

New study explores the meanings of introversion in management education

September 16 2014



Researchers from UWE Bristol are beginning an innovative study about introversion in Management Learning, Leadership, and the Teaching of

Business Studies.

The [project](#) is led by Eda Ulus (Senior Lecturer), and Inge Aben, (Lecturer) in Organisation Studies in the Faculty of Business and Law at UWE, who are passionate about exploring introversion in a variety of [learning](#) and management contexts.

The project titled "Silence is Golden: Learning from Introversion to Broaden Teaching and Learning Experiences in Management and Business" was one of the thirteen projects out of 125 applications that was successful in being awarded a Researcher Development Grant from the British Academy of Management (BAM). One of the reviewers from the BAM Researcher Development Grant Scheme noted that the project, "Is timely as there is a need to explore the extent to which [extraversion](#) is emphasised at the expense of introversion." The project will explore individual experiences of introversion in Management and Higher Education.

Inge said, "People like Rosa Parks and Gandhi were quiet characters, but also major world figures, with world changing impact. Yet in talking about leadership we still find there is a preference for extraversion. It is not considered normal that introversion can achieve a lot."

The researchers said, "In some management education spaces there is a preference for active learning, which is interpreted as talking, doing, displaying, performing – but is everybody good at this? And is it really preferable to do it all the time? Maybe there should be space for people who prefer to sit, listen and think – this is missing in some settings."

Eda said, "We are both interested in exploring possible links between learning in classrooms and how it is replayed in the future. For example in the selection of people for management roles, candidates are often tested using psychometric tests for introversion/extraversion. And if

people choose to listen at a meeting rather than speak out immediately, this may be regarded as not contributing."

The new study will involve in-depth interviews with undergraduate, postgraduate, and Executive Education students in business and management, as well as practitioners and lecturers. Eda and Inge will be looking for new conceptualisations about introversion and what it means to people who experience or observe it. They are interested in the subtleties of people's experiences, not in labels or measuring.

Eda added, "We would rather talk about 'introverted preferences' than labelling people as either introverts or extraverts. We will explore how such preferences may depend on the context and environment."

The results from the project will be analysed to develop themes for teaching and [management](#) practice. The results will be shared in reports with educators and practitioners, and published in academic journals.

Provided by University of the West of England

Citation: New study explores the meanings of introversion in management education (2014, September 16) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-09-explores-introversion.html>

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