

11 ICLEI 2018-045 Anupap Thupa-ang

Educational Management and Leadership for First Time Leaders in Thai Higher Education

Anupap Thupa-ang
Faculty of Education, Suan Dusit University,
Ratchasima Road, Bangkok, Thailand
anupap5@yahoo.com

Abstract

Nowadays, there are many new leaders that have been promoted in higher education sectors worldwide, and many of them tend to be more young and inexperienced. In Thailand, in contrast to school leaders, many first time leaders in higher education have insufficient support such as leadership development programmes. Thus, some of them can adjust themselves to their new roles properly, whereas many are unable to do so. The common mistakes of first time leaders, for example, might comprise of failing to delegate, not providing feedback, failing to define goal, trying to change everything immediately and so on; these could be divided into two crucial aspects, including management style and leadership style. Firstly, their problematic management style, generally subjective model, could lead to being isolated. Secondly, their problematic leadership style, mainly emotional leadership, could possibly lead to unsuccessful results. Therefore, this article attempts to provide optional management models including: collegial models, systems models, and combined models; as well as an optional leadership style, distributed leadership, for the first time leaders. Moreover, according to the importance of interaction and communication in organization, complex responsive processes are also recommended for the new leaders in order to manipulate the conversation with their colleagues in the organizations.

Keywords: Educational management, Educational leadership, Higher education, Thailand

Introduction

There are, nowadays, many first time leaders that have been promoted in higher education (HE) sectors worldwide, and many of them tend to be more young and inexperienced. In Thailand, in contrast to school leaders, many first time leaders in higher education institutions (HEIs) have insufficient support such as leadership development programmes. Thus, some of the leaders can adjust to their new roles

properly, whereas many are unable to do so. Therefore, these days, being a leader for the first time in a HEI in Thailand has become one of the most crucial periods for all of the leaders. As elsewhere, in Thailand, many new leaders have been promoted to executive positions, such as director, dean and so forth. Therefore, in this article, example cases chosen are that of the first time leaders in HEIs in Thailand.

The reasons for promoting first time leaders might be varied and it is probably due to an establishment of a new organisation, an available position at a less important organisation or at a remote area organization, for example. These positions are possibly seen as less interesting vacancies for those experienced counterparts. Thus, the positions become decent opportunities for new leaders to commence their careers. For example, in one case, there is a university that the main campus is located in Bangkok, and the university also has a new organization, approximately two hundred kilometres away from the capital. Hence, the experienced leaders hesitated to take up the position at this new campus. Then, a first time leader had an opportunity to take on an executive role, as a Director.

In educational context, two tasks that a first time leader needs to face are surviving and becoming an educational leader (Daresh & Playko, 1997). However, these are relatively tough for many new leaders in Thai HE sector and some of them probably had to leave the positions due to the lack of sufficient support. Several experts indicate that new leaders are normally lack of fundamental skills of management and leadership and could possibly make mistakes such as failing to delegate, not providing feedback, failing to define goal, trying to change everything right away and so on (Doseofleadership, 2018; Edmondson, 2017; Holland, 2018; Predictivesuccess, 2018; Purdy, 2018; Tredgold, 2018) and these could lead to disadvantageous results.

Issues of First Time Leaders in Thai Higher Education

This article is written from personal experience by observing management and leadership styles of the new leaders in Thai HEIs, which were particularly unbeneficial to the institution and the leaders themselves, such as doing every activity on their own and organising large events by using their personal decisions mainly. The above two problematic examples correspond to the expert perspectives about new leader mistakes, which are failing to delegate (Doseofleadership, 2018; Predictivesuccess, 2018; Tredgold, 2018) and trying to change everything right away (Edmondson, 2017; Purdy, 2018). Having said that, most new leaders are very diligent and generally dedicate themselves for the organisation more than the experienced counterparts. For instance, one of the new leaders became the first director, who regularly stayed at a remote campus twenty-four hours a day, his predecessors having commuted between the

capital and the campus daily. However, the management and leadership styles of the new leaders are often problematic and possibly disappoint them.

To some extent, according to the insufficient leadership support, the new leaders inevitably manage their organizations by using natural ability. Some of them might be able to manage it; however, many are struggling if they are lack of that natural talent. Particularly, the first issue is their management approach, possibly considered as an incomplete subjective model. The subjective model is the organisational structure emphasizing on individuals within the institutions and each individual is placed at the centre of the institution, rather than focusing on the whole institution separated from its members; moreover, this model comprises phenomenological and interactive approaches (Bush, 2011). As, Hoyle (1986) explains that the phenomenological approach prioritises members and their actions, because the social world necessarily comprises of people interaction, discussing relationship patterns and building up a concept of the world (as cited in Bush, 2011, p. 127). Although, the subjective model is useful and effective for many organizations, leaders have to employ both phenomenological and interactive approaches of the model in order to constitute interdependence and intersubjectivity to organisations. However, in many cases, the main issue is that the first time leaders seem rather to concentrate on their individual perspective, and both underestimate and deemphasize interaction with other members of the institution. In one case, a first time leader tended to do everything himself, from policy implementation to upload pictures to the campus website without asking for the others' supports. This could be considered as one of the new leader common mistakes, working in isolation (Doseofleadership, 2018), and might also demonstrate the lacks of interaction and delegation. On top of that, this could cause the leader's depletion, which leads to depletion of faculty, of the school, of community, and also of students (Barth, 1990, as cited in Boerema, 2011).

Due to the insufficient support for the new leaders in Thailand's HE, the next issue is a spontaneous leadership style of them, which is normally found as an emotional leadership and related to the subjective model, according to individual motivation and interpretation of events, rather than emphasizing on the literature of leadership (Bush, 2011). Additionally, Crawford (2009) explains that emotion is socially constructed and emphasizes the importance of individual interpretations of events and situations (as cited in Bush, 2011, p. 203). For instance, there was another new leader who concentrated on promoting the campus in many ways, including attempting to organize large traditional events for students and local people nearby, without sufficient discussions with other members about the possibility and obstacles. This could be considered as common mistakes of the new leader, called being too autocratic and trying to change things immediately (Purdy, 2018). However, many new

leaders probably need to secure their positions by making achievements as soon as possible. Nevertheless, as a result, that event was unprofitable due to the lack of participants, because there were similar events in the better locations at the same time.

“Too often, people are put into leadership positions without the appropriate training, and they just simply struggle” (Tredgold, 2018). Most of the new leaders are one of the best staff in their institutions. However, it might relate to the new roles and positions that force them to adjust and change, even though they still possess substantive ideas as normal staff, such as subjective and emotional thoughts. The transition from a normal staff to a first time leader is relatively challenging. Thus, the next sections will attempt to provide possible options for them to adapt to their new roles.

Recommendations for management models

Nowadays, the influence of globalisation leads to many changes in the HE sector. Robertson (2010) mentions that the HE sector has become globalised in significant ways. Especially, in 2011, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) declared the concept of a Community and Harmony in ASEAN through Tertiary Education Relations (CHARTER) programme to increase the interchange among HEIs in ASEAN (ASEAN, 2011). On the other hand, this statement also implies a higher level of competition between the universities in the region, to some extent. Therefore, the quality of organisational management in HEIs has become vitally important. And, the leaders should pay more attention to select appropriate management styles to administrate the institutions, particularly the new leaders. Bush (2011) demonstrates six management models, including: formal model, collegial model, political model, subjective model, ambiguity model and cultural model. In order to manage educational institutions, there are probably three models that should be considered: collegial model, system model, and a combination of these two models called combined model.

Collegial Model

In this article, the first suggested management model is the collegial model, which is underpinned by a belief that organizations develop policies and make decisions through a process of conducting discussions to achieve consensus, and that power is contributed by some or all members of the organization who are considered to have a shared understanding about the objectives of the institution (Bush, 2011). As Bush and Middlewood (2005) explain, in this model, structures are demolished and communication has a tendency to be lateral rather than vertical, the idea being that all members of an organization should be involved in making decisions and own the results of discussion. Moreover, in the collegial model, professional expertise is the basic

authority rather than a formal position, and issues are normally resolved by agreement or compromise instead of voting or dissent (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). Bennett (1995) indicates that, from a collegial perspective, members of the organisation work as autonomous persons, with minimal regulations from a higher formal position, and there is mutual comprehension amongst members regarding the nature of their work and the areas of responsibility of each member, based on distributed basic values; thus the objectives of the organisation can be achieved from the mutual objectives of autonomous persons.

Therefore, the collegial model is suitable for management in the HEIs, where members are experts in various fields, because it gives authority to professional expertise rather than a formal position. The new leaders, thus, should apply this model for their management style to improve the performance of the institutions. As Williams and Blackstone (1983) state that any organization which relies upon high-level professional skills will perform effectively if there is a sufficient measure of collegiality in its management process (as cited in Bush, 2011, p. 76).

Systems Model

Another recommended management model is one of the formal models, called the systems models. In terms of formal models, which are hierarchical systems that managers use rational means to pursue agreed goals and possess authority from their formal positions, they include structural models, systems models, bureaucratic models, rational models and hierarchical models (Bush, 2011). Notably, these models are more rapidly in terms of decision making than the previous collegial model, due to the authority from the formal positions.

To some extent, the systems models are probably one of the most suitable models for current HEIs. Because, the systems models highlight organisational integrity and concentrate on the interplay between organisational constituent elements and the outside environment (Bush, 2011), while still maintaining the hierarchical system for effective decision makings, which tends to be very useful for HEIs. Furthermore, the systems models also emphasize on agreed organisational goals, which have the support from the organisational members, and ignoring the individual goals that may contest the formal objectives of the organization; however, another main concept of the models is a system boundary, which also separates the organization and its members from the external environment at the same time (Bush, 2011).

In addition, there are two types of systems models, open and closed, depending on the organization's relationship with its external environment. Bush (2011, pp. 45-46) states that "closed systems tend to minimize transactions with the environment and to take little account of external opinion in determining the purposes and activities of

the organization, whereas open systems have permeable boundaries and an interactive two-way relationship between the organization and their environment”. Therefore, the open systems model should be utilised for HE management. It is because the HE sector inevitably interacts with many external organizations, such as the local community, organizations for research funding, organizations for external quality assessment, and so on.

Combined Models

In reality, competition within the HE sector is increasingly high worldwide. This leads to difficulty in maintaining collegiality in institutions; nonetheless, the participation and consensus of members are still vitally important for high-level professional organizations, as aforementioned. As Bush (2011) explains that the rapid expansion of HE since 1990s may lead to more difficulty for collegiality in the sense of maintaining its previous importance regarding the decision-making process, due to collegiality is incompatible with modern external requirements for accountability, especially funding, quality control and research assessment. Moreover, the systems models make insufficiently provision for the participation and consensus of members in the organization, even though its hierarchical system providing rapid decision-making. Notwithstanding, it remains relatively difficult for the new leaders to figure out when they should use the collegial or the systems models. Thus, it might be a good option to combine the collegial and systems models in order to constitute the members participation and the rapid decision making at the same time.

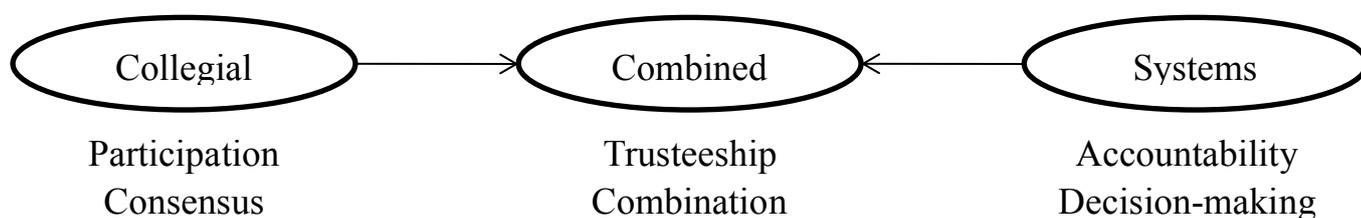


Figure 1. Combined models

Hence, combined models include two main components that are collegial and systems models. Firstly, the combined models employ trusteeship to maintain members’ participation and consensus representing the idea of the collegial models; secondly, the combined models also comprises accountability and effective decision-making via each trustee as an idea of the systems models. In this article, the trusteeship is the process by which members of a professional field voting for their representative as a trustee to participate with other trustees of other fields in the same organization for effective decision-making. It is because the institutions would have to spend more time

if every decision requires consensus from every member in the organisation. Thus, the trusteeship might be a decent choice for this circumstance. In general, a trustee is normally a person who is famous, widely admired and impartial (Craft, Gardner, & Claxton, 2008, p. 4); however, the trusteeship of this combined model might be a taking turn system and include every member, in order to maintain the collegiality.

Personally, the combined models are relatively flexible, because they can either lean on the collegial model if a task needs more participation or consensus from all members, or can lean on systems models, using trustees, if the task requires more effective decision making and accountability in the face of modern competition. Therefore, the combined models are suitable for new leaders of HEIs because they can be effective and flexible, both in the participation of organisational members and the accountability of the institution.

These are all three recommended management models in this article, including: collegial models, systems models and combined models for the first time leaders to manage their organisations. Although these models might provide some ideas for managing the organisation, the new leaders need more time and practices, and should attempt to avoid making mistakes, such as too hands-off or too hands-on (Tredgold, 2018) and being too chummy or being too autocratic (Purdy, 2018). However, there is another vital issue for administrating organizations that is leadership style, as addressed in the following section.

Recommendations for leadership models

As mentioned earlier, rapid changes and global competition increasingly challenge the competitiveness of HE sectors everywhere in the world. Thus, organisational management and leadership are pivotal, especially leadership. It is because educational leadership affects learners' achievement, which is generally one of the main objectives of education, and can significantly constitute higher levels of competitive quality for HEIs. As Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) state, leadership significantly affects the quality of an educational institution and student learning. They, moreover, indicate that total leadership, referring to the combined influence of leadership from all sources, caused twenty-seven per cent of the adaptation in learner achievement of schools (Leithwood et al., 2008). However, there are still unclear leadership styles to deal with the complexities and challenges of technological improvement and globalization, despite clear evidence for the need for new leadership practices to deal with this rapid change (Harris, 2008). Presently, there are several models of leadership in the literature; for example, Bush (2011) describes ten leadership models: managerial, participative, transformational, distributed, transactional, postmodern, emotional, contingency, moral and instructional. And, one of the most

compatible to the previous three management models is probably the distributed leadership.

Distributed leadership

Although, there are many leadership models, as mentioned, each of them has its own advantages and disadvantages. However, the recommended leadership model for the new leaders in this article is distributed leadership because it shares leadership to members of the campus instead of solely the leader and is very appropriate for HEIs, where many experts in various fields exist in the organisations. As Harris (2004, p.13) explains, ‘distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role, moreover she adds that it involves both vertical and lateral dimensions of leadership practice, suggesting a link to both formal and collegial models’ (as cited in Bush, 2011, p. 88). The fundamental point of distributed leadership is the idea that leadership is the outcome of multiple interplays in all parts in the institution, rather than being the preserve of one person in a formal position (Spillane, 2006; Harris 2006 as cited in Harris, 2008, p. 33). Also, distributed leadership is frequently confused with a pattern of everyone leading concurrently, which probably misleads organizational efficiency or effectiveness (Harris, 2008).

In addition, effective distributed leadership needs to distribute leadership to both insiders and outsiders of the organization. Especially, Ngcobo and Tikly (2011) state that distributed leadership is not only distributed to deputy heads, heads of department and class teachers, but also to students, parents and local members of the community. They also mention that every effective principal in their study spends substantial time and energy considering how to collect tuition fees as well as increase the money received from sponsors; and the majority of effective secondary schools in that study had well-prepared sciences labs and computer kit sponsored by local companies. As can be seen, the availability of these resources relies upon the business acumen of the principal, especially the ability to deal with external sponsors such as local companies. Asmal (1999), the former Minister of Education of South Africa, also mentions that “an education system for the 21st century cannot be built by a small group of people, or even the Government only; it calls for a massive mobilization of parents, learners, educators, community leaders, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the private sector, motivated by shared vision” (as cited in Ngcobo & Tikly, 2011, p. 21).

Hence, the distributed leadership is appropriate for the new leaders because it allows leadership to be contributed by more or even all members on the campus, as well as by other stakeholders of the institution. Moreover, this leadership corresponds to the

three management models mentioned earlier: collegial models, systems models and combined models. Bush (2011) matches ten leadership models with six management models, as shown in Table 1, below.

Table 1

Typology of management and leadership models (Bush, 2011, p. 36)

<i>Management model</i>	<i>Leadership model</i>
Formal	Managerial
Collegial	Participative Transformational Distributed
Political	Transactional
Subjective	Postmodern Emotional
Ambiguity	Contingency
Cultural	Moral Instructional

Particularly, the distributed leadership relates to lateral aspects of leadership practice, indicating connections to collegial models as in Table 1. The systems models, for example, highlight organisational integrity and concentrate on the interplay with the outside environment (Bush, 2011), which also corresponds to distributed leadership to some extent. In terms of combined models, it is somewhat similar to the collegial models because it allows leadership to be distributed to trustees of the organisation as much as possible, subject to time constraints, as well as to constitute effective and competitive decision-making. Therefore, the three suggested management models are relatively suitable for distributed leadership and these could provide proper concepts for the new leaders to apply for the real context.

Additionally, in order to keep distributed leadership more effective for administering HEIs, there are five main essential dimensions of leadership, which are personal, social, structural, contextual and developmental (Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2008).

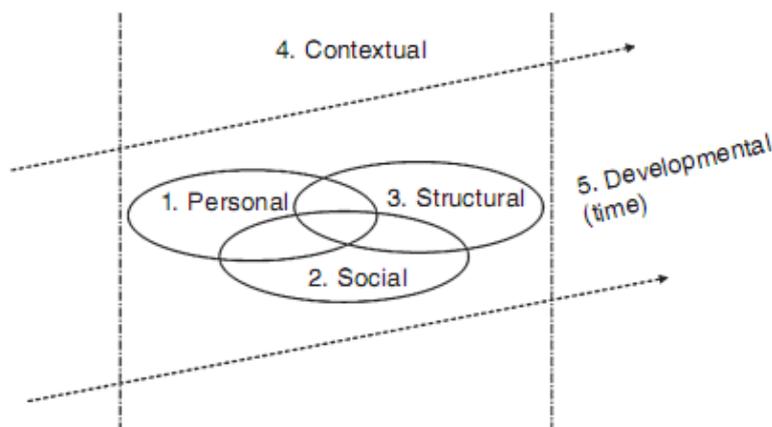


Figure 2. Dimensions of leadership in higher education (Bolden et al., 2008, p. 362)

According to Figure 2, Bolden et al. (2008) explains that the first dimension refers to the personal attributions, experience and preferences of each leader, e.g. expert credibility, advisory open-mindedness, and advisory and distributed decision-making; second is the social dimension which refers to both formal and informal interrelation within and beyond the organisation (social capital), and the distributed feeling of identity and objectives within and among groups (social identity); third is the structural dimension, indicating the structural context whereby leadership takes place, such as the systems processes and structures of the organization, relating to finance, human relations, information technology, strategic planning and the physical environment; fourth is the contextual dimension, consisting of external context, such as the social, cultural and political environment in which higher education leadership is performed, and the internal context of the organisation such as its culture, history and priorities; the last dimension is the developmental dimension, referring to the continually changing developmental demands of individuals, groups and organisations. Although the diagram might contain several components, it demonstrates a clear structure to explain and investigate how leadership proceeds as well as to observe contesting powers potentially to be discovered for the new leaders. Therefore, this diagram is relatively useful for the new leaders to consider, in order to effectively manipulate and develop leadership in their HEIs.

Thus, in order to manipulate and develop distributed leadership in higher education, apart from concentrating on engaging with stakeholders inside and outside the institution and understanding the five main dimensions of leadership, attention should be also paid to individual perspective for organisational development. Notably, every important change or invention is primarily conceived in individual thought; then, it develops through interaction with other people.

Complex Responsive Processes

As can be seen, the recommended models of management and leadership both emphasize on the interaction in the organization. Therefore, another concept that could be practical for the new leaders in order to improve their ability to manipulate the interaction within the institutions is complex responsive processes. The complex responsive processes concentrate on conversation and communication in organizations. As Stacey (2007) states that organization is patterns of interaction among individual persons; in other words, organisation is conversation, and organisation and strategy emerge through conversation.

However, there is some difference about communication processes between the normal process, called cybernetic sender-receiver model, and the complex responsive processes. The cybernetic sender-receiver model concentrates on the word, the vocal gesture of the sender who is making it, whereas the receiver solely translates it until the right meaning is received as transmission; in contrast, the complex responsive processes consider the communication as a person making a gesture to another person in which the gesture calls for a response from that other person, and the response from the second person is itself a gesture, returned to the first person, which in turn calls for a further response (Stacey, 2007). Therefore, ongoing responsive processes occur, called 'the conversation of gestures' and meaning occurs in the responsive interplay of actors; gestures and responses can never be divided and must be comprehended as dynamics in action (ibid.).

Hence, if the new leaders can employ the complex responsive processes to interact with organisational members in order to constitute organisational objectives or consensus, the effectiveness of organisational management will have potential to be increased, because the processes allow the ongoing conversation to continue to prevent miscommunication, which is one of the main factors of failed organizations.

Conclusion

This article has examined the problems of management and leadership for the first time leaders in HEIs in Thailand, and also recommended three management models and one leadership style. The three recommended management models are collegial models, systems models and combined models, which have been suggested for organizing the institutions instead of subjective management models. It is because, for instance, collegial models give authority to professional expertise rather than formal positions, which is very suitable for HEIs. System models are also good choices because, these days, the HE sector inevitably interacts with many external organizations. And, combined models also suit because they can be effective and

flexible, both in the participation of organisational members and the accountability of the institution.

Moreover, distributed leadership has been recommended for HE administration instead of emotional leadership, due to it allows leadership to be distributed to more or even all members on the campus, as well as other stakeholders of the institution. In addition, there are five main constituent elements of leadership in higher education, which are personal, social, structural, contextual and development. These elements are crucial components for considering the development of leadership for the new leaders.

In conclusion, the initial period of a leader is a very vulnerable time, especially in the lack of enough support; nevertheless, good preparation and interaction with colleagues are always helpful for the new leaders if they are to be successful in their administration. However, one of the biggest challenges for the new leaders these days is to find a balance between the participation of organisational members and effective decision-making in this competitive world of the HE sector.

References

- ASEAN. (2011). ASEAN community in a global community of nations. Retrieved from www.asean.org/Statement_18th_ASEAN_Summit.pdf
- Bennett, N. (1995). *Managing professional teachers: Middle management in primary and secondary schools*. London, England: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Boerema, A. J. (2011). Challenging and Supporting New Leader Development. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 39(5), 554-567. doi:10.1177/1741143211408451
- Bolden, R., Petrov, G., & Gosling, J. (2008). Tensions in higher education leadership: Towards a multi-level model of leadership practice. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 62(4), 358-376. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00398.x.
- Bush, T. (2011). *Theories of educational leadership & management* (4th ed.). London: SAGE.
- Bush, T., & Middlewood, D. (2005). *Leading and managing people in education*. London, England: SAGE.
- Craft, A., Gardner, H., & Claxton, G. (2008). *Creativity, wisdom, and trusteeship*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Daresh, J., & Playko, M. (1997). *Beginning the Principalship: A Practical Guide for New School Leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Doseofleadership. (2018). Ten New-Leader Mistakes and How to Avoid Them. Retrieved from <http://www.doseofleadership.com/top-10-new-to-leadership-mistakes-and-how-to-avoid-them/>

- Edmondson, R. (2017). 7 Classic New Leader Mistakes. Retrieved from <http://ronedmondson.com/2017/07/7-classic-new-leader-mistakes.html>
- Harris, A. (2008). *Distributed school leadership: Development tomorrow's leaders*. London: Routledge.
- Holland, M. (2018). 5 Mistakes New Leaders Make. Retrieved from <https://www.bishophouse.com/old-categories/leadership-style/role-of-the-leader/5-mistakes-emerging-leaders-make/>
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(1), 27-42. doi:10.1080/13632430701800060
- Ngcobo, T., & Tikly, L. (2011). *EDUCD*0093 Leading for educational change in organisational settings course manual*. Bristol: University of Bristol.
- Predictivesuccess. (2018). 5 Common Mistakes New Leaders Make. Retrieved from <https://www.predictivesuccess.com/blog/5-common-mistakes-new-leaders-make/>
- Purdy, C. (2018). Nine Worst Mistakes of New Bosses. Retrieved from <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/new-boss-mistakes>
- Robertson, S. L. (2010). *Globalising UK higher education*. Retrieved from <http://www.llakes.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Online-Robertson.pdf>
- Stacey, R. (2007). *Strategic management and organisational dynamics* (5th ed.). Harlow, England: Prentice Hall.
- Tredgold, G. (2018). 6 Mistakes That Rookie Leaders Make. Retrieved from <http://gordontredgold.com/2017/12/08/6-mistakes-rookie-leaders-make/>