



## Desirable Ethical Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Phennapha Chandaeng

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Songkhla Rajabhat University, Thailand

Email: phen20092009@gmail.com

### Abstract

In this paper, the authors synthesized the concept of ethical leadership, which has evolved from Burns' transformational leadership theory (1978). Organizations are now focusing on delivering leadership qualities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The author has applied three concepts: ethical leader's concept, principles of leadership in Buddhism, and desirable leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to propose a modeling approach. It was presented the 21<sup>st</sup> century ethical leadership model, the HEAD OF HOUSE model, by comparing leaders in different organizations. Leaders at all levels are like heads of family members of the organization. The citizens within the country or citizens within the community are like family members. A desirable ethical leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should have the following characteristics: HEAD OF HOUSE Model: H-Harmony, E-Efficient, A-Ability, D-Development, O-Outstanding, F-Fairness, H-Honest; O-Openness; U-Understanding; S-Support and E-Equality. The author proposes that if leaders at all organization adhere to morals and ethics, society will progress. Ethical leaders will be able to manage the organization effectively to build the outstanding and credibility of the organization.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Desirable Leadership, Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### 1. Introduction

Today, organizations tend to be those with leaders who can manage and manage people effectively at the same time. Moreover, a good leader must have morals and ethics along with it. In this paper, the author presents a model of desirable ethical leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For the first part, the author will discuss the origins, meaning and the characteristics of ethical leadership. [Then, the author explains the concept of Buddhism in power 4.](#) Furthermore, the author uses the concept of the Sappuris dharma (virtues of a gentleman) and the 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership concept in this paper. At the end of the paper, the author describes the HEAD OF HOUSE Model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century ethical leadership. This is the main proposal of the author of this paper.

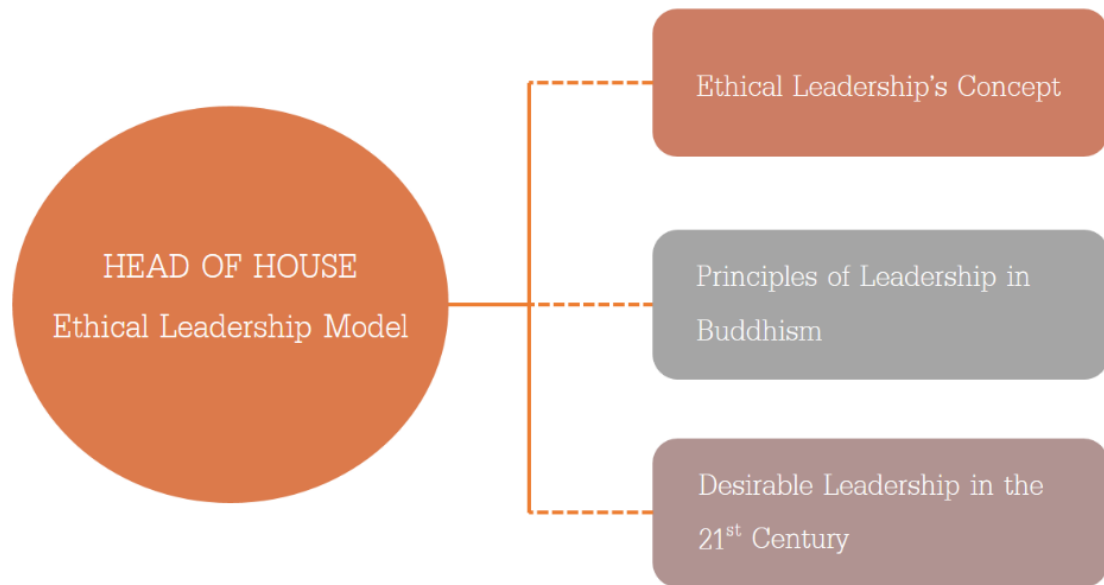


Figure 1: The conceptual framework for HEAD OF HOUSE Ethical Leadership Model

## 2. Origin of Ethical leadership Studies

Ethical leadership is a concept developed from transformational leadership theories, which is largely influenced by Burn's theory. Burn presented two types of leaders (Cherry, K., 2020; STU online, 2014; Nuttanaporn Eknarachindawat, N.D.)

1. Transactional leadership, Burn explains that transactional leadership refers to leaders who interact with their followers through reciprocity. A transactional leader is someone who values order and structure. They are likely to command military operations, manage large corporations, or lead international projects that require rules and regulations to complete objectives on time or move people and supplies in an organized way. Transactional leaders are not a good fit for places where creativity and innovative ideas are valued.

2. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that can inspire positive changes in those who follow. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process; they are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed as well. The concept of transformational leadership was initially introduced by leadership expert and presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns.

Tin Prachyaprut (1984) presented the idea of a leader as follows:

1. Great man theory, this theory believes that leaders have characteristics that their followers do not have physical power, brainpower, and moral power from the genetics and environment of each era, such as Lenin, Churchill, Hitler, and Mussolini.

2. Environmental theory, this theory believes that who can ascend to leadership depends on his ability and skills and ability to resolve situations in times of crisis, such as war, etc. This theory believes that leadership is a result of social, cultural, economic, and political conditions. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, among others.

3. Personal Situational Theories, this group of theorists pay special attention to its reaction status grows reply to perception and behavior of individuals in groups of leaders and followers.

4. Interaction Expectation Theory, this theory believes that leadership caused by the growth reactions and expectations among the group members. Therefore, those who wish to enter the leadership position must have the initiative. and can take care of the structure of the growth reaction of group members because it must be able to always meet the expectations of the group members.

5. Humanistic Theory, this theory aims to develop institutions to have Effectiveness and solidarity, emphasizing the development of human resources, endeavoring to enable individuals in the institution to be independent and able to satisfy their own needs and of the institute.

6. Exchange Theory, this theory believes in the consent of the follower or accepting the person. This is because both parties have contracts to exchange benefits for each other. However, if either party loses the benefit breaches the contract, leadership will lose its importance.

### 3. Ethical Leadership Concepts

For this paper, the author is interested in transformational leadership because it can turn into ethical leadership. They are aware of the needs and motivations of leaders and followers. Ethical leaders understand the needs of their followers to raise their needs according to Maslow's theory of hierarchical needs and make the followers aware of their ideology and adhere to the ideological values such as justice, equality, etc.

Burns (1978) states that ethical leadership is like Transformation both the leader and the follower to the process of transformational leadership ultimately lead to ethics that enhance the leader's conduct and ethical aspiration. In addition, the dynamics of ethical leadership enable both leaders and followers to achieve maximum results and gain acceptance, appreciation, and interdependence.

Ethical Leadership is a leader who can bring about change in line with the needs of the followers. Leaders have relationships with followers in terms of needs, aspirations, values and should uphold the highest ethics, namely fairness and justice in society. In addition to Burns (1978), who discussed ethical leadership, Bass & Stogdill (1990) and Sergiovanni (1992) were compared by the authors in the following table 1

Table 1: Comparison of Leadership Concepts

Burns (1978)	Bass & Stogdill (1990)	Sergiovanni (1992)
1. transactional leadership	1. Transactional Leadership, there are 2 components: (1) Contingent reward (2) Management – by – exception	1. Bureaucratic leadership 2. Psychological leadership is like Transactional leadership

2. Transformational leadership	2. Transformational leadership, there are 4 components: (1) Charisma (2) Inspiration (3) Intellectual stimulation) (4) Individualized consideration	3. Rational – technical leadership
		4. Professional leadership
		5. Ethical leadership

In Sergiovanni (1992)'s opinion, ethical leadership has a distinctive feature that sets it apart from other leadership theories that emphasize the exchange between leader and follower. (Chutima Rukbanglaem, Ekarin Sungtong, Chaowlit Kerdthip, and Chidchanok Churngchow , 2016). This theory focuses on raising the moral and ethical standards of the followers. In addition, the author found that after 2000, there have been more studies on ethical leadership, with scholars defining definitions of ethical leadership as follows:

Table 2: Comparison of Ethical Leadership Concepts

Brown, Treviño, & Harrison (2005)	Coles (2001)	Prachum Phothikul (2007)	Suthep Phongsriwat (2007)
Ethical Leadership refers to the right expression and action between people who interact with each other.	He proposed the concept of ethical leadership without mentioning the theory of psychology. Furthermore, he presented in a narrative and descriptive way about life and events. through dialogue that reflects the essence of ethical leadership.	Ethical Leadership refers to how leaders act consistently with reality. In addition, ethical leadership deals with fairness, equality, commitment, responsibility, and mission.	Ethical Leadership is a leader who can motivate followers to look beyond personal interests. Ethical Leadership is done for the benefit of the organization or the public instead. Ethical leaders' actions raise the morale of their followers.

Additionally, Kelly Monahan (2012) from Regent University wrote an article titled A Review of the Literature Concerning Ethical Leadership. He summarized the definition of Ethical Leadership as follows

Cumbo (2009) focuses on the leader when defining ethical leadership. A leader is considered ethical when inward virtues direct the leader’s decision-making process. Followers simply are beneficiaries of a leader living a virtuous life.

Martinez-Saenz (2009) identifies constructs within ethical leadership. Five paradigms identified are altruistic, egoistic, autonomous, legalist, and communitarian. One of these constructs is not favoured over another, but rather the authors identify various examples and environments for each. Altruistic motivation within ethical leadership is the leader acting out of selfless motives.

Plinio (2009) reviewed three commonly correlated leadership theories to ethical leadership. The first classical leadership theory that associates with ethical leadership is transforming leadership.



“Transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both”

Sandel (2009) notes three common historical approaches to ethical leadership. The first approach is the leader maximizing the welfare of followers as defined by Utilitarianism Theory. The second is a leader protecting the freedom of individuals, which is noted in Libertarianism Theory. Third, a leader is focused solely on promoting the right thing to do, regardless of consequence, as seen in Kant’s Ethical Theory.

In conclusion, ethical leadership refers to behaviors and processes which leaders express their values and have the courage to stick to those core values. Ethical leadership can motivate followers to consider the interests of the organization or the greater than the personal interests. However, the author noted that ethical leadership studies have been around for a long time, but there is no clear and widespread discussion of the subject of research.

### 3.1 Characteristics of Ethical Leadership

Western Governors University (2020) has concluded about characteristics of ethical leadership as follows:

1. Leads by example: Ethical leaders should have the same expectations for themselves as for those that work for them. Ethical leaders help their employees with daily tasks, so they have an in-depth understanding of what the other workers do and the challenges that can come with their work.

2. Willing to evolve: good leaders need to be able to evolve and adapt to the changes that are sure to come in the business world. As businesses expands, get bought out, merge, and more, adaptability is key for success. Good organizational leaders are willing to take the changes that are coming and meet them head on.

3. Respects everyone equally: respect is a vital element of ethical responsibility. Leaders that are ethical will respect everyone, from their superiors to their employees, equally. Not showing respect to the people around you can quickly create a negative or hostile work environment.

4. Communicates openly: leaders who have ethics need to excel at communication to make sure their organization is a place of trust and honesty. Without communication, issues can go undetected for a long time. This can create hostility and distrust in your organization.

5. Manages stress effectively: leaders and managers are faced with stressful situations every day, both in their work life and their personal life. It is not acceptable to take out your personal or even your professional stress on your workers. This is taking advantage of a power dynamic and can create anger, frustration, or fear in your employees.



6. Mediates fairly: a moral leader is an expert in solving problems in a way that is fair to everyone involved. They consider all the opinions and people involved to be fair and impartial. Good organizational leaders are compassionate and kind when helping solve problems and issues.

In addition, Indeed Editorial Team (2021) has introduced Principles of ethical leadership. Practitioners and scholars of ethical leadership point to five key principles of ethical leadership: honesty, justice, respect, community, and integrity.

1. Honesty: Dishonest behavior is a form of lying or misrepresenting reality. Dishonest behavior by leadership creates an atmosphere of mistrust and can lead to leadership being seen as not dependable. People will lose faith in dishonest leadership. As a result, it is critical for ethical leaders to behave with honesty.

2. Justice: Ethical leaders are also concerned with issues of justice and fairness. These types of leaders prioritize treating everyone in an equal manner and placing justice and fairness at the center of their decision-making more broadly. They make a rule of never giving certain individuals special treatment, except when a particular situation demands it for the purposes of justice.

3. Respect: Leaders who convey respect to their peers and employers approach others with an inherent sense of their worth and value as individuals. Respect means listening carefully to others and confirming their inherent value. Leaders should also mentor others to become aware of their own purpose, values and needs so that ethical qualities spread throughout the organization.

4. Community: Ethical leaders behave with altruism. They place the welfare of their subordinates high in their esteem, and engage in activities like team building, mentoring, and empowerment behaviors. These leaders consider the values and purpose of their employees of the organization.

5. Integrity: Integrity refers to the quality of having a strong moral purpose and being honest. Ethical leaders demonstrate appropriate values to those around them via their own behavior. Leaders who act with integrity can strengthen the organization by attracting talented, ethical hires. People generally want to work for leaders they perceive as acting with integrity. Investors and customers feel the appeal of leadership that acts with integrity and are more likely to be attracted to those organizations.

### **3.2 Ethical Leadership and Buddhist Principles**

The author furthermore has brought more principles of leadership in Buddhism to analyse ethical leadership, that is Power four and Sappuris dharma (qualities of a good man; virtues of a gentleman) The author will explain in the following order:

1. Power four: Power four is the principle that the powerful Dharma makes us live with confidence, not afraid of all dangers (strength; force; power). This principle can be applied to good management practices that enable both the cooperation of others and the work. The author believes that leaders at all levels should adhere to this principle to make the organization they run as effective as possible. Power four consists of (1) power of wisdom (knowledge power or intelligence power) (2) power of energy or diligence (perseverance) (3) power of faultlessness, blamelessness, or cleanliness (the power of action without penalty)



is physical karma, verbal action, and pure mentality) (4) power of sympathy or solidarity (helping people or human relations is to hold people's kindness and unite people in unity). (Jet Anukulpokarat, 2005; Phra Brahmakunaphorn, 2003). The Power of sympathy or solidarity consists of (Phramahanapadon Sithong, 2011) (1) gift; charity; benefaction (2) kindly or salutary speech (3) friendly aid; doing good; life of service (4) equality; impartiality; participation

2. Sappuris dharma (qualities of a good man; virtues of a gentleman) This principle has been applied to the leadership in which the leaders are efficient, quality, intelligent, and competent to create prosperity in the region, business, and the social sector. The author has compiled the seven principles of Sappuris dhamma, which consist of the following elements: (Phra Brahmakunaphorn, 2003)

1. Knowing the law; knowing the cause
2. Knowing the meaning; knowing the purpose; knowing the consequence
3. Knowing oneself
4. Moderation; knowing how to be temperate
5. Knowing the proper time; knowing how to choose and keep time
6. Knowing the assembly; knowing the society
7. Knowing the individual; knowing the different individuals

The Leader who adheres to these principles (Power four and Sappuris dharma) will hold the minds of and harmonize the people within the organization. This virtue will help us to be strong-minded, not wavering, as well as building popularity and trust to others as well.

### **3.3 Ethical Leadership and 21st-century leadership**

By the way, the author found a study of the work of Sandmann and Vandenberg (1995) proposing a framework for 21st-century leadership came to conclusions related to the following seven action-based values: (1) visioning together (2) leading together (3) learning together (4) intragroup relationships (5) developing energy (6) acting together (7) Communicating and they proposed four components in their paper: (1) holistic philosophy of community, vision, learning, and action; (2) action-based values (visioning, leading, learning, building community, developing energy, acting, communicating); (3) the role of leaders in promoting community action; and (4) method and content.

In addition, the work of George Couros (2010) wrote an article titled the 21st Century Principal in the 21st century, leaders should possess the following attributes: (1) Creative (2) Communicator (3) Critical thinker (4) Builds community (4) Visionary (5) Collaboration and connection (6) Positive energy (7) Confidence (8) Commitment and Persistence (9) Willingness to learn (10) Entrepreneurial, creative, and innovative (11) Intuitive (12) Ability to Inspire (13) Be Humble (14) Good Model



Warren Bennis (1989) said that the ideal qualities of a 21st-century leader are as follows:

1. Awareness of goals and visions
2. Be a good communicator in presenting a vision
3. Be a reliable person and a good example (role model)
4. Courageous
5. Realize and believe in change
6. Able to look beyond the framework of the organization
7. Dare to create an organization that is compact and easy to manage.

Uthai Laohawichian (cited in Chatchawan Senawong, 2013) presented a summary of desirable leadership qualities:

1. Leaders must have knowledge and leaders must manage
2. Leaders must have the ability to do the job and can be a coach and advisor to the followers
3. Leaders must have a positive attitude, creative thinking, and show good value in life.
4. Leaders must have morals, ethics, and codes of conduct.

In addition, Wicha Mahakhun (cited in Chatchawan Senawong, 2013) outlined the elements of an ethical person: (1) Integrity (2) Honesty (3) Morality (4) Fairness (5) Promise keeping (6) Conflict of interest (7) Compliance with law and regulations (8) Reputation and dignity. A desirable leader in Thai society today should have the following characteristics: (1) Creative Leader (1) Effective leader (2) Leader as coach (3) Change agent leader (4) Leader as spokesman (5) Outcome oriented leader (6) Ethical leader.

For the proposal in this paper, the author has applied Burn's concept of ethical leadership to combine it with the concept of Buddhism in secular dharma and Sappuris dhamma (qualities of a good man; virtues of a gentleman) to be consistent with leaders in the 21st century. Lastly, the author presented a model from various academic applications combined with the Buddhist concept that is the HEAD OF HOUSE Model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century ethical leadership.

#### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

The author has compared leaders who must protect the organization is like a big house because leaders in organizations that are like family heads or heads of organizations to drive the organization to success. Today, ethical leaders are the ones that matter to every organization. In addition, members of organizations at all levels tend to want ethical leaders to work in the organization. Next, the author would like to present the HEAD OF HOUSE Model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century ethical leadership with the following details:





1. H- Harmony, a good leader should create unity in the working team. He did not cause divisions among their subordinates. Sometimes members' opinions may not match. But leaders must make mutual understanding, come to consult, talk, exchange ideas with each other. The leader must not take sides with either party and must show political neutrality.

2. E- Efficiency, a good leader should have an open mind to listen to the opinions of others. He knows how to coordinate can work with people of all ages. All levels of education, even if that person or group is the opposite of the leader himself. Therefore, a good leader must know how to use power with reason to keep the work of intelligence or conflict to a minimum.

3. A- Ability, a good leader should understand himself and others. He should use discretion to consider things or various reasons correctly. Moreover, he must know his underlings, know what they want both in terms of working environment, living conditions and should respect each other.

4. D- Development, a good leader should be ready to provide advice and support to all members and give opportunities for members of the organization to create change for the organization. A good leader should provide members with proposals that enable the organization to thrive. Thus, the leader must be ready to support the success of those around him regularly.

5. O- Outstanding, the outstanding leader focuses on the leaders who have a clear vision and achievements accepted by the public. They emphasize results-based work rather than process and is often the one who has the flexibility to work must adapt to different situations. These leaders are often leaders who have been in power for a long time. Examples of many leaders of this nature are Paul Biya, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Denis Sassou Nguesso, Hun Sen, Yoweri Museveni, Idriss Déby, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Emomali Rahmon and Isaias Afwerki.

6. F- fairness, if some followers misbehave, leaders should judge such actions with fairness even if that person is a favourite follower. At the same time, if one of the followers works well to be accurate, a good leader needs to be praised like the other followers, even if that follower has had conflicts with the leader before. Therefore, fairness is one of the most qualities of every leader.

7. H- Honest, a leaders should be honest in their work. A good leader relies on the principle of truthfulness. Principles of reason and honesty to oneself and others. It is an orderly diagnostic tool or working with an unbiased mind free from bias favouritism.

8. O- Openness, a good leader must have an open mind to listen to the opinions of others. He knows how to coordinate can work with people of all ages. All levels of education, even if that person or group is the opposite of the leader himself. Therefore, a good leader must know how to use power with reason to keep the work of intelligence or conflict to a minimum.

9. U- Understanding, a good leader should understand himself and others. He should use discretion to consider things or various reasons correctly. Moreover, he must know his underlings, know what they want both in terms of working environment, living conditions and should respect each other.

10. S- Support, a good leader must be ready to provide advice and support to all members and give opportunities for members of the organization to create change for the organization. A good leader should

provide members with proposals that enable the organization to thrive. Therefore, the leader must be ready to support the success of those around him regularly.

11. E- Equality, good leaders are equal and treat members of society equally, even if they differ in gender, race, colour, religion, culture, or practice. Leaders must treat others without bias in various fields.



Figure 2: HEAD OF HOUSE Model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century ethical leadership

## 5. References



- Bass, B. M., & Stogdill, R. M. (1990). *Handbook of Leadership: Theory Research and Managerial Application*. New York: Free press.
- Bennis, W. (1989). *On Becoming a Leader*: New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 97, No. 2, pp. 117–134.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Chatchawan Senawong. (2013). *Desirable Leadership Context* <https://www.gotoknow.org/posts/260395>.
- Cherry, K. (2020). *Transformational Leadership: A Closer Look at the Effects of Transformational Leadership*. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-transformational-leadership-2795313>.
- Chutima Rukbanglaem, Ekarin Sungtong, Chaowlit Kerdtip, Chidchanok Churngchow. (2016). Ethical Leadership: The Power-Driven Force to Leadership in Educational Institute. *Narathiwat Rajanagarindra Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 168-181.
- Coles, R. (2001). *Lives of Moral Leadership: Men and Women Who Have Made a Difference*. Random House Trade Paperbacks.
- Editorial Team. (2021). *Complete Guide to Ethical Leadership*. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/ethical-leadership>.
- George Couros. (2010). *The 21st Century Principal*. <http://connectedprincipals.com/archives/1663>.
- Indeed Editorial Team. (2021). *Complete Guide to Ethical Leadership*. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/ethical-leadership>.
- Jet Anukulpokarat. (2005). Leadership according to the principles of Power 4. *Buddhachak Journal*. Vol. 69, No. 2, pp. 47-58.
- Monahan, K. (2012). A Review of the Literature Concerning Ethical Leadership in *Organizations Emerging Leadership Journeys*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 56-66.
- Nuttanaporn Eknarachindawat. (No year of publication). *Leadership in development management*. Bangkok: Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
- Phra Brahmakunaporn. (2016). *Buddhist dictionary dharma book* [https://84000.org/tipitaka/dic/d\\_item.php?i=139](https://84000.org/tipitaka/dic/d_item.php?i=139).
- Phra Brahmakunaphorn. (2003). *Leadership, Importance of Human Development: Developing the Country*. Bangkok: Thammasat Council.
- Prachum Phothikul. (2007). *Ethical Courage of Educational Leaders*. Bangkok: Institute of Development Commander-in-Chief of Education, Ministry of Education.
- Phramahanapadon Sithong. (2011). *The relationship between the virtues of Sangahavatti 4 and Khantisoracha and Good organizational membership behavior of personnel: a case study of office personnel*. Policies and Strategies for Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health Ministry of Public Health. Bangkok: King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok.



Sandmann, L. R. and Vandenberg, L. (1995). A framework for 21st century leadership. *Journal of Extension*, Vol. 33, No. 6, p.198.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

STU online. (2014). *What is Transactional Leadership? How Structure Leads to Results*.  
<https://online.stu.edu/articles/education/what-is-transactional-leadership.aspx>

Suthep Phongsriwat. (2007). *Leadership*. Bangkok: S.Asia Press.

Tin Prachayaprut. (1984). “Leadership and Involvement”, Teaching Materials on Human Behavior in Organization Unit 11. Nonthaburi: Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, pp. 635 - 637.

Western Governors University. (2020). *What is ethical leadership?* <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/what-is-ethical-leadership2001.html>.