

Creating Resilient Leaders with Reference to the Teachings of Old Master Confucius

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Abstract

*Can one, in these days and times, be really excited or enthusiastic about Confucianism or the teachings of Confucius? Of course, the answer is an emphatic yes. This author would argue that one should especially appreciate the idea of building resilience in oneself and in one's leadership ways. It is also about one's sheer good sense, and growing one's basic character, building one's discipline as well as developing one's humanistic ways. Confucian leaders include some of Singapore's founding fathers and pioneers as well as the Japanese entrepreneurs such as the late Konosuke Matsushita, just to name a few. Indeed the Confucian's key ideas and values such as – gentleman (lady) (jen), character, integrity, learning, positive thinking, diligence and prudence – are still fresh and relevant in today's context to help contribute to building and growing one's (leadership) resilience, if not excellence. This literature survey paper is an adaptation, an update and an expansion of a Chapter section of Low (2013) *Leading successfully in Asia, "Being Resilient, the Confucian Way."**

Keywords: Confucius, Confucian teachings, leadership, resilience; Singapore, Matsushita; Lee Kuan Yew; learning, character; integrity; positive attitude.

1. Introduction

“Being resilient” is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as rising readily again after being depressed, hence buoyant or resolute (<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00204038>, cited in Low, 2009, 2002; also cited in Low, 2007). We will thus define “to be resilient” as to be able to perform or remain stable to (continue to) function in the face of trouble, disruption or difficulty. One is thus able to bounce or spring back to action and/ or continue to attain. Interestingly, the Chinese has a saying that goes, “When one falls, one picks oneself up again” (Low, 2013: 385), and that saying is often seen as synonymous with or associated with the Old Master. One should not stop, in spite of the obstacles. In addition “forging on” (Low, 2013a), one just goes on, and keeps going. Tough people last, and in spite drawbacks or obstacles, they persevere and keep on going. Moreover, according to Confucius (551 B.C. - 479 B.C.), adversity indeed has its good effects, beneficial results and consequences. Rather than fighting with others, a Confucian would be better to struggle with oneself, and try to find ways to improve oneself. (Yu Dan, 2010). After all, in the Confucian context, a person's greatest glory lies in never falling, but in rising each time (s) he falls. To him, “one who has his arms broken three times may (*improve himself and*) become a good doctor” (Zhou, 2005: 170; *italics author's*).

Confucius was a Chinese thinker and social philosopher, whose teachings and philosophy have deeply influenced Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese as well as, to some extent, Singaporean, if not the political leaders and pioneers (Low, 2013: 385, 2009; 2005; 2002) thinking, thoughts and life. His philosophy stressed on personal and governmental morality, correctness of social relationships, justice and sincerity. The purpose and objective of this literature review paper is to relate Confucius' teachings and various aspects of Confucianism that relates to and supports the idea and concept of being resilience or tough in the person/ leader and ensuring resilience and more specifically, surviving, if not growing and/ or resulting in continuity in business. One cannot be a real leader unless one is resilient; “a king (*leader*) can't become a real ruler, without encountering difficulties” (Zhou, 2005: 169, also cited in Low, 2013: 385, *italics authors*). Mencius, the disciple of Confucius' grandson maintained that, “There is goodness out of adversity.” (Chew, 2000: 43).

Tired, poverty, hunger, hardship, and frustration will stir a man's mind, toughen his character, and make good his defects. In fact, similar to carbon which turns into diamond when under pressure, one should be grateful or thankful for the difficult times as during such times, one grows. Chinese traditional culture is a treasure among the cultures of the world and the *Analects of Confucius* (Confucius' teachings) is "the brightest pearl in its depository" (*Analects of Confucius*, 1994: 4). In Confucius' teachings, we can find these pointers and indicators which can help promote resilience in people and/ or leaders; and they include as follows:

2. Learning Helps, Continuous Learning Benefits

Interestingly, "promoting benevolence and transformation through education is what Confucius would speak of most approvingly." (Scroll 26, *Wei Zhi*, Vol. 2, cited in Qunshu Zhiyan, 2012: 265). A Confucian-inspired Chinese proverb has it that, "learning colors a man more than the deepest dye," and indeed learning and education is critical (Low, 2010). The value of learning is much stressed in Confucianism (Low, 2012; 2010). One learns "as though... (One) would never be able to master it; hold it as though... (One) would be in fear of losing it." (http://www.1000advices.com/guru/learning_confucius.html). Here, it should be stressed that as a person and a leader, one needs to be open and broad-minded (Low, 2012); "one must (also) learn from others" (Zhou, 2005: 36; Low, 2010; Lin, 1997). "When you make a mistake, do not be afraid of mending your ways." (*The Analects*, I verse 8; Lau, 1979: 60). [Interestingly, Low (2010a) emphasized this, applying or relating it to customer service and excellence]. This parallel can be well seen when Mencius spoke of Confucius that is, when Confucius ascended the Eastern Mountain, he realized how small the state of Lu was. When he ascended Mount Tai, he saw how small the empire was... (Mencius says, 2009). A leader needs to be broad-minded, learning, improving and growing (Low, 2012).

For Confucius, a person or a leader who thinks him (her) self wise cannot hear any advice, and he does not learn or cannot improve him (her) self. Learning, however, encourages mind growth (Low, 2012), preventing one from being narrow-minded. It also helps build one's resilience, and for Confucius, it is very important for individuals to learn, and keep on learning. Here, Matsushita (1994; PHP Institute Inc, 1994), a Confucian, the late founder of the Matsushita Electric Company (now Panasonic) and "the 20th century most remarkable entrepreneur" (Kotter, 1997) speaks of the un-trapped mind. We can take it that the Confucian idea of never afraid or ashamed of asking questions (Zhou, 2005) here is applied, and this broadens one's thinking and horizons. It is certainly wise to learn ("A gentleman is always eager to learn" (*The Analects*, I verse 14; Lau, 1979: 61), and it is wisdom when one is aware of what one knows, and when one does not, and one acknowledges one's ignorance. One learns from one's mistakes or wrong-doings, and learns, embarking on the path to improvement. And this can be one of the sources of self or inner motivation. Confucius further added that if one finds a good man, emulate his example, and if one finds a bad man, search for his mistakes or fault so as to learn. And for Confucius, more critically, if one makes a mistake and does not learn from it, one is actually making a double mistake, if not a serious one. Interestingly, the (resilient) leader also learns (there is "growth in hardship"; Kotter, 1997: 35), correcting him (her) self; (s) he toughens and grows. In *The Analects*, Confucius presents himself as a "transmitter who invented nothing" (Wikipedia, 2007) or what Yu Dan (2010: 164) highlighted, "Confucius himself often said: 'I was not born with knowledge but, being fond of antiquity, I am quick to seek it.' (*Analects VII*). He put the greatest emphasis on the importance of study or learning, underscoring that: Not to correct the mistake one made is to err indeed. (Zhou, 2005: 79). Or "The Master said, 'not to mend one's ways when one has erred is to err indeed.'" (*The Analects*, XV verse 30) (Lau, 1979: 136)

Never be afraid of correcting mistakes one has made. (Zhou, 2005: 80). "When you make a mistake, do not be afraid of mending your ways." (*The Analects*, I verse 8) (Lau, 1979: 60). Being able to deal effectively with his or her mistakes, the resilient leader learns something positive from every situation; and being proactive, (s) he decides on a plan of action, anticipating and overcoming obstacles to move towards success (Brooks and Goldstein, 2004). Likewise, for Confucius, learning from mistakes is indeed beneficial; it is good to review the old and deducing the new [and one who does these becomes a teacher]. To this researcher, overall, this also signifies that as an example setter (Zhou, 2005: 150; Low and Ang, 2013), the leader learns and takes actions (i.e., benchmarks, learns and improves). Here, it can also be said that there's a touch of learning and *Kaizen* (continuous improvement; here, Matsushita leadership spoke of "untiring effort for improvement"; Kotter, 1997: 115); continuous learning and actions (corrections) really builds and enhances resilience and hardiness in a leader and even in a company.

Mistakes and problems are seen as opportunities for learning and improvement, an important spur to organizational growth and development (Moore, 1998; Khoo, 2001). And note that when everyone within the organization does so in a continuous process, learning becomes part of the organization's culture; the organization – a learning organization – becomes organic and grows (Achua and Lussier, 2010; Moore, 1998). Interestingly too, wrapping up that Singapore has the *Confucian Heritage* national culture (Low, 2009; 2002; Low, 2007) highlights that being resilient, Singaporeans value learning. And the typical Singapore Company grows, and could cope well with changes in the external environment. These also indicated that the island-nation's small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including family-run companies, could also learn to cultivate winning values such as being prudent, hardworking and resilient so that they can really turn into SMEs: small (strong), and mighty enterprises (Low, 2009; 2002). Besides, with public sector support, Singaporean workers learn and they upgrade (Lee, 2000); the Confucian value of learning is there and they are motivated; these overall contribute to the nation's embracing the value of learning and human capital, making Singaporeans robust or resilient.

The values of learning and continuous improvement thus help Singaporeans and Singapore companies to be hardy and buoyant. And indeed this value of continuous learning and improvement is certainly held up high in the Singapore Community. Referring to the 1998 regional economic dip, the then Deputy Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong said that Singapore had managed to “sit pretty” amid the regional economic tumult since it was always thinking ahead planning for the future and revising its strategies constantly. Lee then said, “We are never content to take things as they come, to accept passively what with ingenuity and foresight we might either turn away or turn to our advantage. I don't think in our philosophy, *que sera sera* (what will be, will be) ranks very high.” (*The Straits Times*, p.1, Saturday November 7, 1998, cited in Lim, 1999: 108).

3. Advocating Positive Thinking Really Pays

What one thinks is so important. The mind is indeed influenced by the setting or the surroundings the person is in. Such a thinking can indeed be argued as Confucian as in the case of Mencius who enjoyed the lessons of his kind mother; she thrice changed her residence on his account. When they lived near a cemetery, Mencius amused himself with acting the various mourning scenes which he witnessed at the tombs; and when finally staying near a public school, it became the proper place for Mencius as the child was taken with the various exercises of the politeness which the scholars were taught, and he endeavored to imitate. (Legge, 1970: 16-17). One needs to be positive and thinks positively so that one can then act in a positive manner too. Positive thinking is “a mental attitude that would enable one to look forward for good and favorable results” (Low and Ang, 2011: 199). Here, psychology. about.com (2014) underscored that positive thinking essentially entails approaching life's challenges or tests with a positive stance. It does not necessarily involve avoiding or ignoring the bad things; in its place, it actually involves making the most of potentially bad situations, seeking to see the best in others, and looking oneself and one's abilities in a positive light. Burns (2000) spoke of not emphasizing failings or shortcomings, but concentrate on positive facts while providing encouragement. It can be said that a negative spirit produces negative or bad emotionality. People who are of a negative spirit radiate negative energy wherever they go. Their presence or company creates a negative air. This negative air creates tension and promotes division. Negative personalities draw the worst out of others, and they have a means of drawing the negative qualities in others to the detriment or loss of the whole (Lim, 1999).

In contrast, steadfast and resolute, the Confucian leader breaks limiting or negative beliefs or thoughts (the weeds in his or her heart) and achieves. The gentleman (lady) is to have no evil, bad or negative thoughts. Chew (2000) echoed that fear is reduced as one thinks positively, and one's world becomes a better world. Positive in thinking and outlook, (s) he becomes strong and resilient. And what more, the more man meditates upon good thoughts; the better will be his world and the world at large. Positive-minded, Confucian entrepreneurs and leaders are said to be fighting fit. It is said that “if you dare to dream (*think*), you dare to do. Failure or throwing the towel is not his style.” (Lim, 2001: 66; author's *italics*). For Confucius, “the mind of the gentleman (*lady*) (*jen*) progresses upwards; the vulgar mind progresses downwards” (Chew, 2000: 22, *italics mine*). As said earlier, akin to diamonds under pressure, one toughens up when faced with challenges and difficulties, and grow. When one looks inwards, one would improve oneself, and become strong and robust. Confucius said, “A gentleman (*jen*) blames himself while a common man blames others.” (Lin, 1994: 181). This, to the author, means that the Confucian leader is more of an internal than an external; the leader is the Captain of his (her) ship and (s) he is the master (mistress) of his (her) destiny.

The Confucian believes that man has natural goodness (Asiapac, 2013; Mencius says, 2009; Legge, 1970). In Matsushita's case, Kotter (1997: 206) wrote that Konosuke Matsushita "assume(d) people are basically good, progress is possible", and man have the capacity to bring material and intellectual resources to bear on the difficult problems facing the world. Indeed detached and un-trapped by power, position and wealth, it can be strongly perceived that the positive Confucian steadfastly serves and makes good the given situation. Business can survive and continue to exist, if not prosper. That overall service attitude can also help the person to be more influential or persuasive, attracting customers and prospects. (S) he willingly serves. "A gentleman (*lady*) is (*also*) conscious only in the knowledge of others' comfort; the mean is conscious only of his (*her*) own comfort" (Chew, 2000: 2, *italics mine*). Besides, the Confucian leader does more than (s) he cannot bear. Or (s) he has something that (s) he cannot bear. Mencius commented that everyone has something that he cannot allow or stomach (Mencius says, 2009). To extend such distaste to what he can bear is benevolence. Everyone has something that (s) he refuses to do; and to enlarge such dislike to what (s) he is willing to do is righteousness. To this author, to broaden such aversion to such obstacles to what he is willing to do is to be positive, indeed having that inner strength, boldness and resilience.

4. Giving Help to Others Builds One's Character and Resilience

One contact who knew that the researcher-author was writing a paper on Confucius and resilience approached him and related these: Respecting, looking after, and helping the elders are Confucian values that require a lot of energy and time. And, these days, everybody requires work to earn a living unless one is rich that one can spare oneself to look after the elders such as one's parents. One's parent(s) may suffer from Alzheimer and this requires resilient children to perform the task. However, my mother was resilient enough in performing her tasks of looking after my father for over 15 years from when my father was 65 (when he contracted the sickness) until when he passed away when he was 83 last year. She volunteered to do the tasks by not troubling her 5 grown up children as much as possible. I really admire and respect her resilient character. Resilient leaders are also benevolent or compassionate; "love all and serve all" (Low, 2010: 685).

Interestingly, in the Confucian context, the gentleman (*lady*) (*junzi*) is not only kind and benevolent to one's parents and family members, those within the family and those outside the family and friends, but also to other people and, in fact, to society as a whole. "Give(ing) help to the needy, not to the wealthy" (Zhou, 2005: 124), the gentleman (*lady*) is a source of affection and kindness to all. It is also worthy to note that even among the Straits Chinese (Peranakans), benevolence is stressed. And "a person must not be "jahat" (evil) or cruel. (Chia, 1980, cited in Low, 2014). 'Their socialization or child-rearing at home enables character-building.' (Several interviewees' inputs). 'The Babas' conversation is always halus (fine or polite)'. (Chia, 1980: 23, cited in Low, 2014).

A man is ailing if he makes no progress in virtue, learns nothing or leaves no bad habits and corrects no mistakes. But as one learns, one betters oneself; one strives and makes progress in one's virtue, and as one betters oneself, is it not that one also indirectly improving one's family, one's country, and ultimately the world? "The Master said, 'The gentleman is *generous* without its costing him anything... *has desires without being greedy*...' (*The Analects*, XX verse 2 (Lau, 1979: 159 – 160; *italics*, author's emphasis). In this regard, Konosuke Matsushita spoke of serving the society; "for the good of society" (Kotter, 1997: 113). In Confucian leadership, when profits are made, the Confucian businessmen returned some of the profits to the community. Singapore's pioneers such as Tan Tock Seng, 1798-1850, the founder of Tan Tock Seng Hospital and Dr. Lim Boon Keng, 1869 – 1957 (Lim and Chia, 2004) would return some to the community in the form of help and assistance to others. Care for others and social responsibility is thus 'built-in'. [Note that after Tan Tock Seng's death in 1850, his son Tan Kim Ching carried on the family support for the hospital which continues as one of Singapore's most prominent medical centers (<http://singaporepioneers.blogspot.sg/>; Low, 2014)]. For Confucius, not only during normal times but also during a crisis, a good leader helps others especially the needy (Chew, 2000).

5. Ensuring Integrity and (Safeguarding) Character Attracts and Wins Business/ Customers

It is common between the Chinese to adopt the general Confucian notion of integrity which is commonly expressed in the form of a saying – in that, "when one loses one's money, one would lose nothing. When one loses one's health, one loses something.

And of course, when one loses one's character or integrity, one, in fact, loses everything!" Low and Ang (2013: 2; *italics author's*) observed that it is indeed shocking to spot that "many managers (*leaders*) of... *business enterprises* were responsible for their firms' financial decline, but they were rewarding themselves as if they deserved high compensations for their disastrous business decisions, policies, and actions". The financial excesses in their control brought these executives worldwide notoriety and public ridicule. On the other hand, it is significant to note that "honoring the virtuous and able as well as giving recognition to moral excellence is something in which a sage-king (an ideal leader) would attach great importance" (Scroll 26, *Wei Zhi*, Vol. 2, cited in Qunshu Zhiyan, 2012: 265). And in business, it is also vital that one's words should not outstrip one's actions. "Confucius said: 'The junzi is ashamed of his word outstripping his deed.' (Analects XIV). "In China we still talk about someone's words outstripping his deeds' today. A junzi is ashamed for their words to go further than their actions" (Yu Dan, 2010: 138).

Here, Confucius expressed, "The power of the spiritual forces in the Universe – how active it is everywhere! Invisible to the eyes, and impalpable to the senses, it is inherent in all things, and nothing can escape its operation." (Lin, 1994: 109). And indeed "a gentleman (*lady*) (*junzi*) understands what is moral; a base man (*lady*) understands what is advantageous or profitable" (Confucius cited in Chew, 2000: 9; *italics mine*). "The moral character of a gentleman is like the wind, while that of a petty man is like grass" (Zhou, 2005: 188-189). Interestingly, for Confucius, virtue is never alone; a good man (*lady*) is sure to attract other good men (*ladies*). Virtue also inspires respect of others. Confucius also highly stressed on integrity, business associates and people in general would often want to do business with a business person of character and integrity. When one has the character, high integrity and good example, one shines like the North Polar Star, and thus able to attract other people including one's business associates and customers. Honesty and integrity gives the Confucian leader firm grounding and rises above the storms. Mencius once expressed that, "A great carpenter teaches his apprentice to use squares and compasses. The man, who wants to cultivate himself, must also have squares and compasses for his conduct *in his business and in living*." (Lin, 1994: 290, *italics mine*). When one is not greedy, and being virtuous as well as having "a sensitive heart which cannot bear to see suffering in others" (Mencius cited in Chew, 2000: 36), other people's trust on one is being built; there is also trust between business partners and associates, and goodwill spreads. And a virtuous business person, being credible, thus succeeds.

This author would also take it that ensuring integrity entails a true commitment, and a heartfelt promise to oneself from which one will not back down or compromise; one perseveres or continues to ensure or uphold one's integrity in spite of whatever the situation. Although business is not the primary concern, once the baseline is settled [one's integrity and character is established, there is much trust (*xin*) and], business and profits would (naturally) be in place. This coincides with the Matsushita leadership which Kotter (1997: 115) highlighted, that is, the Confucian leader strives "to be fair and honest in all business dealings and personal conduct, always taking balanced judgments free of preconceptions." Another case in point that can also be seen in practice is that of Singapore's Choon Keng Tang or better known as C.K. Tang, honesty and diligence were the guiding principles of the pastor's son who built a commercial edifice. He believed that "in business, one must not cheat people", and he earned much trust of others (Tang, cited in Lee, 2000: 42). In the late 1970's, C.K. Tang expanded his business, and in 1992, the Tang Complex, a 33-floor deluxe hotel and shopping complex was built along Singapore's popular tourist area and high street, Orchard Road.

6. Building the Customers' (People's) Trust (*Xin*)

One can't truly be a great leader without trust ("the currency of leadership", Peshawaria, 2013). Building the people's trust is creating the leadership edge. One of the prime mistakes a leader can make is to assume that others trust him simply by virtue of his title. Building the people's trust is, in fact, one of the skillful qualities of a great leader (Horsager, 2012). When leading (ruling) the country, it is critical that the leaders have the support and trust of the people. And for the Confucian adherents, trust (*xin*) is very important whether ruling the country or doing business. Trust must truly be earned, and it takes time. The leaders should not be resting on one's laurels or be complacent; otherwise they will lose the support and trust of the customers (people). Confucian, the late Matsushita Konosuke, the founder of Matsushita Electric Company, now Panasonic, for example, strongly believed in building the customers' trust. Customers' trust, with quality Company's delivery of good and services, can help to grow the Company, its markets and overall business (Matsushita, 1994; PHP Institute Inc., 1994).

Merchants normally work hard to create a respected name for their shops or companies; they seek to sell goods whose quality lived up to that name. Confucian in his ways, for Matsushita Konosuke, no matter how old and esteemed its name may be, a business today would receive no quarter if it shows incompetence or inadequacy in its performance, and it would eventually go under. Matsushita (1994; PHP Institute Inc., 1994) highlighted that the Company or one should not be resting on one's laurels but keep on improving after establishing the reputation – and that will assure the Company of continued success.

7. Being Proactive Ensures Business Survival, If Not Growth

One can indeed take it that for a Confucian to be proactive – making things happen (Low, 2013a); (s) he would learn, apply, help others; give and be service-oriented. Here, Matsushita (cited in Kotter, 1997: 115) upheld the value of service to the public. (That is, “to provide high-quality goods and services at reasonable prices, thereby contributing to the well-being and happiness of people throughout the world”.) And indeed the Confucian (leader) also sets the example (Low and Ang, 2013; Low, 2010; Zhou, 2005; Lin, 1994). These, this author believes, would enable the leader to have a belief system of success or a success mind growth with a set of values that will rocket-fuel him (her)!

Contrary to the common perception and the view that Confucianism promotes up-keeping the status quo (basically in Ancient China, the people in power promoted conservative Confucianism to perpetuate their power), we can, in fact, safely affirm that Confucianism endorses or encourages pro-activeness. The Confucian leader and business owner is both resilient and bold yet (s) he “exercises judgment in the course (of) being daring” (Chew, 2000: 10); (s) he is “slow to speak but prompt to act” (Chew, 2000: 10). To be proactive, this author interprets it that the Confucian leader-gentleman (lady) must be “always open-minded” (Zhou, 2005: 6; Low, 2012) and in fact, truly learns. To Confucius, “if one doesn't study when he is young, he will be of no use when he grows up” (Zhou, 2005: 34). As during the post-World War 2 period and the globalization of Matsushita Electric, the late Matsushita (Kotter, 1997: Chapter 12) then pointed out that the major factor that could limit the company's future was not the market. The potential around the globe was enormous; technology was also not the central issue. They were learning about the best from Philips and would develop even better ideas themselves. No shortage of employees could be foreseen in a world with billions of people. Money could be a problem, but only if they stopped following his policies concerning profits. The chief issue was the firm's leadership ways or values. The challenge, as he then saw it (and this, to the author, is still relevant), was to create an increasingly large cadre of people who believed strongly in the company's core precepts, but who otherwise were learning, receptive; flexible and applying (relevantly). These seem to aptly fit in with a Confucian-inspired Japanese saying that goes, “The bamboo that bends is stronger than the oak that resists.”

It is strongly felt that a Confucian, let alone a Confucian leader, is often giving (讓) (coinciding with the inputs of the three volunteered interviewees). And note that giving generates much warmth (溫); in his own ways, Confucius was warm when he was teaching his students; Yu Dan (2010: 12) spoke of, “What we will find in Confucius is a way of thinking, which is plain, simple and warm. It is exactly this attitude with which Confucius influenced his students.” And it should be noted that the Confucian leader is always willing to help others (taken as customers) no matter how difficult the problem others are facing with. (S) He would listen patiently to the customer's problem(s) and would make suggestions and ways for him or her to solve the problem. The leader is constantly by the customer's side guiding him or her to achieve the customer's goals or needs. (S) He is considerate and always helps to ease the customer's way when facing any difficulty (*The Analects*, Chapter 7 verse 38, Lau, 1979; Lin, 1994).

8. Being Perseverance Is a Boon

Thrown into poverty at a young age of four, the late Konosuke Matsushita is a prime example of a successful Confucian Japanese entrepreneur. The late Konosuke Matsushita was and is a role model who has inspired many; he struggled with the early deaths of family members, an apprenticeship which demanded sixteen-hour days at age nine, all the problems related to starting a business with neither money nor connections, the death of his only son, the Great Depression, the horror of World War 2 in Japan and more. Yet despite grounded by these hardships, Konosuke Matsushita grew to be a splendidly successful entrepreneur (Kotter, 1997). The Master once said, “The gentleman is generous without its costing him anything, *works others hard* without their complaining...” (*The Analects*, XX verse 2 (Lau, 1979: 159 – 160; *italics*, author's emphasis).

And it is also worthy to note that Yeung and Tung's 1996 PRC study (cited in Low, 2009; 2002) uncovered that a relationship exists between certain Confucian values (such as hardworking and perseverance) and firm performance. Perseverance and industriousness lead logically to focus, working towards the company goals that enhance the company's profitability, adding to corporate success. Indeed, the value of resilience can be considered as the people's or followers' vitality and their drive and, indeed, the latter has made countries such as Germany, Japan and South Korea (Isaak, 1997) economically successful.

9. Being Bold and Having the Essential Determination and Persistence

Being bold or courageous starts with an inward battle within the self, and it grows and spreads to one's followers and others (Maxwell, 1999). Confucian leadership expands or multiplies our notion of the possible; it tells us the story of being a die-hard and having courage as well as the essential determination and persistence to grow and achieve. Typically, leaders are "peak conquerors" (Lim, 1999) and "climbers" with high adversity quotient (AQ) (Stoltz, 1997; Lim, 2004), and climbers are self-propelled, daring; and they are determined to get what they want to achieve (Stoltz, 1997; Lim, 2004). In this aspect, "The Master said, 'As in the case of making a mound, if, before the very last basketful, I stop, then I shalt have stopped. As in the case of leveling the ground, if, though tipping only one basketful, I am going forward, then I shall be making progress.'" (Lau, 1979: 98 – 99; *Analects of Confucius*, 1994: Chapter IX: 19). Moreover, (resilient) leaders should not seek to act or decide on things to make themselves popular, but rather seek to do things no matter how unpleasant they may be, but what that may be the long-term good for the people and the organization as a whole. A person or a leader can be bold ala Confucian (Low, 2013a). "Act resolutely, and both heaven and hell will respect you" (Matsushita, cited in PHP Institute Inc., 1991: 39). When one, as a leader, makes up one's mind to do something, one must have the resolute, determination and persistence to carry it out. Confucius has further highlighted that: ...a king can't become a real ruler without encountering difficulties; and soldiers can't become crack troops without suffering setbacks. (Zhou, 2005: 171).

To best cite a practical example, this researcher would highlight these: With the *Confucian Heritage* culture (Low, 2009; 2002; 2005; 2006a), Singapore's ejection from Malaysia in 1965, its caesarean national birth and the influence of other factors as highlighted by Low (2007), Singapore/ Singaporeans are said to possess resilience. Most or older workers, who have lost their jobs, persevere in finding jobs, and being flexible being open to options in their job search. In times of recession and unemployment, they search for opportunities to keep afloat. They to some extent also welcome foreign talents while facing some competition to their jobs and means of survival; overall, they bravely face the issues and forge on. Perhaps, this could be interpreted as Confucian leadership of the ordinary people in their everyday lives. They, in fact, subscribe very much to the Chinese saying of "not be afraid of going slow, but be very much afraid of standing still" (Low, 2007: 142; also cited in Low, 2008).

10. Remaining Thrifty and Prudence Enhances the Leader's Resilient Qualities

The Master said, "Be trustworthy in what you say; avoid excesses in expenditure and love your fellow men" (*The Analects*, I verse 5) (Lau, 1979: 59). And he added that "extravagance means ostentation, frugality means shabbiness. I would rather be shabby than ostentatious." (*The Analects*, VII verse 36) (Lau, 1979: 91). Being thrifty and prudent are Confucian qualities (Low, 2013a; Low, 2008; 2006b); here, some form of self-disciplined is also often exercised when one is being prudent. And from the Confucian perspective, one can assert that such a leader, being resilient, is undeniably self-disciplined which in turn underpins the Confucian leader's overall resilience.

[Low (2012a) argued that the Confucian leader is self-disciplined in terms of 10Ps (although Low, 2012a indicated in his title as 9Ps); these 10 Ps are admittedly, 1. planning and organizing, 2. Personal mastery, 3. Principles or core values, 4. Practice, 5. Patience, 6. Person of character, 7 (being) provided for, 8. Personal example; 9. persistence and perseverance; and 10. prudence.] And being thrifty and prudent is what Matsushita (1994; PHP Institute Inc., 1994) refers to as dam management – it is in fact a useful practice for entrepreneurs and enterprises (nations) whose aim is long term stability and development. Prudence also aptly adds to the resilience of the leaders such Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Keng Swee and Lien Ying Chow, and Singapore's economic strengths (Lim and Chua, 2004; Low, 2008; 2006b).

The Singapore Government can also be said to be prudent in their Central Provident Fund policies as well as maintaining the island-Republic's national reserves. Dr. Goh Keng Swee (Singapore's former Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister/ Education Minister February 1979 to May 1980 and from June 1981 to December 1984) was one of the key men who helped to make Singapore what it is today; as one of the Singapore's Old Guards who can, in some ways, be said to be Confucian (and who recently passed away), Dr. Goh was known for his values of "thriftiness, perseverance, courage and diligence" (Chiam See Tong, cited in *The Sunday Times*, 2010: 6).

11. Having Proper Procedures (Li - Rituals) and Openness Help and Build Transparency

Ordinarily, a strong need exists to have proper procedures (*li* - rituals) and being open also facilitates things to happen; these characteristics help and build transparency within the organization or nation. With a strong value of governmental support and involvement, the Singapore Government builds road and provides the necessary infrastructure (Low, 2009, 2002). Certainly, paternalism also exists alongside the "confidence of the people in the ruler" (Lin, 1998 cited in Low, 2009; 2002), and being an orderly society is seen as a top Asian value (Bjerke, 1999 and Naisbitt, 1995 cited in Low (2009, 2002).

For Confucius, rites and rituals (*Li*) aid self-discipline and create stability. When there are proper and systematic procedures, it helps tremendously, and in the Singapore case, clear and established procedures leads to an effective and efficient civil service [recruited and hiring talents in a meritocratic manner], contributing or adding to greater transparency and good governance of the island-Republic. [Here, it is worthy to note that as Quah (2016) pointed out that red-tape is a key cause of corruption in the six Asian countries (Pakistan, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Brunei Darussalam) as civil servants are tempted by "opportunities to sell their official discretion and information" and "by the opportunities to extort payments" because "permits can be delayed, licenses held up, deliberations protracted, proceedings prolonged, unless rewards are offered" (Kaufman, 1977: 51-53, cited in Quah 2016: 249)]. With an "efficient and honest civil service that promptly attended to the needs of its citizens" (Ganesan, 2002 cited in Low (2009; 2002), for Singapore everything was on the table with clear rules (Thurow, 1996: viii; Schein, 1996: 169). There is also little or no corruption with much transparency. And all these favor and contribute to the island-nation's business and economic resilience. Also, of interest is the fact that a recent newspaper report (Lee, 2016) indicated that corruption cases handled by the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) dipped to new low in 2015. The latest statistics show that CPIB received 877 complaints in 2015, up from 736 in 2014 and 792 in 2013. Of these 132 cases were then pursued, down from 136 in 2014 and 152 in 2013 (Lee, 2016).

Limitations and Benefits of the Research

One of the key limitations of the study is that it is based on literature review or secondary data of resilience and Confucian leadership in general without any specific country in particular and when volunteered information/ data came, it zeroed in on only these respondents' interview outcome. In other words, a much richer perhaps deeper account of resilient Confucian leadership would be obtained had primary data or interviews been relied upon. Besides, it would be good to hear and know of what Chinese with different ideological influences/ nationalities/ other races and/or ethnic perceived of the Confucian leaders and their resilience. And in conducting this study, the author also deems that another key limitation is the time and costs constraints – there were little funds – even for publications and sponsorships for the study yet the researcher self-financed and supported it himself. It is worthy to note that the paper should and could be better off with more interviews made with a pool of interviewees.

Another limitation or caveat of the research is that culture is always ever evolving (or dying). Like any other cultures, the paradigms are shifting; and the thinking as well as the values too are changing; it is also difficult to indeed isolate particular cultural traits or characteristics which influence Confucian leadership/ resilience in metropolitan and multicultural Singapore and/ or even Malaysia. In any case, the benefits of the study are to create or give a snapshot of the Confucian leadership (please see Figure 1 below: The Profile of a Resilient Leader, Confucian-style), showing their ways of creating resilient leaders.

Figure 1 shows the profile or a summary of the qualities in the making of a resilient leader, Confucian-style, and ways.

Figure 1. The Profile of a Resilient Leader, Confucian-style



Concluding Remarks

All in all, the Confucian's key concepts and values as discussed: character, integrity, learning, positive thinking, continuous improvement; trust (*xin*), diligence and prudence – are still relevant in today's world, and holding key leadership lessons and hallmarks of success, they really help contribute to building and growing one's leadership resilience and toughness, if not, leadership excellence. Besides, as Yu Dan (2010: 10) interestingly pointed out, "The truths that Confucius gives us are always the easiest of truths"; and to paraphrase her, Confucius' teachings tell us all how we can live or lead the kind of happy leadership life that our spirit needs.

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