Review Application Form</i> submitted alongside your research proposal?	
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A study of introverts and their perception of informal leadership and introversion

By Juan Pablo Jimenez Salazar

MSc in Management (MSCMGMT2)

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2024

**Title**

A study of introverts and their perception between informal leadership and introversion.

**Abstract**

Personality has been studied for centuries, and over the years, researchers have developed multiple tests to learn about individuals' personalities. Shahzad, et al (2021) define personality traits as characteristics and qualities that all individuals possess and make them unique, and also mention the Five Factor Model as a well-accepted system that identifies five major facets of personality: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience.

One of the most evident facets is extroversion, statistics suggest that between 20% and up to 50% of the global population are introverts. There have been many studies regarding extraversion and leadership, mainly in enterprises and corporations, but there is limited knowledge about introversion and leadership, and even less about introversion and informal leadership.

This study focuses on perceptions of introverted individuals who perform an informal leadership role. Identifying aspects of introversion in informal leadership can help introverts learn from what others have done to exercise leadership roles. It is also beneficial for organisations to develop better selection processes that fit the real need avoiding unnecessary economic and human costs. This last aspect is key, according to Leino (2022), the nature of how organisations work is changing, moving away from hierarchical leadership structures to a more collaborative setting where informal leaders play a crucial role.

## Declaration

### Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

#### National College of Ireland

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*(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)*

**Name:** Juan Pablo Jimenez Salazar

**Student Number:** 20235054

**Degree for which thesis is submitted:** MSc in Management (MSCMGMT2)

#### Material submitted for award

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- (b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
- (c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository NORMA (thesis reports and projects).
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**Signature of research student:** Juan Pablo J. S.

**Date:** 10 Aug 2024

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank my supervisor Michael Cleary-Gaffney for his thoughtful comments and recommendations on this dissertation. I am also thankful to the School of Business and all its member's staff for all the considerate guidance. Many thanks to all participants who took part in the study and enabled this research to be possible. And my biggest thanks to my family for all the support you have shown me through this research, the culmination of three years of learning. My wife Liz, thanks for all your support, without you, it could not have been possible, you have been amazing, and to my daughter Emma who has been next to me all this time!

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## **Introduction**

For centuries, the human race has been fascinated with the study of personality, multiples studies have been carried out to analyse different aspects of behaviour and personality including and not limited to introversion and extraversion, and even though there is no consensus on an exact number of how many people are introverts or extraverts, these studies commonly find between 20% and 50% of the population or respective samples are introverts (Stephens-Craig et al., 2015).

Identifying personality traits such as introversion and extraversion is important because unconsciously, it could lead to perceiving people or behaviours in a certain way. For example, studies have shown that what people perceive as leaders and leadership is directly related to the representation of extraverted individuals in managerial positions (Rudolph et al., 2021), which raises the question of how leadership and introversion are related.

The Five Factor Model defines extraversion as the individual who is higher in sociability, dominance, and positive emotions, opposite to this, an introverted individual is considered someone who is lower on these characteristics (Costa and McCrae, 1988). It is well received and accepted, that extraversion is linked to leadership, multiple types of research are confirming the extraverted leadership advantage, which describes how extraverts are more likely to emerge as leaders than introverts (Spark and O'Connor, 2020). Not surprisingly, extraversion is the most commonly identifiable personality trait out of the five main personality facets. (McCord and Joseph, 2020).

Multiple studies such as the one by McCord and Joseph (2020), and also Spark and O'Connor (2020), focus on formal leadership positions, more specifically, they have analysed samples of managers versus subordinates in formal settings (enterprises and corporations).

The literature also provides evidence about how introverts, if acting more extraverted, have more chances to emerge as leaders (Spark and O'Connor, 2021). At the same time, it shows how some introverts want to become or be perceived more as extraverts due to social preference and acceptance towards extraversion (Lawn et al., 2019).

As mentioned by Leino (2022), informal leadership is broadly present in many settings, from formal and well-structured organisations up to non-formal settings such as community volunteering groups, residents' associations, small groups in churches, etc., where there is no hierarchy nor the formal position of designated power. Nonetheless, there is not much mentioned in the literature about the relationship between informal leadership and introversion.

On the other hand, the relationship between introversion and leadership is not as clear nor accepted, though Karlsen and Langvik (2021) suggest that introverts tend to take more time to analyse and explore different ideas, and also mention that up to some extent, introverts prioritise depth trying to really understand a given situation or potential solutions instead of rapidly going for superficial decisions.

Another unknown aspect is the process that an individual follows or goes through to emerge as a leader. Spark and O'Connor (2020) mention a brief description of how introverts have higher chances of emerging as leaders when deliberately acting as extraverts, however, also confirm there is not enough specific knowledge in regard to how leaders emerge.

This study aims to answer specifically in regard to informal leadership, what is the perceived perception of the link between informal leadership and introversion? And, what behaviours do informal leaders enact to be regarded as leaders?

Introverts can benefit from this study by gaining insights into what other introverted informal leaders have been through, this is relevant not only from an individual's perspective, even organisations can leverage this information given how leadership structures are changing from hierarchies of managers and subordinates, into more collaborative structures where people not holding managerial positions have influence across organisations (Leino, 2022).

The study presented here includes a literature review in regard to leadership and extraversion, analysing in both cases perceptions, behaviours, and beliefs. Then the study was narrowed down to informal leadership, and finally focused on the relationship between introversion and informal leadership given that this is not covered in the literature. The instrument used for

this research was a thematic analysis, multiple participants were interviewed, and the data was analysed to find patterns. This study closes with some discussion based on findings, accompanied by a conclusion and suggested next steps for future studies on similar topics.

## **Literature Review**

There is no doubt about the relevance of topics such as personality and leadership. There is vast literature ranging from leadership within organisations, and leadership in general, as there are studies covering multiple personality traits. In order to understand what has been studied in regard to introversion and informal leadership, a detailed search of the literature was completed. This literature search included but was not limited to topics such as leadership, informal leadership, personality traits, introversion, extraversion, and others.

To identify titles for the literature review, Google Scholar and the NCI Library were the main search engines or tools used. The initial search was focused on leadership and extraversion, nevertheless, there is a lot of research already done about these topics, on the other hand, there is very limited data in terms of informal leadership and introversion.

As mentioned before, there is vast information in the literature on leadership, and similarly for extraversion. Some of the topics studied in these articles include leadership, and informal leadership, as well as personality traits and behaviour. Some of the studies touch base on what is known as leadership advantage, which in short is considered as favouritism towards extraverts. Other studies mention how there could be mistreatment as a result of perceptions linked to personality traits and behaviour.

To carry out this study, the initial literature review was limited to leadership and extraversion, focusing on perceptions, behaviours, and beliefs. Next, the search changed to introversion and informal leadership, given that this last topic has not been extensively studied, and last the link with introversion was also added to bridge this gap in the literature. In addition, articles in regard to ambivert, biases, leadership advantage, mistreatment, and other topics will be reviewed given the relevance to this study.

## ***Leadership***

The literature covers extensively the topic of leadership, from leadership in business to different types of leadership, and the connection between leadership and extraversion. One pattern that was present in most of the articles reviewed as part of this study, was the perception that people have of leaders and leadership, and how it is connected in many cases to extroversion.

## ***Perceptions***

Shafique and Loo-See (2018) mentioned there is a psychological influence directly linked to the perceptions of leaders, this is a preconceived idea that has been influenced by external factors. Adewale (2020) studied the perception employees have of their leaders, and also the perception of the leadership culture before and after joining the company, in some cases, the perception of employees changes over time.

The study conducted by Frieder et al. (2018) describes the role leaders play in shaping the employees' perception of their jobs, by delivering clues or signs. Another study mentions how leaders are able to influence the perception of employees in regard to how achievable goals are, this also reflects the motivation and level of engagement between leaders and employees (Verawati and Hartono, 2020).

Another aspect of perception is respect. According to Rudolph et al. (2021), the perception of employees in regard to the respect of their leaders is directly linked to the respect employees have toward their leaders, in other words, this perception of respect cannot be generalised given that it is affected by individual owns beliefs. Respect is not the only attribute discussed in the literature, Reis and Grady (2019) describe how gender influences the perception of employees and leaders, and how it impacts the organisational structure. The authors indicate how the masculine presence in leadership results in a more masculine leadership style, affecting the perception not due to effective leadership, but instead by those who are in leadership positions. The employees' perception of masculine leadership structures tends to notice authority as a more masculine behaviours, this results in women having fewer chances to emerge as leaders based on the perception that they will not execute the same level of authority.

Another aspect of leadership is perceived, is how people think of themselves as leaders. This was studied by Booher et al. (2020), and one of their findings was that when people are not aware of their potential as leaders, they do not consider or think of what impact they could make on others, which results in people missing opportunities to influence others in a positive way in circumstances that are within their control, in a way, it contributes to define who can potentially emerge as leader. In a similar way, Zaar et al. (2020) identified that what people think of themselves suggests if they identify as leaders or followers, once again, individual's own perception playing a crucial role in determining leaders. Furthermore, the study by Dwyer (2019) shows how the success of leaders is also linked to how effective they think they are, higher perceptions of effectiveness relate to the perception of leadership effectiveness.

### *Behaviours*

The importance of the relationship between leaders and followers is explained by Abbas (2018), who indicates that part of the leader's effectiveness depends on how the leader's behaviour impacts followers, and in the same way, how followers' behaviour makes an impact on the leader. This is a two-way channel where the effectiveness is directly impacted, followers not being heard of, end up in more authoritative leadership style. This aspect of effectiveness and the relationship between leaders and followers was also discussed by Bertsch et al. (2017) who mentioned how leaders help followers achieve their goals, which positively impact performance, this reflects followers being supported by their respective leaders.

A key factor in terms of behaviours is the moral aspect, Adewale (2020) describes how people can be positively influenced if certain virtuous behaviours are shown, this also indicates how crucial it is to understand the environment when it comes to impacting people. This aspect plays a dual role, well accepted good behaviours can positively influence the environment, while negative or diminishing behaviours jeopardise the overall environment and effectiveness.

The impact that behaviour can have on people can be seen across different scenarios. For example, in sports, as mentioned by Figgins et al., (2019), athletes are influenced by their coaches, and in religion or faith, followers also are influenced by their leaders and their devotion (Low and Ayoko, 2020).

Even the pursuit of learning can be influenced by leaders. According to Xie (2019), people relate positively when others show as role models, as someone who can be trusted. In an opposite way, certain behaviours can be perceived as aggressive, even if the intention was to show authority, which indicates that people in general are making subjective assessments based on their perceptions, which makes it difficult for leaders or those in leadership positions to determine what is accepted, and what could be deemed as not appropriate given that everyone could perceive differently (Reis and Grady, 2019).

### *Beliefs*

According to Reis and Grady (2019), leaders and non-leaders are influenced by their own beliefs, and some of these beliefs could be shared, nevertheless, when it comes to the social order built by an organisation, a leader is only responsible for part of the constructed belief, a leader is not entirely responsible for how followers perceive and how they create their own belief. This concept was expanded by Shafique and Loo-See (2018), who added that in corporate settings, these beliefs help leaders in performing their roles, influencing the culture of the organisation, and how members relate to their leaders.

Lastly, other topics such as the behaviour theory of leadership were examined by multiple authors. For example, Verawati and Hartono (2020) claim the behaviour theory of leadership parts from the premise that leaders are or can be made, instead of being limited to natural abilities one can be born with. Furthermore, the authors note how the leader's actions are what matters instead of someone's mental qualities.

Similarly, a leader's self-beliefs are key to shaping and rendering success, a positive approach has higher chances of succeeding (Huszczo and Endres, 2017). From the point of view of employees, their attitude could potentially affect how they perceive leaders' behaviours, employees could be biased by their own beliefs (Langford et al., 2017). Another aspect of perception and beliefs is what Wille et al. (2018) mentioned in regard to gender, noting that there is a perception that beliefs are different when it comes to comparing between males and females, nevertheless, their study shows the opposite, male and female leaders are fundamentally similar.

The main idea behind all the leadership information reviewed in this study is to be aware of the different corners that affect leadership, from how leaders are perceived by others, how leaders' behaviours are judged, how beliefs from leaders and others also affect leadership, all these aspects influence how leaders and others comprehend leadership. There is no magic formula for leadership, and the different perceptions could be challenging to understand.

### ***Extraversion***

There is a lot said about extraversion, to mention some examples, extraverts are characterised as being outgoing, brave, aggressive, and even positive (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016; Dust et al., 2021; Jacques-Hamilton et al., 2019; Seger-Guttmann and Medler-liraz, 2016). Other researchers have described extraverts as people who are known for being passionate, active, kind, social, confident, and always in the look for enjoyment (Abbas, 2018; Conard, 2020; Hu et al., 2019; Mitchell et al., 2021).

Other studies describe people who identify as extroverts as those how are willing to take control and be in power, extroverts also do not hesitate to voice their opinions and ideas, a distinctive aspect is their ability to be the centre of attention without being bothered, as well as proactively participating in meetings and activities, some claim they tend to stay healthy, and like to be the centre of attention in all social events (Frieder et al., 2018; Karlsen & Langvik, 2021; Lawn et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2021).

Researchers have also defined extroverts as people who tend to display authoritative behaviours, this has been commonly seen among those who hold leadership roles, which is considered a well-accepted characteristic, and for some, there is a desire to acquire this skill (Dai et al., 2019; Karlsen & Langvik, 2021; Lanaj et al., 2016; Le Sante et al., 2021).

An important aspect mentioned by Cullen-Lester et al. (2016), is that people who identify themselves as extraverted, tend to not only contribute but also to get motivated from social interactions. Levels of energy and enthusiasm raise when extroverts are socially stimulated. This was also mentioned by Dust et al. (2021) where they indicate how extroverts get energized when they interact with others, and furthermore, these levels of energy can be correlated with happiness (Jacques-Hamilton et al., 2019).

According to Dust et al. (2021), even if an individual who is not considered to be an extrovert acts as an extrovert, that can make the individual feel happier. Related to happiness, Lanaj et al. (2016) mentioned how extraverts are more likely to experience life events that turn into positive emotions, given the high stimulation perceived from external factors.

One noticeable pattern found in multiple studies is how authors share that extraverts are more stimulated by social interactions, for example, Conard (2020) mentions that extraverts prefer to socialise in large groups of people, instead of small groups like introverts would opt for. The aspect of significance is discussed by Dunaetz and Lanum (2020) who use extraversion to measure an individual's ability and tendency for social interaction.

A relevant finding is that extraverts are able to not only be energised by social interactions, but also, they can get ideas and inspiration from others, which eventually can help to drive the development of their own thoughts and ideas (Farrell, 2017). In regard to extroverts' own thoughts and ideas, other authors suggest how extroverts intentionally look for opportunities to socialise and be the centre of attention, some could even choose specific behaviours to not only blend in but to be placed at the centre (Dust et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2019; Mitchell et al., 2021).

As mentioned by Jacques-Hamilton et al. (2019), some of the extroverts' behaviours are socially desired, it depends mainly on the culture, the western culture tends to long for extravert's behaviours, while peace and calmness are more appreciated in other cultures. However, extroversion could also be perceived as something negative and can be associated with an inability or difficulty to socialise as already described by Karlsen and Langvik (2021).

### ***Extraversion and Leadership***

#### ***Perceptions***

As mentioned before, there is a vast literature in regard to the relationship between leadership and extraversion, the literature also mentions the extraverted leadership advantage, which in summary explains how extraverts are more likely to emerge as leaders than introverts (Spark and O'Connor, 2020).

Author Lee (2022) explains how the perception of leadership is strongly connected to the different angles of how extroverts socialise. The study of this perception of leadership was expanded by Taylor (2020) who concludes there is a perception of extroverts being effective leaders, then in a similar way, Mitchell et al. (2021) have mentioned that the perception of leadership is consistently predicted by extraversion.

Studies have noted leadership performance is influenced by people's perceptions, and particularly with the level of extraversion observed in the leader (Karlsen and Langvik 2021). Not surprisingly, there is also evidence of how social attributes such as charisma and positivism are used by individuals to shape their perception of ideal leader behaviour (Zigan et al., 2021).

The literature provides insights in terms of how introverts, if acting more extraverted, have more chances to emerge as leaders (Spark and O'Connor, 2021), and, there is also information related to how authentic these individuals can be perceived by others if they act as extroverts (Jacques-Hamilton et al., 2019). A study by Shahzad et al. (2020) shows that what matters to be perceived as authentic is good communication skills, which is one of the skills easily found and noticed in extroverts.

The aspect of good communication skills is inferred by Wilson et al. (2021) who explain how active participation influences the perception people have of leaders, and it is known that extroverts tend to not be afraid of voicing their opinions.

### *Behaviours*

Different studies mention common behaviours seen in leaders. Williams et al. (2018), in their study, mention how charisma, as well as moral and other caring behaviours are important for leaders, and according to the authors, these behaviours are related to extraverted behaviours as well.

A study by Jacques-Hamilton et al. (2019), also noted how charisma, enthusiasm, and confidence are linked to extroversion. Proactive behaviours in team members can be positively influenced by the leader's extraverted behaviours (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016). It is

also mentioned that introverts can emerge as leaders if they show more extraverted behaviours (Spark et al., 2018).

### ***Introversion***

There is no single and unified definition for introversion in the literature. Nevertheless, multiple types of research have characterised introverts in different ways. For example, the Five Factor Model describes introverts as those who lack the characteristics generally present in extroverts, which are highly sociable, dominant, and positive emotions (Costa and McCrae, 1988).

### ***Perceptions***

Other studies have also characterized introverts as reserved, thoughtful, and reflective (Bertsch et al., 2017; Colley, 2019; Seger-Guttmann & Medler-liraz, 2016; Lebin et al., 2019). Lebin et al. (2019) also mentioned how introverts tend to show other characteristics such as humility and their preference for their own space, and it is also mentioned how introverts are mentally drained by socialising with others. Colley (2019) notes how introverts make good listeners, the author mentions introverts seem to have a natural ability to listen, are oriented to details, and are organised.

Researchers have also found negative perceptions in regard to introverts, for example arrogant, shy, strange, negative, and bored. Nevertheless, Taylor (2020) mentioned these are misconceptions. This aspect of misconception was also studied by Lebin et al. (2019), who explained that for example shyness, implies someone is afraid of social interactions or not being accepted, however, the preference of an individual to spend time in solitude does not mean one is not friendly or capable of socialising.

### ***Informal leadership***

It is clear there is vast knowledge in regard to leadership and extraversion, but is there any other type of leadership, and is it also affected by personality traits? According to Leino (2022), informal leadership is recognised as a type of leadership, however, there is no systematic literature review about it, though it is accepted that informal leadership follows a multiple-

level approach to leadership, and is defined as leadership action and influence without a designated power position.

According to Adams-Robinson (2021), informal leadership is strictly related to knowledge, change orientation, action, communication, group, and influence., and it takes place in social and interpersonal settings. The author suggests that informal leadership influence is developed over time, when an individual, based on knowledge, conveys to others a certain vision based on something in common.

### ***Introversion and Informal Leadership***

Blevins et al (2022) completed research on extraversion and introversion in the workplace focused on twelve leading management journals published from 2009 to 2019. This research suggests how different aspects of introverts are beneficial at multiple levels in organisations, and shares how a balance between introversion and extraversion improves and reshapes the organisation's health and performance.

On the other hand, and complementary to the previous work, McCord and Joseph (2020) studied the negative responses to introversion at work, and how identifying other individuals as introverted or extraverted could create stereotypes that inaccurately reflect the individual, which might result in opportunities for mistreatment including negative outcomes such as depression, anxiety, stress, and reduced wellbeing in general.

### ***Other Studies***

Ambivert is a new concept that has not been widely accepted, and there is no universal definition, but it is gaining popularity. It implies that ambiverts are able to shift from being introverts or extroverts depending on the situation, they can adapt to multiple communication methods, and know when to listen and when to talk (Dennis, 2023).

A study performed by Farrell (2017) indicates how often the strengths of introverted leaders could be misunderstood or overlooked, because there is an expectation for leaders to behave more extraverted, this is under the perception that extravert people work well with others,

have good communication skills, actively participate in meetings, etc., which is generally seen as positive behaviour that contributes to advance the organisation.

Based on the premise that extraverts are more likely to emerge as leaders, Spark and O'Connor (2021) performed an experiment to determine if manipulating extraversion, in other words, introverts deliberately acting as extraverts, increases the chances of being recognised as a leader. The experiment confirmed that introverts acting as extraverts were perceived as leaders, opposite to this, extraverts acting as introverts had a negative effect in being perceived as leaders.

### **Research Question**

From the point of view of introverts, what's their perception of the link between informal leadership and introversion? And how does introversion affect informal leadership?

Based on the research question above, this research aims to study the perceptions introverts have in regard to their introversion, and how it affects their informal leadership. These perceptions have been built from their personal experiences.

Having a better understanding of the link between introversion and informal leadership can potentially benefit other introverts who long to explore leadership opportunities, and at the same time, it can bring awareness of how valuable and unique introverted leaders are.

### **Research Methodology**

This study aims to examine the experiences of introverted individuals who hold or have held leadership roles, to analyse the perceived perception of the link between their informal leadership and introversion. Also, this research intends to find out if these informal leaders enacted any specific behaviour in order to be regarded as leaders.

This is a qualitative study using a semi-structured interview. Qualitative research is a method to collect, analyse, and interpret what individuals say or do. The data processing could include a series of paradigms, methods, and research strategies such as interviews. One of the

advantages of qualitative research is its flexibility since there is no need for a pre-defined hypothesis (Prosek and Gibson, 2020).

Given the nature of this study, the data expresses feelings and emotions through words, and the aim is to analyse this data thoroughly, so a qualitative analysis is better suited to answer questions like how and why. A quantitative analysis approach was discarded given that this study is not based on quantifiable data.

This study aims to document and analyse what the participants perceive as the relationship between informal leadership and introversion, and their respective personal experiences that support their perceptions. Bartholomew et al. (2021) suggest a sample size of 5-10 participants to produce insightful data. Based on his study where 200 articles were analysed.

### ***Participants***

The criteria for a participant to proceed included: the participant has to be introverted, and have held an informal leadership role (previous experiences are also accepted even if the informal leadership role is not held anymore). Potential participants will use the Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales, and only those with an overall score of less than 0 will be considered (the score ranges from -500 to +500, the average score individuals who identify as introverts is -100, while the average score for the ones identified as extroverts is +100). It is important to mention that the Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales assessment can be used in quantitative analysis, however, in this study, it is only going to be used to determine if a potential participant can be categorised as introverted or extraverted.

As part of the criteria, it is also important for participants to have a common understanding of what informal leadership means, the definition mentioned by Leino (2022) will be used for this purpose. In summary, Leino defines it as a dynamic social process, where individuals exercise leadership without having formal authority over others.

All participants were recruited locally based on the student's personal network. Also, all participants have or have held an informal leadership role in settings such as a local church or community volunteering groups. To initiate the recruiting process, the topic of research was

presented, these were one-to-one conversations, and then, every participant indicated his or her interest and willingness to proceed with the assessment, to subsequently move to a potential interview based on the Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales overall score.

Every participant was provided via email or text with a link to complete an online Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales assessment (Open-Source Psychometrics Project, 2011), they were also given one week to complete this step. This step takes in average ten minutes, the Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales assessment consists of 91 short questions. Only those who scored between -500 and 0 were interviewed. This assessment can be completed from a computer or smartphone.

Once participants communicated their respective scores, they were thanked for the effort and also were made aware if they qualified to proceed with the interview. For those proceeding to an interview, it was scheduled based on interviewee and interviewer availability.

All interviews were individual or one-on-one. On the day of each interview, a link to the meeting was sent to the respective participant in advance. During the interview, the participant provided consent to recording the meeting, only audio is going to be recorded, a brief description of the study and definition of informal leadership was provided, and then interview questions were asked. Before stopping the recording, every participant was asked if there was any question or any other detail to add. All interviews were completed within the allocated 30 minutes time.

The data needed for this study is based on individual's personal experiences, and how they perceive or interpret the correlation between informal leadership and introversion. Every participant will be interviewed separately, a semi-structured interview will take place using Microsoft Teams, which features recording and transcription capabilities. During each interview, the participant must acknowledge the recording, then the purpose of the study will be briefly explained, to then begin the interview.

### ***Thematic Analysis***

The Thematic Analysis method will be used to analyse the data. As described by Braun and Clarke (2006), the Thematic Analysis, if used correctly, can provide rich and detailed data, while being a flexible and useful research tool at the same time. It is used to identify, analyse, and report patterns within data (themes).

Braun and Clarke (2006) also mentioned that every pattern or theme underlines something important that is related to the research question, which provides meaning within the data set. However, it is important to remember that, because this is a qualitative analysis, the number of occurrences of a theme across the data does not necessarily bring more importance to it.

The following guide suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) will be used to carry out this analysis. It is important to highlight that this is only a guide, this analysis is not a sequential process, instead, it is a recursive process where there is back and forth movement as needed, and the process itself develops over time (Ely et al., 1997).

- Familiarise with the data, this phase cannot be underestimated even if the data is collected like in the case of this research. Given that interviews are going to be used, the Microsoft Teams tool provides a feature to automatically transcript the recording. This is key to retaining all the data true to its original nature.
- Generate initial codes, this is to identify data points that are relevant or seem related to the research question, this process is going to be done manually and for the entire data set to later identify as many themes as possible. This is an inductive coding process where all codes are determined and assigned during the analysis, there is no deductive coding in this analysis, so, no code is predefined, instead, all codes emerge naturally from the data. The coding methods to be used are *in vivo*, these are exact words from the transcript, and also value or descriptive codes. This coding process is done manually, line by line.
- Search for themes, this consists of analysing codes to find how they can be combined to form a theme, a visual representation like a thematic map could help. Depending on the data, code could also be grouped into categories, and then categorised into themes.

- Review themes, the aim here is to find a pattern between themes.
- Define and name themes
- Produce the report

## **Results and Findings**

Nine participants completed the Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales assessment, and one of them was not interviewed due to a score above zero. All interviews were completed using Microsoft Teams, and an audio recording and transcript were captured. Then a thematic analysis was performed, where relevant elements such as patterns and commonalities were identified and coded.

The findings of this study show the different perceptions in regard to introversion and informal leaders from the point of view of introverts. It is assumed that all details provided by the participants are their own experiences. The overall score of every participant ranges from -300 to -500, for the list of participants (codes) and their respective scores see the Appendices section.

For the thematic analysis, all transcripts were compared against the audio recording, with the aim of identifying inconsistencies in the transcript, and to correct these inconsistencies, minor corrections were made to all transcripts. To make the coding and theme identification process easier, an online application called Delve was used. All transcripts were uploaded to Delve, and then an inductive coding approach was used, this was a manual process, all codes were created and assigned while doing the analysis, and codes were not predefined, instead, all codes emerged naturally from the data.

All interviews were read multiple times, line by line, to identify as many codes as possible. Then, these codes were grouped by themes, and a total of four themes were identified. Each theme was given a descriptive name.

## ***Findings***

The four themes identified are Awareness of the environment, Perception, Motivation, and Common Practices. No sub-themes were identified.

### Theme 1: Awareness of the environment

This theme describes how multiple participants are aware of their environments, and how it impacts their ability and willingness to position themselves as leaders. Two of the participants mentioned that environments where people tend to be rude or very upfront can easily hinder their confidence, for these participants, this is seen as a disadvantage that an extrovert might not experience. Another participant also mentioned confidence, and how it is seen as an advantage for those who are extroverted. Confidence is one of the characteristics commonly found in extroverts (Hu et al., 2019).

Another aspect of awareness is the environment, participants mentioned how a positive and encouraging environment has helped boost their confidence to perform informal leadership roles.

#### Participant 020:

I think it's a disadvantage because, again, it depends on the environment, and when you have to deal with people that are more, I'm going to say, maybe, that they're rude or a little bit more upfront than what I am, is really hard to take the leadership role.

#### Participant 030:

In my perception, I think there is a publicly or in the public social view. I think people tend to think that there is a link mainly with extroverts being more into informal leadership, but from my own experience, yes, there might be a tiny lean, like if you have to put it on a scale of 1 to 100, you'll find that more likely 51% informal leadership might be extroverts, but you do have again the other 49%, that will probably be introverts, depending on what needs to be done. And that's how I would perceive it.

#### Participant 070:

I guess, there would be informal feedback from the people under me, in work, that's either they find me boring, or not enough life, or like, they don't like spending time

with me, but I wouldn't get that kind of feedback, in church, people like being around me, and, I've never had bad feedback from church, because I guess we have more in common, but in work, the managers will always place their trust in me, because I am reliable, and I can do the job well, and I'm not rude, I'm polite with people, but maybe the people under me, maybe they're expecting more an extroverted personality, to be in charge, maybe I feel more insecure in work, I don't really know why that is, maybe because in church everything is very encouraging, and you have the backup and encouragement of the leadership, whereas in work there isn't so much of that, in general.

## Theme 2: Perception

This theme describes the perception participants have of themselves, and also the perception they think others have over them. For the first one, even though the eight participants obtained negative scores in the Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales assessment, six of them acknowledged they are introverts, while two of them see themselves as ambivert, these last two also obtained the two scores closest to zero. As mentioned by Dennis (2023), ambiverts have the ability to adapt and shift between introversion and extroversion depending on the environment.

In regard to the perception of others, the perception goes from none, a few participants recognise they don't know how others perceive them and have not received any feedback, while others have received positive feedback which leads as well to a positive perception. There was one case where, the participant mentioned how the perception of others can also change, specifically, this participant indicated how people initially have considered this participant as an introvert, however after some time, and allowing them to know each other, the perception has changed.

### Participant 010:

I mean, I do see myself as an introvert, but when it comes to leadership. I'm not.

Participant 040:

Very often I get this feedback, if somebody's meeting me for the first time, and then over the period of time, ohm, we form a bond or we have a good friendship, and then, they are so like the bond is so good that are not afraid to come and tell me that, you know what, the first time we met you umm, we felt like you were super introvert. You don't like to talk to anybody, and umm, yeah. Like, that's not the case and we were wrong. So, I just felt like I wanna tell you this. And I've heard this so many times, like so many times, from more like from everybody.

### Theme 3: Motivation

A common pattern seen across all interviews is the motivation that makes introverts step out of their comfort zone to play a leadership role or take a leadership position. All participants expressed how they are results oriented, so for them to take the lead, there has to be an attainable outcome of interest to them. Some participants called themselves selfish, acknowledging that they would do certain work or take specific actions only for their own interest. Other participants also mentioned a team or group, in the sense that, the benefit for others is optional, the outcome that others could get is not what drives introverts to step out.

Another aspect in terms of motivation is the aspiration to become a leader. Only one of the participants recognized this aspiration, and always looked up to leadership, this participant compared leadership to a ladder, describing it as a journey that needs to be taken step by step. This analogy of climbing up a ladder to become a leader is related to the perception already mentioned by Farrell (2017), that extroverts make good leaders.

Participant 020:

Not really, because I do it because, it's something that works for me, and I'm selfish and I'm just doing it because it works for me.

Participant 010:

Uh, I've always looked up to leadership. Always felt I wanted to be a leader, but it's not been the easiest approach, but it's probably a stepping stone. I would say kind of climbing up a ladder. Uh, but taking my bit time to get up there, but I believe I like

leadership a lot, but I slowly get there, and I learned through the small steps that I take.

Participant 060:

And I guess as a principle, I try and, you know, treat other people as I'd like to be treated. And so, you know if, especially if it's a work colleague or whoever it is and I try to do good things for them, and had them out and they need help in the hope that, then when I need help, they'll be around to help as well.

#### Theme 4: Common Practices

This theme describes different practices that the participants deliberately do to be able to perform as leaders. An important observation is when participants were asked if they did something intentionally to be regarded as leaders, all of them said no as if they didn't do anything to be recognised as a leader. Nevertheless, other questions for example in regard to their leadership style, and the feedback they have received from others, reveal how these participants know well what steps they take in order to lead or influence others.

The most common practice is to earn trust. All participants mentioned in different ways, how creating a relationship based on trust is fundamental. Engaging with others, and leading by example are key aspects to building trust, another aspect, that according to the participants received positive feedback is, empowering others. Participants stated how they feel more comfortable by empowering others than pushing them to get things done, one participant in particular described how influencing others without them knowing they are being influenced is key. This aspect of trust was mentioned by Xie (2019), who described how people can relate more easily when others lead by example, and hence, gain their trust.

One last common practice is to prepare. Participants described how they need to spend time preparing themselves in advance. This preparation could be as simple as a short meditation before a presentation, up to multiple rehearsals prior to an important event.

Participant 030:

I have had to step up within the team. If nobody does it, and that is mainly to ensure that, that outcome is guaranteed, that is the outcome of the good code, the quality code and being efficient and productive. Now have I done it? I've been in situations where I've done it intentionally.

Participant 020:

Even though they have the coach, right, and the coach, he has a leadership role, right, coach, but they don't do what the coach says. However, when I organize the sessions to practice, they do it, because they see me pretty often practicing, so, I think it may be the thing that comes to us, trust, I guess. But yeah, that's usually goes on that way. Also at work, they don't trust the manager, but they trust me, so that's how it goes.

Participant 080:

I guess being gentler, kind or slow with people. So when you have that like you, they talk about the best leaders lead from the back. And so I think that ability to have strength in one on one or not to be too ohh, I know everything. I'll just do it myself. And therefore, actually trying lead and help people and show them away would actually be a really strong strict strength or advantage.

### ***Summary***

This study was completed using the thematic analysis method. A total of nine participants completed the Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales assessment, and eight participants were interviewed, every participant gave consent to being interviewed, and audio and transcript were captured. All participants were of different ages, ranging from 30 to 45 years of age, and all of them hold or have held an informal leadership role outside of their formal work. Six of the participants see themselves as introverts, while two of the eight participants consider themselves as ambivert, these two participants obtained scores lower than zero, however, these were the closest scores to zero.

For the thematic analysis, all codes were identified manually, reading all interviews line by line multiple times. Themes emerged naturally by correlating and grouping codes. Every theme

provides insights in regard to how the participants perceive their introversion, how they perform as introverts, and the link between introversion and informal leadership. One of the themes describes in detail the motivation that drives these participants to step out of their comfort zone to lead, which is mainly driven by outcomes, something that benefits the participants, but it does not necessarily have to benefit anyone else.

## **Discussion**

In this section, the experiences of the eight participants are discussed and compared against what has been reviewed as part of the literature review. Key findings are highlighted, some limitations with the findings are also mentioned, and last, some suggestions are made for similar future researchers.

As a reminder, all participants hold or have held an informal leadership role, as per Leino (2022), there is no systematic literature review about informal leadership, nevertheless, it is defined as leadership action and influence without a designated power position. According to Adams-Robinson (2021), informal leadership influence is developed over time, it is based on knowledge to convey others to a certain vision based on something in common.

Based on the thematic analysis, the participants described how they are aware of their introversion, and what advantages or disadvantages it brings when it comes to performing an informal leadership role. One of the most relevant findings was in what the participants have done to be regarded as informal leaders, some participants expressed how they have done something deliberately, while others don't have any interest in being seen as an informal leader, nevertheless, all participants mentioned how the right motive can push them to step out of their comfort zone. Last, details of common practices found between participants will be discussed as well, and correlated with the reviewed literature.

## ***Discussion of Findings***

The discussion of findings follows the same sequence in which themes were presented.

### *Theme 1: Awareness of the environment*

All interviewed participants mentioned in one way or another, how they perceive the environment they are in, and how it impacts their willingness to emerge as informal leaders. In general, participants described environments where people tend to be rude or very straightforward, and is more difficult for introverts to emerge as leaders, whereas environments full of respect and encouragement have the opposite effect. This awareness is aligned with what is described in the leadership advantage, which explains how extraverts are more likely to emerge as leaders than introverts (Spark and O'Connor, 2020).

Participant 020:

So that's the reason that I think it depends on which environment you are, because sometimes you might have the best intentions, but the environment won't let you be a leader. I think it's a disadvantage because again, it depends on the environment and when you have to deal with people that are more, I'm going to say maybe that they're rude or a little bit more upfront than what I am, is really hard to take the leadership role, right.

One of the participants described how experiences between informal leadership outside of work are different compared to experiences at work. For this case in particular, the environment outside of work was described as encouraging and supportive, with relatable people (common interests), whereas, the environment at work was split between managers who trust and rely on the participant given the quality of work, however, others non-managers did not perceive the participant in the same way, there was an expectation that was not being met. According to McCord and Joseph (2020), negative responses to introversion could create stereotypes that inaccurately reflect the individual, which might result in mistreatment.

Participant 070:

I guess, there would be informal feedback from the people under me, in work, that's either they find me boring, or not enough life, or like, they don't like spending time with me, but I wouldn't get that kind of feedback, in church, people like being around me, and, I've never had bad feedback from church, because I guess we have more common, but in work, the managers will always place their trust in me, because I am

reliable, and I can do the work well, and I'm not rude, I'm polite with people, but maybe the people under me, maybe they're expecting more an extroverted personality, to be in charge, maybe I feel more insecure in work, I don't really know why that is, maybe because in church everything is very encouraging, and you have the backup and encouragement of the leadership, whereas in work there isn't so much of that, in general.

A study by Spark and O'Connor (2021) notes that introverts if deliberately act as extraverts, increase their chances of being recognised as a leader. All interviewed participants were asked if they have done anything intentionally to be regarded as informal leaders, nevertheless, none of them have behaved as extrovert, although they do recognise certain practices have helped them in obtaining a specific outcome, more details will be discussed in theme number four.

Interviewed participants were also asked for their perception in regard to the link between informal leadership and introversion, in case they see a link. Two of them mentioned there is no link at all, these participants scored the highest values in the Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales assessment.

Participant 020:

I don't see any relationship, and I think it should. It just happened naturally. It depends on the environment that you are in.

Participant 040:

I think I do see a link, as, I mean like as you have my results from there.

While the remaining participants admitted they do see a link, nevertheless, the perception varies. For some participants, the perception is negative and automatically relates to extroverts having a better chance to perform as informal leaders, while others expressed a more neutral position. Nonetheless, regardless if people have a positive or negative perception of informal leadership and introversion, in both cases they agree that the environment plays a crucial part in predicting the outcome.

Participant 070:

It's hmm... I was thinking, because it is very different, based on where, so in church, when I've been leading stuff, it's never been an issue, but in work, I always feel really, under, less confident, or that, people aren't or I don't feel they do respect, I feel I am a bad leader in the work place, and that I don't capture people's attention, an extrovert will be able to capture people's attention, I struggle to relate to people more at work.

Participant 080:

There's definitely going to be a link and I think it could be I'm thinking it could be situational because I feel like I kind have two kind of so examples or ways potentially I'm working in informal leadership. And one would be in work through. As I said, that kind of working with our teaching people who are a grade below me are the same grade as me in certain things. And then also in kids church. And being part of the core team for kids church.

One of the studies by Farrell (2017) indicates how the strengths of introvert leaders could be misunderstood or overlooked, simply because there is an expectation for leaders to behave more extraverted. This premise stands true from the point of view of the interviewed participants who see themselves as introverts.

### *Theme 2: Perception*

Booher et al. (2020) explain the relevance of how people think of themselves as leaders and its effects on performance. Not all participants expressed if they see themselves as leaders or not, however, one of them mentioned how there is an aspiration to become a leader, this individual described this process as climbing a ladder. For this participant, even though the process is not easy, this is a motive and a belief that introverts can be equally good leaders. This is also aligned with the premise that leaders can be made, this is according to Verawati and Hartono (2020) who suggest leadership is not limited to innate abilities, instead, good leaders can also be made.

Participant 010:

I've always looked up to leadership. Always felt I wanted to be a leader, but it's not been the easiest approach, but it's probably a stepping stone. I would say kind of

climbing up a ladder. Uh, but taking my bit time to get up there, but I believe I like leadership a lot, but I slowly get there, and I learned through the small steps that I take.

I feel it comes with practice, but the more I have been in the role kind of practicing it, the more confidence I gain and I believe I can also be an equally good leader.

This idea of self-perception was also studied by Zaar et al. (2020), who suggest that people identify themselves as leaders or followers based on their own perception. In addition to this point is that, this perception is not fixed or unchangeable, instead it can be circumstantial. One of the participants described how the environment drastically impacts levels of confidence, and the ability to perform as an informal leader.

Participant 070:

I feel I am a bad leader in the work place, and that I don't capture people's attention, an extrovert will be able to capture people's attention.

The managers will always place their trust in me, because I am reliable, and I can do the work well, and I'm not rude, I'm polite with people

Maybe because in church everything is very encouraging, and you have the backup and encouragement of the leadership, whereas in work there isn't so much of that, in general.

Participant 040:

I'm like a bit of both, so I take 2 roles like wherever I want to. I have to listen. I'll just listen. I won't say anything, but there are times when I will be vocal.

One of the participants, in particular, mentioned how success in previous projects and efforts has led to being appointed by others to lead challenging situations. These experiences have also helped shape the idea that this individual can also be an effective leader. this phenomenon is described by Dwyer (2019) who references how the success of leaders is also linked to how effective they think they are.

Participant 030:

So certain times I have done that intentionally and other times, I would say best of previous experiences like best of all scenarios where I've had to stand up and naturally you end up surfacing on the top because people default to you because of the history they have with you.

Last, in terms of perceptions of others over introverted informal leaders, only one out of the eight that were interviewed has received informal negative feedback, which can be alluded to as a misconception given the environment and lack of common interests. This aspect of misconceptions in regard to introversion was studied by Taylor (2020), who confirms that introverts as commonly mistakenly perceived as arrogant, shy, strange, negative, and bored.

### *Theme 3: Motivation*

All interviewed participants shared the same motive or reason why they have taken an informal leadership role in the past, and they still stand on the same belief that, in the future, they will take a leadership position as long as the motive is strong enough. This motive is a selfish interest in the outcome, all participants expressed how they have taken informal leadership roles not to gain attention or be seen, this is deemed irrelevant for them, instead, they mentioned how a selfish genuine interest in the outcome is what has driven them to take informal leadership roles.

Participant 020:

Not really, because I do it because, it's something that works for me, and I'm selfish and I'm just doing it because it works for me.

Participant 060:

Not really, because I do it because, it's something that works for me, and I'm selfish and I'm just doing it because it works for me.

Along with a strong motive, all participants also spoke about the environment they are in, and how it impacts their decision-making process to decide to step up as an informal leader. Introverts are less likely to take an informal leadership position in environments where there

is a lot of pressure and decisions need to be made quickly, this is because introverts prefer to think, and it requires a level of effort.

Participant 070:

Yes, I do. I think, I'd be more of a thinker about it, and analysing it, and self-aware of it, and I have to put efforts into think, and pre think about them

On the other hand, environments, where people feel safe and respected, were described by the participants to be ideal for them to feel the confidence to step out of their comfort zones and take an informal leadership role. Adewale (2020) mentioned how people are positively influenced if certain virtuous behaviours are shown.

The last point in terms of why introverts take informal leadership roles is influence, nevertheless, it does not mean that introverts intentionally look for opportunities to influence others, instead, good ideas coming from introverts get noticed by others, which in turn, naturally puts the introvert in an informal leadership position. This is contrary to what Farrell, (2017) described in his study, where extroverts look for social stimulation to get ideas and inspiration that help drive the development of their own thoughts and ideas.

Participant 020:

Uh, no. Like for example, give getting the title like you are a leader. No, I think that people just follow you because they think that I have good ideas. So, they just go with the flow. That's how I see it.

#### *Theme 4: Common Practices*

As mentioned before, all interviewed participants acknowledge they have not done anything specific with the intention of being regarded as an informal leader or gain attention at all, nevertheless, they all agree that some practices have helped them in getting outcomes they are interested in. The pattern seen across all participants is a less authoritative approach, instead, these introverted leaders prefer to lead by example, and they put emphasis on earning other's trust.

This approach is not new, Abbas (2018) mentioned how nurturing a good relationship between leaders and followers is essential. Some of the participants also stated how empowering others, and helping them grow is key. Bertsch et al. (2017) also support that leaders help followers achieve their goals or common goals.

Participant 030:

It's this scenario where I empower or try to empower my teammates and try to work with them and we try to work together to accomplish something rather than me telling them what they need to do.

Participant 010:

The feedback I believe would be, that I was able to kind of give them, able to empower them, as in to give them more space or give them more, started to kind of helping them grow.

Even though there is evidence that if introverts act more extraverted, they might have more chances to emerge as leaders (Spark and O'Connor, 2021), this has not been the perception nor preference of the participants, opposite to this idea, all interviewed participants believe that earning trust is more important and outweighs any benefit that pretending to be an extrovert could bring.

Supporting what Jacques-Hamilton et al. (2019) said in regard to authenticity, participants agreed with the authors that being authentic is essential to earning people's trust. The authors also noted how charisma, enthusiasm, and confidence are linked to extroversion, nevertheless, it is worth noting that, these characteristics are not exclusive to extroverts, it is the opposite, introverts tend to rely on soft skills to exercise their informal leadership.

### ***Limitations***

The main limitation of this study has been the sample size. Given this is a qualitative study, the aim was not to study as many people as possible, instead, the focus has been on studying the perception of a small number of individuals, and identifying how their experiences, even

though unique and personal, might relate and likely could potentially relate to other introverts.

Another limitation is in regard to how to measure extraversion, for this study, the Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales assessment was used, with the criteria that scores below zero identify introverts, nevertheless, individuals with a negative score close to zero tend to also show some characteristics of extraversion, and their introversion is not as strong as in others participants with lower scores.

### ***Suggestions for Future Research***

Introversion and informal leadership are rich topics, and there is so much to be discussed. This study was limited to the introverts' perception of the link between informal leadership and introversion if there is any link.

One aspect in regard to personality traits that was not initially part of this study is ambiversion. The scope of the research parted from the premise of introversion and extroversion, nevertheless, during the study it was also needed to at minimum refer to ambiversion given that two of the participants consider themselves as ambivert, and as per their responses, it shows characteristics that are commonly present in extroverts, so additional research of how ambiverts approach informal leadership is recommended.

An important point of view that was not covered by this study is, the perception that others have over introverted informal leaders. This study analysed key points provided by introvert informal leaders and how they perceive situations and others, these informal leaders consciously and unconsciously make decisions based on their perceptions without validating if they are correct, so a relevant addition to this study could include also the perceptions others have over introvert leaders.

### **Conclusion**

This study describes how introverted informal leaders perceive the link between introversion and informal leadership, and how it affects their leadership. This is based on the experiences

of eight participants who were interviewed, then these interviews were analysed to identify themes, which include their awareness of being introverted, perceptions of them and others, motives to partake in leadership roles, and common practices that have helped them grow.

Some of the experiences of these participants align with the literature, for example, the leadership competitive advantage is perceived by introverts who believe extroverts have more confidence which is well received by others. Nevertheless, other experiences from these participants show an opposite point of view, for example, authenticity and earning trust are more valuable for introverts, and it outweighs the potential benefit of acting as extroverts to be regarded as leaders as was stated in some studies.

The literature shows how social attributes such as charisma and positivism are used by individuals to shape their perception of ideal leader behaviour, and this study shows how introverted informal leaders rely on these soft skills to earn people's trust, and use that well established relationship to achieve a common goal. Introverts prefer to lead by example. This approach can be used by introverts to not only create good relationships, but lasting relationships that can bring more benefit over time than what short authoritative efforts could bring.

Some studies link characteristics such as caring, communication skills, and proactiveness to leaders who are extroverts, and there is a perception that introverts lack these characteristics, nevertheless, this is a misperception that often ends up in strengths of introverted leaders being misunderstood or overlooked because there is an expectation for leaders to behave more extraverted. Introverts could possess these characteristics that allegedly extroverts have, the only difference is their preference for social stimulation.

The fact that some individuals prefer to spend time in solitude, while others prefer large groups, does not mean the first one is not friendly or capable of socialising. Aspects such as respect and acceptance in a given environment, play a more crucial role in predicting who could emerge as a leader, rather than social preferences.

There is a misconception that active participation influences the perception people have of leaders, and it is known that extroverts tend to not be afraid of voicing their opinions, unfortunately for introverts, this misconception puts introverts in a less desirable place where they could be overlooked even though they could have all the skills necessary to successfully carry out the task in question.

In short, there is vast information in regard to personality traits and leadership, nevertheless, many of the questions already asked are focused on the success or what could be achieved for a company, not for an individual. It is concerning to be aware that people don't raise their voices because they don't feel safe or respected. Further research is recommended not only to study individuals but to also include the environments these individuals are in.

For people who think or perceive that introverts do not make good leaders, and for companies that still give priority to whoever raises their voice, please be aware there are more variables in the equation, this study provides insights on how introverts make great leaders, and how their capacity to influence can bring long lasting benefits while maintaining and encouraging a safe environment for everyone.

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## **Appendices**

### ***Interview Questions***

1. Are you aware of your introversion?
2. What feedback have you received from others regarding your leadership approach?
3. Have you received feedback specific to being an introvert?
4. Do you feel being an introvert impacts your informal leadership?

5. Have you done anything intentionally to help you be regarded as a leader?
6. Do you see any relation between informal leadership and introversion?
7. As an introvert, do you feel this benefits your leadership?
8. As an introvert, do you feel this disadvantages your leadership?

***Participant's Scores of Multidimensional Introversion-Extraversion Scales***

Participant	Score
010	-36
020	-7
030	-71
040	-5
050	-269
060	-192
070	-114
080	-143