
Research Article

PSYCHOLOGY OF LIFE CONDUCT OF PRIVATE SECTOR EXECUTIVES ACCORDING TO BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract: This documentary research examines the psychology of life conduct among private sector executives through the lens of Buddhist philosophy. The study explores how Buddhist psychological principles—particularly the concepts of the Middle Way (Majjhimā Paṭipadā), mindfulness (Sati), wisdom (Paññā), and the Four Brahmaviharas—can systematically guide executive behavior, decision-making, and organizational leadership. The integration of Buddhist psychology with contemporary psychological frameworks such as positive psychology and cognitive-behavioral approaches reveals significant convergences in promoting mental well-being, ethical conduct, and resilient leadership. The research identifies three core dimensions of Buddhist-informed executive life conduct: (1) inner governance through mindfulness and self-regulation, (2) relational conduct through compassionate leadership and ethical communication, and (3) systemic wisdom through Right Livelihood and organizational purpose. Findings indicate that the Four Noble Truths (Ariya Sacca) offer a comprehensive phenomenological account of executive suffering and its transformation; the Noble Eightfold Path (Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga) prescribes systematic ethical and psychological development aligned with core leadership competencies; and the Four Brahmaviharas cultivate the relational capacities essential to effective organizational leadership. The study proposes a conceptual framework—the Buddhist Executive Psychology Model (BEPM)—synthesizing classical Buddhist teachings with modern organizational psychology to guide executive development in Thai and ASEAN corporate contexts. The BEPM is organized around three integrated dimensions: inner governance (mindfulness and ethical intention), relational wisdom (the Brahmaviharas in organizational relationships), and systemic purpose (Right Livelihood and interdependence). This research contributes to the growing literature on contemplative leadership, Buddhist psychology in applied settings, and the integration of Eastern philosophical traditions into management science and organizational behavior.

Keywords: Buddhist philosophy, executive psychology, life conduct, mindfulness leadership, organizational behavior

How to Cite (APA)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Private sector executives in contemporary Thailand and across Southeast Asia face unprecedented challenges: rapid technological change, organizational complexity, cross-cultural dynamics, and intense competitive pressures. These demands generate significant psychological stress and ethical dilemmas that conventional Western management frameworks often address inadequately (Goleman, 2000; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). The cumulative burden of high-stakes decision-making, relentless goal pursuit, and the management of complex interpersonal systems contributes to what researchers have

termed the ‘dark side’ of executive life—characterized by anxiety, burnout, narcissistic escalation, and ethical erosion (Kets de Vries, 2014).

Buddhist philosophy, with its 2,500-year history of systematic psychological inquiry, offers a profound and culturally resonant alternative framework for understanding human behavior, mental processes, and ethical conduct. The Pali Canon and related Abhidhamma texts contain sophisticated analyses of mind, motivation, cognition, and interpersonal dynamics that bear remarkable relevance to the challenges facing modern organizational leaders (de Silva, 2010; Bodhi, 2011). Unlike Western psychological traditions that arose primarily in clinical and experimental laboratory contexts, Buddhist psychology emerged from a sustained contemplative investigation of the human mind under conditions of intensive introspective practice—producing a nuanced phenomenology of mental states, cognitive patterns, and motivational structures.

In Thailand, where Theravāda Buddhism permeates cultural values, family structures, and organizational norms, the alignment between Buddhist psychology and executive life presents a particularly fertile area for applied research. Studies indicate that Thai executives who integrate Buddhist values into professional conduct report higher levels of subjective well-being, stronger ethical compliance, and more effective relational leadership (Prayoon, 2018; Suchart, 2020). The Thai cultural context provides additional resonance through values such as *Kreng Jai* (consideration for others), *Nam Jai* (generosity of spirit), and *Sanuk* (finding joy in work)—values deeply rooted in Buddhist ethical teaching (Komin, 1990).

The psychology of life conduct (จิตวิทยาการดำเนินชีวิต) encompasses the cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral dimensions through which individuals navigate their personal and professional worlds. For executives, this includes patterns of decision-making, emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, goal orientation, and the cultivation of meaning and purpose. Buddhist philosophy addresses each of these dimensions through distinct but interrelated doctrinal frameworks: the Four Noble Truths (*Ariya Sacca*), the Noble Eightfold Path (*Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga*), the Three Characteristics of Existence (*Tilakkhaṇa*), and the doctrine of dependent origination (*Paṭicca-samuppāda*).

Recent decades have witnessed growing scholarly interest in the intersection of Buddhist philosophy and organizational psychology (Hanh, 2008; Purser & Loy, 2013; Reitz & Chaskalson, 2016). However, much of this scholarship has focused narrowly on mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques rather than engaging the full depth of Buddhist psychological teaching. Purser and Loy (2013) critiqued this selective appropriation as ‘McMindfulness’, a decontextualized application that strips mindfulness from its ethical and philosophical foundations. This study addresses that gap by synthesizing the broader framework of Buddhist doctrine with contemporary psychological research to develop a comprehensive framework for executive life conduct.

This documentary research is situated within the emerging field of Buddhist organizational psychology—an interdisciplinary domain bridging Buddhist studies, organizational behavior, positive psychology, and applied ethics. It responds to calls from scholars such as Bodhi (2011), de Silva (2010), and Worline and Dutton (2017) for more theoretically integrated approaches to contemplative leadership that honor the full depth of the Buddhist psychological tradition.

2. OBJECTIVE

2.1 To examine the Buddhist philosophical principles relevant to the psychology of life conduct of private sector executives.

2.2 To synthesize a conceptual framework integrating Buddhist psychology with contemporary organizational psychology for executive leadership development in Thai and ASEAN contexts.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs documentary research methodology, a systematic approach to reviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing existing literature to generate new conceptual knowledge (Best & Kahn, 2006). Documentary research is appropriate when the aim is theoretical synthesis rather than empirical data collection, and is widely used in Buddhist studies, applied psychology, and organizational theory.

3.1 Sources of Data

Primary sources include Pali canonical texts (Tipiṭaka), Abhidhamma literature, and classical commentaries by scholars such as Buddhaghosa (Visuddhimagga) and Bhikkhu Bodhi. Secondary sources comprise peer-reviewed journal articles, academic monographs, doctoral dissertations, and conference proceedings published between 2000 and 2024, sourced from databases including PsycINFO, ERIC, Google Scholar, Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI), and APA PsycArticles. Additional sources include reports from the Mind & Life Institute and publications from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) and Mahamakut Buddhist University (MBU).

3.2 Data Analysis

Content analysis and thematic synthesis were employed to identify patterns, convergences, and divergences across the reviewed literature (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Conceptual mapping was used to develop the integrative BEPM framework. Triangulation across Buddhist canonical sources and contemporary empirical organizational research ensured theoretical robustness and reduced interpretive bias.

4. RESULT

4.1 Buddhist Philosophical Foundations for Executive Life Conduct

The systematic examination of Buddhist canonical literature and contemporary scholarship reveals four foundational doctrinal frameworks with direct and substantive relevance to executive psychology.

4.1.1 The Four Noble Truths and Executive Stress Management

The Buddha's First Noble Truth (Dukkha Sacca)—the truth of unsatisfactoriness and existential suffering—offers a profoundly honest phenomenological description of executive experience. Contemporary occupational psychology confirms that executive roles generate among the highest levels of chronic stress, decision fatigue, and interpersonal conflict in organizational life (Kets de Vries, 2014). The Second Noble Truth identifies craving (Taṇhā)—specifically craving for sensual pleasures, for continuation of favorable states, and for annihilation of unfavorable ones—as the psychological origin of suffering. Applied to organizational contexts, this maps directly onto the ego-driven motivational patterns—power hunger, status competition, control anxiety—that research consistently associates with executive dysfunction, ethical violations, and organizational toxicity (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

The Third Noble Truth (Nirodha Sacca) offers the transformative insight that cessation of craving is not only possible but achievable through systematic psychological cultivation. This principal functions as a foundational assumption of executive development: that psychological patterns, however entrenched, are amenable to change through right effort and method. The Fourth Noble Truth prescribes the Noble Eightfold Path (Magga Sacca) as the practical method of transformation. For executives, this framework reframes organizational challenges—not as external problems to be controlled—but as occasions for inner development and deepening practical wisdom. As Hanh (2008, p. 45) noted, the practice of mindful awareness in difficult situations transforms one's relationship with pressure from one of reactive resistance to one of responsive engagement.

Table 1

Analytical Mapping of the Four Noble Truths to Executive Psychology and Western Psychological Frameworks

Noble Truth	Meaning	Executive Psychology Application	Western Psychology Parallel
<i>First Noble Truth (Dukkha Sacca)</i>	Truth of Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness	Chronic executive stress, decision fatigue, interpersonal conflict, existential meaninglessness in purely profit-driven roles	Acceptance-based therapy; Stress Inoculation Training (Meichenbaum, 1985)
<i>Second Noble Truth (Samudaya Sacca)</i>	Truth of the Origin of Suffering	Craving for power, status, control anxiety; ego-driven leadership dysfunction; competitive attachment	Self-Determination Theory — extrinsic motivation pathologies (Deci & Ryan, 2000)
<i>Third Noble Truth (Nirodha Sacca)</i>	Truth of Cessation	Transformation is possible; ego-reorientation toward servant leadership; intrinsic motivation flourishing	Post-Traumatic Growth; Positive Psychology PERMA (Seligman, 2011)
<i>Fourth Noble Truth (Maggā Sacca)</i>	Truth of the Path	Noble Eightfold Path as systematic developmental curriculum for executive psychological growth	Competency-Based Leadership Development (Boyatzis, 2008)

Note. Synthesized from Bodhi (2011), de Silva (2010), Seligman (2011), and Deci & Ryan (2000). Buddhist terms in italics follow standard Pali transliteration.

4.1.2 The Noble Eightfold Path and Executive Competencies

Systematic analysis of the Noble Eightfold Path reveals precise alignment with core executive competencies across three classical Buddhist domains:

The Wisdom Domain (Paññā) encompasses Right Understanding (Sammā Dīṭṭhi) and Right Intention (Sammā Saṅkappa). Right Understanding corresponds to strategic clarity—the executive capacity to perceive organizational reality accurately without distortion by wishful thinking, cognitive bias, or self-serving narratives. Right Intention corresponds to ethical intentionality—the capacity to act from motivations of generosity, non-harm, and compassion rather than from reactive self-interest. These two factors together constitute what Sternberg (1998) identified as practical wisdom: the integration of knowledge and ethical values in real-world decision-making.

The Ethical Conduct Domain (Sīla) encompasses Right Speech (Sammā Vācā), Right Action (Sammā Kammanta), and Right Livelihood (Sammā Ājīva). Right Speech prescribes communication that is truthful, timely, gentle, meaningful, and compassionate—a comprehensive framework for executive communication ethics. Right Action provides behavioral guidelines grounded in non-harm, honesty, and respect for others' welfare. Right Livelihood, perhaps the most directly organizationally relevant of the ethical factors, calls executives toward professional practices that generate genuine social value rather than harm—anticipating contemporary concepts of stakeholder theory, corporate social responsibility, and conscious capitalism (Collins, 2001; Greenleaf, 1977).

The Mental Cultivation Domain (Samādhi) encompasses Right Effort (Sammā Vāyāma), Right Mindfulness (Sammā Sati), and Right Concentration (Sammā Samādhi). These correspond directly to executive competencies now widely recognized as foundational to effective leadership: self-regulation, present-moment awareness, and sustained attentional focus. Goleman (2000) identified exactly these capacities—under the construct of emotional intelligence—as the primary differentiators of outstanding from merely competent executive performance.

Table 2
Noble Eightfold Path Factors and Corresponding Executive Leadership Competencies

Domain	Path Factor	Pali Term	Executive Application	Western Parallel
Wisdom Domain (Paññā)	Right Understanding	<i>Sammā Diṭṭhi</i>	Strategic clarity; perceiving organizational reality free of cognitive bias	Systems Thinking; Practical Wisdom (Sternberg, 1998)
	Right Intention	<i>Sammā Sāṅkappa</i>	Ethical intentionality; acting from generosity and non-harm rather than reactive self-interest	Authentic Leadership; Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1977)
Ethical Conduct (Sīla)	Right Speech	<i>Sammā Vācā</i>	Truthful, timely, gentle, meaningful communication; executive communication ethics	Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 2003)
	Right Action	<i>Sammā Kammanta</i>	Behavioral guidelines grounded in non-harm, honesty, respect for stakeholders' welfare	Business Ethics; Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984)
	Right Livelihood	<i>Sammā Ājīva</i>	Organizational purpose generating genuine social value; conscious capitalism	Corporate Social Responsibility; B-Corp model
Mental Cultivation (Samādhi)	Right Effort	<i>Sammā Vāyāma</i>	Cultivating wholesome states; abandoning unwholesome patterns; sustained self-regulation	Self-Regulation Theory (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007)
	Right Mindfulness	<i>Sammā Sati</i>	Present-moment executive awareness; Satipaṭṭhāna four foundations practice	Mindfulness-Based Leadership (Reitz & Chaskalson, 2016)
	Right Concentration	<i>Sammā Samādhi</i>	Sustained attentional focus; cognitive clarity under organizational pressure	Executive Attention Control; Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)

Note. Row shading distinguishes the three Eightfold Path domains: Wisdom (blue), Ethical Conduct (green), Mental Cultivation (orange). Pali terms in italics follow standard transliteration.

4.1.3 The Four Brahmaviharas and Relational Leadership

The Brahmaviharas—loving-kindness (Mettā), compassion (Karuṇā), empathetic joy (Muditā), and equanimity (Upekkhā)—constitute what Buddhist psychology describes as the four ‘divine abodes’ or the optimal relational attitudes of a psychologically developed human being. Contemporary organizational research reveals strong empirical support for each of these qualities in effective leadership:

Mettā (loving-kindness) corresponds to what organizational psychologists term benevolent leadership—a leadership style characterized by individualized care for subordinates’ well-being. Cheng et al. (2004) found benevolent leadership significantly associated with enhanced employee trust, organizational commitment, and creative performance in Chinese organizational contexts closely paralleling Thai cultural dynamics.

Karuṇā (compassion) aligns with a growing body of research on compassionate leadership demonstrating its role in organizational resilience, employee well-being, and the recovery of organizational functioning during crises (Worline & Dutton, 2017). Compassion in organizational contexts involves noticing others’ suffering, accurately interpreting it as worthy of response, feeling moved to act, and taking action—a four-stage process directly paralleling the Buddhist understanding of Karuṇā as active rather than passive concern.

Muditā (empathetic joy or sympathetic joy) corresponds to the capacity to celebrate colleagues' and subordinates' successes without competitive envy—a quality identified as essential for establishing psychologically safe organizational cultures in which team members can take interpersonal risks necessary for innovation and learning (Edmondson, 2018).

Upekkhā (equanimity) maps onto the emotional regulation capacities associated with adaptive leadership and sustained high performance under uncertainty. Heifetz et al. (2009) described this capacity—maintaining stable perspective while immersed in complex organizational systems—as 'getting on the balcony': the ability to observe organizational dynamics with clarity rather than reactively. Neuroscientific research confirms that equanimity training through meditation practice strengthens regulatory circuits in the prefrontal cortex that govern emotional reactivity (Davidson & Begley, 2012).

Table 3

Four Brahmaviharas: Organizational Applications, Western Leadership Parallels, and Empirical Outcomes

Brahmavihāra	Translation	Organizational Application	Western Leadership Parallel	Empirical Outcomes
<i>Mettā</i>	Loving-kindness	Individualised care for employee well-being; benevolent leadership culture	Benevolent Leadership (Cheng et al., 2004); Transformational Leadership	Enhanced trust, organizational commitment, creative performance
<i>Karuṇā</i>	Compassion	Noticing and responding to employee suffering; organizational compassion capacity; crisis recovery	Compassionate Leadership (Worline & Dutton, 2017); Prosocial Motivation	Organizational resilience; employee well-being; retention
<i>Muditā</i>	Empathetic / Sympathetic Joy	Celebrating colleagues' successes; eliminating competitive envy in team cultures	Psychological Safety (Edmondson, 2018); Positive Organizational Scholarship	Innovation; learning culture; reduced interpersonal conflict
<i>Upekkhā</i>	Equanimity	Stable executive perspective under uncertainty; adaptive leadership through turbulence	Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009); Emotional Regulation	Resilience; sustained performance under pressure; ethical stability

Note. Empirical outcomes synthesized from Cheng et al. (2004), Worline & Dutton (2017), Edmondson (2018), Heifetz et al. (2009), and Davidson & Begley (2012).

4.1.4 Mindfulness (*Sati*) and Executive Cognitive Performance

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta's four foundations of mindfulness—mindfulness of body (Kāyānupassanā), feelings-tones (Vedanānupassanā), mind-states (Cittānupassanā), and mental objects (Dhammānupassanā)—provide a systematic developmental curriculum in present-moment awareness applicable to executive performance across multiple domains.

Neuropsychological research confirms that mindfulness practice produces measurable structural and functional changes in the brain relevant to executive performance: enhanced prefrontal cortical thickness (associated with improved working memory and executive function), reduced amygdala reactivity (associated with improved emotional regulation under stress), and increased connectivity between prefrontal and limbic regions (associated with improved integration of cognitive and emotional processing) (Hölzel et al., 2011). These neurobiological changes translate into the behavioral capacities—sustained attention, cognitive flexibility, emotional regulation, and ethical awareness—that characterize outstanding executive performance.

Table 4

Analytical Synthesis: Convergences Between Buddhist Psychology and Western Organizational Psychology

Buddhist Concept	Western Framework	Shared Domain	Analytical Synthesis
<i>Paññā (Wisdom)</i>	<i>Practical Wisdom; Multiple Intelligences</i>	Integration of knowledge, values, and contextual judgment in real-world decision-making	High convergence — Buddhist wisdom cultivated through systematic practice; Western wisdom situated in experience and expertise
<i>Anattā (Non-Self)</i>	<i>Level 5 Leadership; Servant Leadership</i>	Transcending ego-driven leadership; subordinating personal identity to organizational mission	Very high convergence — Collins (2001) and Greenleaf (1977) independently arrive at ego-transcendence as hallmark of exceptional leadership
<i>Anicca (Impermanence)</i>	<i>Adaptive Leadership; Change Management</i>	Accepting constant organizational flux; leading through uncertainty with equanimous flexibility	High convergence — Heifetz et al. (2009) prescribe similar equanimous stance; Buddhist cosmology provides richer philosophical foundation
<i>Paṭicca-samuppāda (Interdependence)</i>	<i>Systems Thinking; Stakeholder Theory</i>	Understanding organizations as interdependent systems; multi-stakeholder ethical accounting	High convergence — Senge (2006) arrives at systems thinking empirically; Buddhist teaching provides 2,500-year-old philosophical grounding
<i>Sīla (Ethical Conduct)</i>	<i>Business Ethics; Integrity Leadership</i>	Behavioral guidelines systematically developed rather than imposed as external rules	Moderate convergence — Western ethics tends toward rule-based frameworks; Buddhist Sīla arises organically from wisdom and compassion
<i>Samādhi (Mental Cultivation)</i>	<i>Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction; Flow Theory</i>	Systematic attentional training for executive cognitive performance and well-being	High convergence — empirical research on mindfulness confirms Buddhist training effects; but MBSR strips ethical context absent in canonical Samādhi

Note. Convergence levels: High = substantial conceptual and empirical overlap; Moderate = shared domain with important distinctions; Very High = near-complete alignment with Buddhist teaching predating Western formulation by centuries.

4.2 Convergences Between Buddhist Psychology and Contemporary Organizational Psychology

Systematic analysis of the literature reveals significant convergences between Buddhist psychological constructs and established Western organizational psychology frameworks, suggesting that Buddhist insights capture universal features of optimal human psychological functioning rather than merely culturally specific religious practices.

Buddhist Paññā (wisdom) parallels Sternberg's (1998) concept of practical wisdom and Gardner's (1983) interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences—both emphasizing the integration of knowledge, values, and contextual judgment in effective real-world action. The Buddhist concept of Anattā (non-self)—the insight that personal identity is a constructed and transient process rather than a fixed substantial entity—provides the philosophical foundation for transcending ego-driven leadership. This insight converges with Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership model and Collins' (2001) Level 5 Leadership concept, both of which identify the subordination of personal ego to organizational mission as the hallmark of the most effective leaders.

The Tilakkhaṇa doctrine of impermanence (Anicca)—the recognition that all phenomena, including organizational structures, market conditions, and personal capacities, are in constant flux—directly informs adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz et al., 2009) and provides a philosophical basis for organizational change management grounded in equanimous acceptance of uncertainty rather than anxious resistance. Buddhist Paṭicca-samuppāda (dependent origination)—the teaching that all phenomena arise in dependence on multiple interconnected conditions—anticipates systems thinking approaches in organizational management (Senge, 2006) and provides a philosophical foundation for understanding organizational complexity without reductive linear causation.

4.3 The Buddhist Executive Psychology Model (BEPM)

Based on synthesis of the reviewed literature, this study proposes the Buddhist Executive Psychology Model (BEPM) as a theoretically integrated and practically applicable framework for executive life conduct. The BEPM is organized around three core integrated dimensions:

Dimension 1 – Inner Governance: Cultivating mindfulness (Sati), wisdom (Paññā), and ethical intention as the psychological foundation of executive conduct. This dimension addresses the interior life of the executive—the quality of awareness, intention, and ethical commitment from which all external behavior arises. It emphasizes daily contemplative practice, reflective leadership, and systematic examination of personal motivation. Key Buddhist practices associated with this dimension include Vipassanā (insight meditation), Mettā Bhāvanā (loving-kindness cultivation), and the reflective practice of Sampajañña (clear comprehension of purpose in action).

Dimension 2 – Relational Wisdom: Developing the Four Brahmaviharas as the relational psychology of executive leadership. This dimension addresses the quality of executive relationships with all organizational stakeholders: employees, peers, supervisors, customers, suppliers, and communities. It encompasses communication ethics grounded in Right Speech, compassionate decision-making that accounts for the welfare of those affected, psychologically safe team cultures modeled on Muditā, and the equanimous stability that enables effective leadership through organizational turbulence.

Dimension 3 – Systemic Purpose: Aligning organizational mission with Right Livelihood (Sammā Ājīva) and the principle of interdependence (Paṭicca-samuppāda). This dimension addresses the executive's relationship to the larger social, environmental, and economic systems within which the organization operates. It provides a Buddhist philosophical foundation for corporate social responsibility, stakeholder ethics, and the cultivation of sustainable organizational purpose that generates genuine social value rather than merely extracting it.

Table 5

Buddhist Executive Psychology Model (BEPM): Dimensions, Practices, Outcomes, and Contemporary Parallels

BEPM Dimension	Buddhist Principles	Development Practices	Expected Outcomes	Contemporary Parallels
Dimension 1: Inner Governance	Sati (Mindfulness) Paññā (Wisdom) Right Intention	Daily contemplative practice Vipassanā meditation Sampajañña (clear comprehension) Mettā Bhāvanā	Enhanced cognitive performance Improved emotional regulation Increased ethical awareness Reduced decision fatigue	Mindfulness-Based Leadership Authentic Leadership Development Executive Coaching
Dimension 2: Relational Wisdom	Four Brahmaviharas Right Speech	Compassionate listening protocols	Higher team trust and cohesion	Servant Leadership Programs

BEPM Dimension	Buddhist Principles	Development Practices	Expected Outcomes	Contemporary Parallels
Dimension 3: Systemic Purpose	Right Action	Psychological safety cultivation Stakeholder empathy mapping Conflict transformation	Reduced interpersonal conflict Improved communication quality Stronger organizational culture	Organizational Compassion Training Nonviolent Communication
	Right Livelihood	Stakeholder-integrated strategic planning	Enhanced organizational sustainability	
	Paṭicca-samuppāda (Interdependence)	Sustainability goal alignment	Stronger stakeholder relationships	Conscious Capitalism Stakeholder Theory
	Tilakkhaṇa (Impermanence)	Change management through Anicca CSR grounded in Dhamma ethics	Adaptive change capacity Long-term value creation	Adaptive Leadership

Note. The BEPM integrates inner governance, relational wisdom, and systemic purpose as interdependent dimensions of executive development grounded in the complete spectrum of Buddhist psychological teaching (Sīla–Samādhi–Paññā).

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this documentary research illuminate how Buddhist philosophy provides a psychologically rich and practically applicable framework for executive life conduct—one that both complements and significantly transcends conventional Western management theory.

A central insight emerging from the synthesis is what this study terms the paradox of executive power: conventional organizational psychology tends to frame executive effectiveness in terms of power acquisition, goal achievement, and competitive advantage, while Buddhist psychology suggests that the most effective leadership arises from a fundamental reorientation away from ego-driven control toward skillful, compassionate service. This convergence with servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) and Level 5 Leadership research (Collins, 2001) suggests that Buddhist insights capture something genuinely universal about optimal human functioning in organizational contexts, rather than representing merely a cultural or religious perspective.

The proposed BEPM framework addresses a significant gap in existing leadership development literature. Purser and Loy (2013) demonstrated that mainstream corporate mindfulness programs have incorporated mindfulness primarily as a stress-reduction and productivity enhancement technique while systematically stripping away its ethical and philosophical foundations. By integrating the full spectrum of Buddhist teaching—from Sīla (ethical conduct) through Samādhi (mental cultivation) to Paññā (wisdom)—the BEPM offers a more comprehensive and theoretically coherent developmental pathway for executive psychological growth.

The Thai cultural context provides particular resonance and practical relevance for this framework. Research on Thai organizational behavior documents that Buddhist values significantly influence organizational dynamics through cultural patterns such as Kreng Jai (reluctance to impose on others), Nam Jai (generosity of spirit), Bun Khun (gratitude for received kindness), and respect for hierarchical relationships shaped by Dhamma principles (Komin, 1990; Lawler & Atmiyanandana, 2004). The BEPM framework explicitly acknowledges and works constructively with these cultural dimensions rather than imposing Western psychological models that may lack cultural validity in Thai organizational contexts.

This study also highlights important convergences between Buddhist psychology and positive psychology—the psychological tradition focused on flourishing, strengths, and optimal human functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The Brahmaviharas parallel positive psychology’s PERMA model (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement), while the Buddhist emphasis on non-attachment parallels positive psychology’s research on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These convergences suggest that Buddhist organizational psychology is not peripheral to mainstream psychological science but rather anticipates and enriches its most progressive developments.

Limitations of this study include the inherent challenges of cross-tradition translation—Buddhist psychological concepts do not map perfectly onto Western psychological constructs, and care must be taken to avoid reductive equivalences that obscure important distinctions. The Pali term *Sati*, for instance, encompasses dimensions of memory, recognition, and ethical vigilance that the English term ‘mindfulness’ inadequately captures (Bodhi, 2011). Additionally, documentary research cannot substitute for empirical investigation of how Buddhist principles actually manifest in executive behavior. The BEPM framework remains a conceptual proposal requiring empirical validation through rigorous quantitative and qualitative research.

6. CONCLUSION

This documentary research demonstrates that Buddhist philosophy provides a comprehensive and psychologically sophisticated framework for understanding and developing the life conduct of private sector executives. The Four Noble Truths offer an unflinchingly honest phenomenological account of executive suffering and its potential transformation; the Noble Eightfold Path prescribes systematic ethical and psychological development directly aligned with core leadership competencies; the Four Brahmaviharas cultivate the relational wisdom essential to effective organizational leadership; and the practice of *Sati* (mindfulness) develops the cognitive clarity and emotional regulation that underpin high-quality executive performance.

The Buddhist Executive Psychology Model (BEPM) synthesizes these teachings into an integrated framework organized around inner governance, relational wisdom, and systemic purpose—providing a theoretically grounded and culturally resonant foundation for executive development programs in Thai and ASEAN organizational contexts. The convergences identified between Buddhist psychology and contemporary organizational psychology frameworks—including servant leadership, adaptive leadership, positive psychology, and systems thinking—suggest that Buddhist philosophy offers not merely a culturally specific perspective but universal insights into the psychology of effective and ethical human conduct.

Buddhist philosophy, far from being a retreat from organizational complexity, offers executives a path of deeper, wiser engagement with that complexity—one that cultivates psychological resilience, ethical clarity, and compassionate effectiveness. In an era of rapid organizational change and growing calls for responsible, sustainable business leadership, the wisdom of Buddhist organizational psychology represents a valuable, theoretically rich, and practically applicable resource for executive development.

Figure 2
Knowledge from research



8. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Leadership development programs in Thai and ASEAN private sector organizations should integrate Buddhist psychological principles—particularly mindfulness practice, ethical deliberation grounded in the Noble Eightfold Path, and compassion cultivation through the Brahmaviharas—as theoretically justified and culturally resonant core components of executive education curricula.

7.2 Future empirical research should investigate the practical manifestation of Buddhist psychological principles in Thai executive behavior, employing mixed-methods approaches including validated psychometric instruments, behavioral observation protocols, and narrative inquiry to test the proposed BEPM framework.

7.3 Human resource development practitioners should design experiential learning interventions drawing on the BEPM framework, incorporating contemplative practice periods, case-based ethical reflection using Buddhist doctrinal frameworks, and organizational systems analysis grounded in Paṭicca-samuppāda.

7.4 Academic programs in organizational psychology, business administration, and applied humanities should incorporate Buddhist psychology as a legitimate and empirically informed theoretical tradition—particularly within ASEAN educational contexts where Buddhist cultural frameworks remain socially and institutionally significant.

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