

Forging Ahead: The Role of Resilience and Reinvention in Exceptional Leadership in Malaysia and Indonesia

(Menempa Ke Hadapan: Peranan Ketahanan dan Penciptaan Semula dalam Kepimpinan Luar Biasa di Malaysia dan Indonesia)

YAP PEI SHI* & AQIMI RAFUAD

ABSTRACT

The role of resilience and reinvention in exceptional leadership in Malaysia and Indonesia is crucial in times of rapid change and challenges; where this article seeks to identify the concept of resilience and reinvention in leaders based in Malaysia and Indonesia, highlighting how these attributes enabled leaders to navigate uncertainty confidently by drawing from past experiences. This article encouraged aspiring and current leaders to adopt the principles of resilience and reinvention as guiding beacons on their journey toward leadership excellence. Furthermore, the researchers explored how exceptional leaders cultivated a culture of growth by valuing innovation, encouraging risk-taking, and promoting ongoing development. Lastly, this article suggests that a supportive environment, volunteering programs, and nation-building initiatives are the strategies to enhance resilience and reinvention in exceptional leadership among young leaders. However, with reliance on secondary data, there were limitations in data availability and finding relevant sources.

Keywords – resilience, reinvention, leader, exceptional leadership, Malaysia, Indonesia.

ABSTRAK

Peranan daya tahan dan penciptaan semula dalam kepimpinan yang luar biasa di Malaysia dan Indonesia adalah penting dalam masa perubahan dan cabaran yang pesat; di mana artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti konsep daya tahan dan reka cipta semula dalam pemimpin yang berpangkalan di Malaysia dan Indonesia, menyerlahkan bagaimana sifat-sifat ini membolehkan pemimpin mengharungi ketidakpastian dengan yakin dengan menggunakan pengalaman lepas. Artikel ini menggalakkan bakal pemimpin dan pemimpin semasa untuk mengguna pakai prinsip daya tahan dan reka cipta semula sebagai petunjuk arah dalam perjalanan mereka ke arah kecemerlangan kepimpinan. Tambahan pula, para penyelidik meneroka bagaimana pemimpin yang luar biasa memupuk budaya pertumbuhan dengan menghargai inovasi, menggalakkan pengambilan risiko, dan menggalakkan pembangunan yang berterusan. Akhir sekali, artikel ini mencadangkan bahawa persekitaran yang menyokong, program sukarelawan dan inisiatif pembinaan negara adalah strategi untuk meningkatkan daya tahan dan penciptaan semula dalam kepimpinan yang luar biasa dalam kalangan pemimpin muda. Walau bagaimanapun, dengan pergantungan pada data sekunder, terdapat had dalam ketersediaan data dan mencari sumber yang berkaitan.

Kata kunci – daya tahan, ciptaan semula, pemimpin, kepimpinan luar biasa, Malaysia, Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

In an ever-evolving world, leadership is no longer confined to static principles. The modern landscape demands leaders who can navigate uncertainty, adapt to change, and inspire their teams through challenges. This article delves into the vital qualities of resilience and reinvention that underpin exceptional leadership. We explore how leaders who embrace these traits survive and thrive in adversity, driving their teams and organisations toward success. Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks, learn from failures, and maintain a positive attitude in adversity (Coutu, 2002). Exceptional leaders understand that setbacks are inevitable, but their response truly matters. They serve as role models, demonstrating how to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles. By showing vulnerability and acknowledging their struggles, these leaders foster a culture of openness that encourages their teams to confront difficulties head-on.

Reinvention is about continuous self-improvement and adaptability (Ghez, 2019). Exceptional leaders recognise that clinging to outdated strategies or approaches can lead to stagnation. They actively seek new perspectives, stay attuned to changing trends, and remain open to innovation. These leaders create a dynamic environment that encourages creativity and experimentation by embracing change and encouraging their teams to do the same. This willingness to evolve propels the organisation forward and instils a sense of purpose and excitement among team members. Resilience and reinvention empower leaders to tackle uncertainty with confidence. Resilient leaders maintain their composure when unexpected challenges arise, assess the situation objectively, and make informed decisions. Drawing from their experiences of overcoming past obstacles, they guide their teams through uncertainty by emphasising adaptability and a solutions-oriented mindset. Their unwavering commitment to growth reassures team members that change can lead to positive outcomes.

Leaders who embody resilience and reinvention inspire their teams to adopt the same mindset. They foster an environment where failure is viewed as a stepping stone to success and innovation is celebrated. They create a culture that supports continuous improvement by actively encouraging learning and development. Team members feel empowered to explore new ideas, take calculated risks, and contribute to the organisation's evolution.

THE ROLE OF RESILIENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Resilience is defined as the human ability to meet challenges and then recover from them to live life fully. Resilient leaders can sustain their energy level under pressure, cope with disruptive changes, and adapt (Kohlrieser et al., 2015). Resilience stands as a foundational pillar upon which exceptional leadership is built. In modern business's dynamic and often unpredictable landscape, leaders who possess and demonstrate resilience are better equipped to guide their teams through challenges, foster innovation, and drive organisational success. The role of resilience in exceptional leadership is multifaceted and can be understood through various key aspects.

Haver and Akerjordet (2014) mentioned that experienced leaders have cultivated resilience through their extensive experience and effective emotional regulation. For instance, the Co-founder of Apple Inc., Steve Jobs, faced numerous setbacks throughout his career, including being ousted from his own company. However, his resilience and passion for innovation drove him to return to Apple and lead it to become one of the most successful tech companies in the world. Jobs' ability to bounce back from failure and maintain his innovative spirit made him an exceptional leader.

Besides, The CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, Elon Musk, has faced numerous setbacks and criticism throughout his career. Musk has shown resilience by persevering in adversity, from financial difficulties to technical challenges. His ability to learn from failures, adapt his strategies, and continue pushing the boundaries of innovation exemplifies the role of resilience in exceptional leadership. These examples demonstrate how leaders from diverse backgrounds and fields have exhibited resilience in their leadership styles. Their ability to overcome challenges, maintain a positive outlook, and inspire others has solidified their place as exceptional leaders in history.

THE ROLE OF REINVENTION IN EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Reinvention is critical to exceptional leadership, especially in today's rapidly changing world. Leaders who embrace the concept of reinvention are better equipped to navigate evolving challenges, seize new opportunities, and drive innovation within their organisations. The findings suggest that the most successful leaders nurture and maintain organisational cultures that enable the management reform envisioned

by reinvention, resulting in improved effectiveness and efficiency (Hennessey, 1998). The role of reinvention in exceptional leadership can be understood through the following key aspects. Embracing change, continuous learning, innovation, agility, and adaptability are key aspects that explain the role of reinvention in exceptional leadership.

Exceptional leaders understand that change is inevitable and often necessary for growth. They actively seek new ideas, perspectives, and approaches to adapt to shifting circumstances. By embracing change themselves, they inspire their teams to be open to innovation and transformation. Leaders who prioritise reinvention are committed to continuous learning and self-improvement. They invest time and effort into expanding their knowledge, developing new skills, and staying updated with industry trends. This dedication to learning enables them to make informed decisions and drive their teams toward success. Furthermore, reinventive leaders foster a culture of innovation within their organisations. They encourage creativity, experimentation, and the exploration of new solutions to address challenges. Promoting an innovation mindset ensures that their teams remain competitive and forward-thinking.

Besides, leaders embracing reinvention possess the agility to pivot and adapt to changing circumstances. They are not wedded to a single approach but are willing to adjust strategies when needed. This adaptability enables them to seize new opportunities and navigate unexpected challenges. Exceptional leaders who embrace reinvention often become trendsetters in their industries. They influence

their fields by pushing boundaries, introducing new ideas, products, or services, and inspiring others to follow suit. Their willingness to take calculated risks sets them apart as leaders who drive change rather than simply respond to it. Leaders prioritising reinvention become transformational leaders who inspire their teams to achieve beyond their perceived limits. They challenge the status quo, communicate a compelling vision for the future, and empower their teams to contribute to the organisation's evolution.

Lastly, organisations led by reinventive leaders tend to have longer-lasting success. These leaders are attuned to market, industry, and consumer preference shifts. Reinventing their strategies and offerings ensures that their organisations remain relevant and resilient over time. Famous leaders who embraced reinvention are the founder and former CEO of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, who is known for his relentless pursuit of innovation and reinvention. He transformed Amazon from an online bookstore into a global e-commerce giant and then further expanded the company's reach into areas such as cloud computing and entertainment streaming. Reed Hastings, a co-founder and CEO of Netflix, also exemplifies reinvention in the entertainment industry. He shifted the company's focus from DVD rentals to online streaming, revolutionising how people consume media and making Netflix a household name worldwide. Lastly, following the legacy of Steve Jobs, Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, has continued the company's tradition of innovation and reinvention. He oversaw the launch of new products like the Apple Watch and led the company's expansion into services, diversifying Apple's revenue streams.



FIGURE 1. Tim Cook, CEO of Apple.

THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF RESILIENCE AND REINVENTION IN LEADERSHIP

Resilience and reinvention are not standalone traits but interconnected qualities that, when combined, create a powerful synergy in leadership. Leaders who embody both resilience and reinvention can navigate challenges more effectively, inspire their teams, and foster sustainable growth within their organisations.

Firstly, resilience equips leaders with the mental and emotional strength to withstand setbacks and challenges. It allows them to bounce back from failures, maintain a positive outlook, and persevere in adversity. Reinvention complements resilience by encouraging leaders to adapt their strategies and approaches when confronted with new challenges. Instead of being rigid in facing obstacles, reinventive leaders are open to exploring alternative paths and solutions. Secondly, resilience leaders understand that setbacks are opportunities for learning and growth. They view failures as valuable lessons contributing to personal and professional development. Reinvention involves a commitment to continuous learning and self-improvement. Leaders who embrace reinvention actively seek new knowledge, adapt to changing circumstances, and apply innovative approaches.

Thirdly, resilience sets an example for team members by showing them how to navigate challenges with composure and determination.

When leaders model resilience, they inspire their teams to adopt a positive and solution-oriented mindset. Meanwhile, reinvention inspires teams by promoting a culture of innovation and creativity.

Leaders who embrace reinvention encourage their teams to think outside the box, explore new ideas, and challenge the status quo. Fourthly, resilient leaders create an environment where failure is not feared but embraced as a stepping stone to growth. They encourage experimentation and risk-taking, fostering an atmosphere of continuous improvement. Reinventive leaders drive growth by constantly seeking new opportunities and approaches. Their willingness to reinvent processes, products, or strategies can lead to innovation that propels the organisation forward.

Lastly, resilience helps leaders stay focused on their long-term goals despite short-term setbacks. It ensures leaders maintain their vision and guide their teams toward a common purpose. Reinvention allows leaders to adapt their vision to changing circumstances. They can pivot their strategies while staying aligned with the overarching mission, ensuring their organisations remain relevant and competitive.

The Example of Resilience and Reinvention in Malaysia's Leaders

These examples demonstrate that resilience and reinvention are key attributes of effective leadership in Malaysia. Leaders like Tan Sri Anthony Fernandes, Puan Sri Dr Susan Cheah, and Datuk Nicol David have achieved personal success and transformed their respective industries by overcoming challenges, adapting to change, and inspiring innovation. Their stories inspire aspiring leaders to embrace these qualities and make a lasting impact in their fields.



FIGURE 2. Tan Sri Anthony Fernandes, the CEO of AirAsia Group

Fig. 2 shows Tan Sri Anthony Fernandes, the CEO of AirAsia Group, a notable example of resilience and reinvention in Malaysia's leadership. When the aviation industry faced significant challenges, including the aftermath of the September 11 attacks and the global financial crisis, Fernandes displayed remarkable resilience. Instead of succumbing to adversity, he saw an opportunity to revolutionise air travel in Southeast Asia. Fernandes reinvented the airline industry by introducing a low-cost carrier model, making air travel more affordable and accessible to millions. He harnessed innovative strategies such as eliminating travel agents, offering online booking systems, and optimising operational efficiency. Despite initial scepticism, his resilience and unyielding belief in his vision propelled AirAsia to become a leading budget airline, defying traditional industry norms. In addition to his pioneering role in aviation, Fernandes demonstrated reinvention through diversification. He expanded AirAsia's offerings beyond flights, venturing into hospitality, digital services, and fintech. This strategic reinvention enabled the group to weather industry challenges and establish a strong presence in various sectors (klia2info, n.d)

Puan Sri Dr. Susan Cheah, a prominent oncologist and founder of Beacon Hospital in Malaysia, exemplifies resilience and reinvention in healthcare leadership. In a sector marked by complexity and constant advancements, Dr. Cheah's resilience is evident in her commitment to providing exceptional patient care despite the challenges posed by severe illnesses. Dr. Cheah's reinvention is apparent in her adoption of cutting-edge medical technologies and treatment approaches. She recognised the importance of staying

updated with the latest medical breakthroughs, ensuring that her hospital offers state-of-the-art treatment options to patients. Her willingness to embrace innovation has positioned Beacon Hospital as a centre of excellence in cancer care. Furthermore, Dr. Cheah's resilience is evident in her efforts to raise awareness about cancer prevention and early detection. She organised various initiatives to educate the public and promote a proactive approach to healthcare. Her commitment to reinventing healthcare practices to prioritise patient well-being and education has set a benchmark for leadership in the medical field (i3investor, n.d).

Datuk Nicol David, a former world champion squash player from Malaysia, showcases resilience and reinvention in sports leadership. Throughout her career, she faced formidable opponents and injuries that could have deterred her progress. However, her unwavering resilience enabled her to bounce back from setbacks and maintain her sports dominance. Nicol David's reinvention is evident in her continuous pursuit of improvement. Despite being a world champion, she constantly sought new techniques, strategies, and training methods to enhance her skills. Her ability to adapt her game and embrace new approaches allowed her to maintain her competitive edge over the years. Beyond her individual achievements, Nicol David's resilience and reinvention have contributed to elevating the status of squash in Malaysia. She inspired a generation of players and initiated efforts to popularise the sport among youths. By combining her personal resilience and commitment to reinvention, she has left a lasting impact on sports leadership in Malaysia (DiGiacomo, 2024).

The Example of Resilience and Reinvention in



FIGURE 3. Joko Widodo, the president of Indonesia

Indonesia's Leaders

Joko Widodo, commonly known as Jokowi is a prime example of resilience and reinvention in Indonesian political leadership. As the President of Indonesia, Jokowi faced numerous challenges, including complex bureaucracy, economic disparities, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Jokowi demonstrated resilience by maintaining a hands-on approach to governance, often visiting remote areas to address citizens' concerns directly. His ability to navigate political obstacles and economic fluctuations showcased his determination to bring about positive change. Reinvention was evident in his economic policies and infrastructure projects. Jokowi implemented pro-business reforms, streamlined regulations, and focused on infrastructure development to attract foreign investment and stimulate economic growth. His commitment to reinvention is also visible in his efforts to digitise government services and promote e-commerce, ensuring Indonesia remains competitive in the digital age (Hollar, 2024).

Tri Rismaharini, often called Risma, exemplifies resilience and reinvention in urban leadership. Currently serving as the Minister of Social Affairs in Indonesia and Mayor of Surabaya for ten years, she tackled complex urban issues with innovative solutions. Resilience was evident in her response to natural disasters, such as floods and pandemics. Risma's hands-on approach to disaster management, quick decision-making, and transparent communication demonstrated her ability to lead through crises. Risma's reinvention efforts focused on urban development and environmental sustainability. She revitalised public spaces, promoted green initiatives, and introduced waste management systems. Her leadership demonstrated that urban areas could evolve to become more livable, sustainable, and resilient (Dewi, 2016).

Rudiantara, Indonesia's former Minister of Communication and Information Technology, embodies resilience and reinvention in the realm of technology leadership. He faced challenges such as improving digital connectivity across the archipelago and enhancing cybersecurity. Resilience was evident in his pursuit of expanding internet access to remote areas. Despite infrastructural challenges, Rudiantara remained dedicated to bridging the digital divide, which was crucial for economic development and empowerment. Rudiantara's reinvention efforts involved crafting national digital strategies and regulations to support the digital economy. He promoted tech startups and innovation hubs, contributing to Indonesia's growth as a digital hub in Southeast Asia. His leadership demonstrated how resilience and reinvention could

drive technological progress and digital inclusion (Pusat Data Dan Analisa Tempo, 2020).

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE AND REINVENTION IN EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP AMONG YOUNG LEADERS

A supportive environment

Creating a supportive campus environment is integral to fostering resilience and reinvention of young leaders within the education institution. When the institution prioritises an atmosphere that encourages personal growth, embraces adaptability, and provides resources for leadership development, it empowers youths who are student leaders to thrive. A comprehensive resilience framework emphasising the importance of learning from past experiences encouraged student leaders to embrace risk-taking, learn from failures, and enhance their resilient problem-solving abilities. They engage in identity-building, strengthen their capacities, and partake in leadership for change efforts. Additionally, they experience reinvention through resources like outbound mentorship programs and international leadership workshops, which expand their horizons and nurture a global perspective. In this way, a supportive campus environment is the foundation for cultivating resilient and reinventive student leaders who can effectively navigate the challenges of university life and beyond.

Volunteering programs

Studies have proven that self-initiated volunteer efforts have the potential to enhance community resilience (Albahari & Schultz, 2017). Volunteering programs, including forums, summits, and on-site projects, offer young leaders the opportunity to acquire invaluable skills and hands-on experiences while contributing to improving their communities. This active engagement enhances reinvention in leadership by exposing themselves to real-life experiences and fostering adaptability to diverse environments by cultivating a sense of motivation and responsibility among young leaders. It provides a unique opportunity to engage in identity-building work by contributing transformative ideas and developing their thoughts and strengths in incorporating sustainable development goals (SDGs) into community programs. Furthermore, it promotes collaboration on vital global issues among youth from various countries.

Nation-building initiatives

Nation-building initiatives are pivotal in enhancing reinvention among young leaders by providing exposure to diverse perspectives and complex problem-solving experiences. The findings imply that individual leaders can significantly influence the development of nations (Jones & Olken, 2005). Engaging with multifaceted issues such as economic development and social cohesion, these leaders learn to adapt to evolving circumstances and develop innovative solutions. Collaboration and networking opportunities at various levels and the ability to embrace failures as learning experiences foster adaptability. Moreover, these initiatives offer resilient learning in leadership, governance, and global perspectives, equipping young leaders with practical skills and insights for addressing interconnected global challenges. This dynamic learning environment nurtures the attributes of reinvention, contributing to the cultivation of exceptional leadership skills vital for driving societal and global progress.

CONCLUSIONS

The modern landscape demands leaders who can navigate uncertainty, adapt to change, and inspire their teams through challenges. This article delved into the vital qualities of resilience and reinvention that underpin exceptional leadership. Resilience stands as a foundational pillar upon which exceptional leadership is built. It is the ability to bounce back from setbacks, learn from failures, and maintain a positive attitude in adversity. Exceptional leaders understand that setbacks are inevitable, but their response truly matters. They serve as role models, demonstrating how to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles. By showing vulnerability and acknowledging their struggles, these leaders foster a culture of openness that encourages their teams to confront difficulties head-on.

The research shows that reinvention complements resilience by fostering continuous self-improvement and adaptability. Exceptional leaders in Malaysia and Indonesia recognise that clinging to outdated strategies or approaches can lead to stagnation. They actively seek new perspectives, stay attuned to changing trends, and remain open to innovation. These leaders create a dynamic environment that encourages creativity and experimentation by embracing change and encouraging their teams to do the same. This willingness to evolve propels the organisation forward and instils a sense of purpose and excitement among

team members. The interconnectedness of resilience and reinvention in leadership creates a powerful synergy. Resilient leaders who also embrace reinvention are equipped to tackle uncertainty with confidence. They maintain composure in the face of unexpected challenges, assess situations objectively, and make informed decisions. Drawing from their experiences of overcoming past obstacles, they guide their teams through uncertainty by emphasising adaptability and a solutions-oriented mindset.

Furthermore, leaders who embody resilience and reinvention inspire their teams to adopt the same mindset. They foster an environment where failure is viewed as a stepping stone to success and innovation is celebrated. They create a culture that supports continuous improvement by actively encouraging learning and development. Team members feel empowered to explore new ideas, take calculated risks, and contribute to the organisation's evolution.

In conclusion, the role of resilience and reinvention in exceptional leadership is multifaceted and dynamic. These qualities empower leaders to navigate challenges confidently, inspire their teams to embrace change and drive growth within their organisations. As the world continues to evolve, leaders who embrace resilience and reinvention will stand at the forefront of progress, shaping the future of their industries and leaving a legacy of impactful leaders.

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Yap Pei Shi* & Aqimi Rafuad
 Student Affairs Department,
 Universiti Utara Malaysia,
 06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

*Corresponding author: yap_pei_shi@stml.uum.edu.my