T.C.

ISTANBUL OKAN UNIVERSTY

INSTITUTION OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMEMT

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ENGLISH PROGRAM

Minghua Xing

LAOZI HARMONY AND MANAGEMENT: CONCEPTUAL IMPLICATIONS

SUPERVISOR

Prof. Dr. Gonca Telli YAMAMOTO

Istanbul, May 2022

T.C.

ISTANBUL OKAN UNIVERSTY

INSTITUTION OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMEMT

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ENGLISH PROGRAM

Minghua Xing

112016035

LAOZI HARMONY AND MANAGEMENT: CONCEPTUAL IMPLICATIONS

SUPERVISOR

Prof. Dr. Gonca Telli YAMAMOTO

Istanbul, May 2022

T.C.

ISTANBUL OKAN UNIVERSTY

INSTITUTION OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMEMT

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ENGLISH PROGRAM

LAOZI HARMONY AND MANAGEMENT: CONCEPTUAL IMPLICATIONS

Minghua Xing

112016035

Date of Submission of Dissertation to the Institution: …….
Date of Dissertation Defense : 27/05/2022

Dissertation Supervisor : Prof. Dr. Gonca Telli YAMAMOTO
Doğuş University ……

Dissertation Jury Members : Prof. Dr. Halit Targan ÜNAL
Doğuş University ……

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hakan ÇORA
İstanbul Okan University ……

Dr. Ayşenur TOPÇUOĞLU
Istanbul Okan University ……

Dr. Beyza TOKSOY
Istanbul Okan University ……

ISTANBUL, May 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My genuine appreciation, first of all, is for the remarkably valuable guidance and support I have received from Professor Dr. Gonca Telli Yamamoto. Her sincere and constant encouragements are the sources of motivations that discovered my internal voice and devotion to this tough journey. When traditional Chinese wisdom, still remains alien in sense of deep understanding in different cultural contexts, the explorations for conceptual implications in management studies will be inevitable challenging. Conceptual thinking, as literally perceptible, works on abstractness and cognitive thoughts. Deep thinking, involves deep engagement not only in minds but also in souls. Deep and genuine embracement with concepts alien and different, requires a truly accommodating mind and vision, along with sharpness in analyzing and richness in knowledge accumulation. It is my great luck that my dissertation advisor, does possess all of them and more importantly, constantly refreshing, dynamic and adaptive academic view, which is undoubtedly precious for me to learn from in a long-run as an academic researcher.

My special thanks go to Prof. Dr. Targan Unal, his professional, witted and well-organized advices are illuminating throughout this research. His words on time and process management for this study truly helped me out of my anxieties in many critical moments. My wholehearted thanks also go to Dr. Ayşenur Topçuoğlu, her constant concern and support, are the lights and resource for my progress little by little. She also enlighted my tough days of pandemic COVID-19.

I also wish to express my respect and gratitude to distinguished jury members Associate Prof. Dr. Hakan Çora and Dr. Beyza Toksoy, whose academic compositions, open mindedness, and embracing attitude and thoughts are so meaningful not only for this study but also for my future scholarly career.

Trying to deliver research meaningful for goodness of reality, no matter how tiny it might seem, is among my enthusiasm during this study. Besides academic reasonings, I would like to add it is also my true belief that: instead of 'either or' mindsets, conceptual collaborative mindsets, namely 'both and', are not alternative but necessity for management today in a general sense, which calls for wide penetration of harmony concept. May the world a better peaceful place.

Minghua Xing
May 2022

ABBREVIATIONS

BELMAS: British Educational Leadership, Management & Administration Society

CCPIT: China Council for the Promotion of International Trade

CRCAH: Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health

DEİK: Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey

DDJ: Dao De Jing

HBR: Harvard Business Review

IOSR: International Organization of Scientific Research

JBM: Journal of Business and Management

TÜSİAD: Turkish Industry and Business Association

UNCCD: The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

USA: The United States of America

Table of Contents

Laozi Harmony and Management: Conceptual Implications

Chapter 1: Introduction……..1

1.1. Conceptual skills in management and challenges they undergo today…….....1

1.1.1. A brief review on conceptual skills in management……..... 1

1.1.2. New developments challenging studies on conceptual skills in management…...6

1.1.2.1. Inclusiveness trend…….....6

1.1.2.2. Self-management model…….....7

1.1.2.3. Era of information, communication and digitalization…….....7

1.1.3. Inadequacy and challenges conceptual skills in management undergo….....7

1.2. Chinese harmony as complementary and/or alternative approach for conceptual skills in management…….....8

1.3. Significance of the research…….....11

1.4. Research methodology…….....12

1.5. Scope of the research……...14

1.6. Research question…….....15

1.7. Design of the contents……16

Chapter 2: Harmony in Chinese Tradition and its Implications for Conceptual Skill in Management……18

2.1. Origin and developments of harmony concept in Chinese tradition……...18

2.1.1. Chinese harmony in etymology perspective……... 18

2.1.2. Chinese harmony in different dimensions…….....19

2.1.2.1. Origin…….....19
2.1.2.2. Heaven, Earth, Humankind…….....20
2.1.2.3. Harmony as a concept in social context…….....21
2.2. Confucian harmony…….....25
2.2.1. Knowledge learning…….....27
2.2.2. Ethical codes…….....28
2.2.3. State of Equilibrium and Harmony…….....31
2.2.4. Embracing differences…….....33
2.2.5. Hierarchy and order…….....34
2.3. Other views enriching Chinese harmony…….....37
2.3.1. Mozi harmony…….....37
2.3.2. Laozi harmony ……...…….....39
2.3.3. Zhuangzi harmony..... 40
2.3.4. Wang Fuzi harmon.....41
2.4. Modern Chinese harmony.....42
2.5. Chinese harmony and implications for conceptual skills in management.....43
2.5.1. Socio-historical uniqueness.....44
2.5.2. Chinese harmony as a case study for conceptual insights.....45
2.5.3. Other harmony thoughts from different traditions.....46
2.6. Challenges and recipe for conceptual skills in managements.....48
2.6.1. Existent gaps and conceptual needs..... 49
2.6.2. Wholeness view is not at its place in reality..... 50
2.6.3. Oriental approaches to meet the challenges and to close the gaps.....52
2.7. Chinese harmony and implications for conceptual skills in management.....54
2.7.1. Wholeness view..... 55
2.7.2. Long-term view.....56
2.7.3. Complex problems..... 57
2.7.4. Achieving the organizational goal.....59

2.8. Conceptual framework of Chinese harmony.....60

Chapter 3: Laozi harmony and its implications for conceptual skills in management.....64

3.1. Laozi: an introduction.....64

3.1.1. Laozi and his influences.....64

3.1.2. Dao Jing 道经 De Jing 德经 and harmony.....65

3.2. Laozi harmony.....67

3.2.1. Overview.....67

3.2.2. Laozi's perception on harmony.....71

3.2.2.1. Harmony as a state.....71

3.2.2.2. Harmony as a dynamic process.....73

3.2.2.3. Harmony awareness for human beings.....74

3.3. Laozi harmony approach.....76

3.3.1. Self-cultivation.....76

3.3.2. Self-localization.....79

3.3.2.1. Ignorance awareness.....79

3.3.2.2. Self-identification.....81

3.3.2.3. Conscious wu wei (non-action, non-interference).....83

3.3.3. Self-integration.....85

3.3.3.1. Water-like.....85

3.3.3.2. Holistic Oneness.....87

3.4. Implications for conceptual skills in management.....91

3.4.1. Laozi harmony and wholeness view.....91

3.4.2. Laozi harmony and long-term view.....92

3.4.3. Laozi harmony and complex problems.....94

3.4.4. Laozi harmony and achieving the organizational goal.....97

Chapter 4: Laozi harmony and management: conceptual implications……101

4.1. Laozi harmony and Niccolo Machiavelli.....103

4.1.1. Convergence between Machiavelli and Laozi in terms of managerial thoughts.....103

4.1.2. Conceptual difference between Machiavelli and Laozi in terms of managerial thoughts.....104

4.2. Laozi harmony and Maslow' human needs pyramid..... 110

4.2.1. Maslow's human needs pyramid.....110

4.2.2. Connections between Maslow's thoughts and Laozi harmony approach..... 112

4.2.3. Conceptual differences between Maslow and Laozi..... 115

4.3. Laozi harmony and Porter's Five Force framework.....117

4.3.1. Porter's Five Forces framework..... 117

4.3.2. Conceptual convergency and differences between Porter's thoughts and Laozi harmony.....122

4.4. Laozi harmony and Itay Talgam.....125

4.4.1. Conceptual convergency beween Laozi harmony and Itay Talgam.....125

4.4.2. Harmony as an approach and Talgam's interpretations……... 126

4.5. Non-Western wisdom converging with Laozi harmony and harmonization.....127

4.6. Harmonization, creativity and future preparation.....129

4.6.1. Harmonization and creativity.....129

4.6.2. Harmonization and future preparation..... 131

Chapter 5: Conclusion……135

5.1. Findings……135

5.2. Limits of the study……153

5.3. Further study……..153

Figure 1.1. Three basic skills necessary in different management levels…….154
Figure 2.1. Confucius harmony hierarchy diagram……..155
Figure 2.2. theoretical harmony diagram extracted from Chinese harmony……156
Figure 3.1. Laozi's illustrations on harmony……157
Figure 3.2. Laozi harmony approach……159
Figure 4.1. Hierarchy of leaders' category: Machiavelli and Laozi…….....160
Figure 4.2. Maslow's eight stage hierarchical pyramid……161
Figure 4.3. Porter's five competitive forces……..162
References……163

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Three basic skills necessary in different management levels…….3

Figure 2.1. Confucius harmony hierarchy diagram…….36

Figure 2.2. theoretical harmony diagram extracted from Chinese harmony……...62

Figure 3.1. Laozi's illustrations on harmony……...71

Figure 3.2. Laozi harmony approach……...…90

Figure 4.1. Hierarchy of leaders' category: Machiavelli and Laozi…….....104

Figure 4.2. Maslow's eight stage hierarchical pyramid…….....112

Figure 4.3. Porter's five competitive forces……..118

Abstract

Available studies on conceptual skills in management bear inherent inadequacy and undergo emerging challenges including gaps between lack of cognitive codes and inflating expectations, trends of inclusiveness and needs of collaborative minds. This study, through explorations and elaborations on oriental approaches, proposes an indigenous approach: Laozi harmony from rooted, well-established Chinese harmony tradition to respond to existent inadequacy and challenges conceptual skills in managements. Laozi harmony, is delineated in a systematical way by a comprehensive descriptive study, followed by a comparative study between Laozi harmony and familiar literature under West context represented by four prominent scholars and their renowned thoughts fundamentally influential for conceptual architecture in management under West context. As an initial effort to draw attention to harmony concept for its potential contribution to conceptual implications for management, besides Laozi harmony, this study also suggests further studies on explorations on other approaches out of Chinese harmony, as well as out of other harmony traditions in the world.

Key words: conceptual skills in management, Harmony, Chinese harmony, Laozi harmony, conceptual implications

Özet

Yönetim bilimlerinde kavramsal becerilere ilişkin mevcut çalışmalar, doğasında yetersizlik taşır ve bilişsel kodların eksikliği ile şişmiş beklentiler arasındaki boşluklar, kapsayıcılık eğilimleri, katılımcı zihinlere duyulan ihtiyaçlar dahil olmak üzere ortaya çıkan zorluklarla karşı karşıya kalır. Bu çalışma, açınsamalar ve detaylandırmalar yoluyla, doğu medeniyetlerini ele almak konusunda yerel geleneğe özgün bir yaklaşımı tercih etmekte ve halihazırda yönetim bilimlerinde yaşanan yetersizliğe ve zorluklara yanıt vermek adına, köklü, gelişmiş ve kabul görmüş olan Çin ahenk geleneğinden gelen Laozi ahenk geleneğini önermektedir.

Çalışmada Laozi ahenk, kapsamlı bir tanımlayıcı araştırma çalışmasıyla ile sistematik şekilde izah edilir. Ardından, önde gelen dört bilim insanı tarafından temsil edilen Batı bağlamından tanıdık literatür ışığında, Laozi ahenk ile bu bilim insanları ve onların Batı bağlamından yönetim bilimlerindeki kavramsal mimari açısından etkili olmuş başlıca düşünceleri arasında karşılaştırmalı bir çalışma yapılır.

Yönetim bilimlerinde kavramsal çıkarımlara potansiyel katkı sağlamak adına başvurulan ahenk kavramına dikkat çekmekte bir başlangıç girişimi olarak bu çalışma yapılmıştır. Laozi ahenk dışında Çin'deki ve dünyadaki diğer ahenk geleneklerinden geliştirilebilecek farklı yaklaşımlar üzerine yeni keşifler ve araştırma yapılmasını önermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeleri: yönetim bilimlerinde kavramsal beceriler, ahenk, Çin ahenk, Laozi ahenk, kavramsal çıkarımlar

Laozi[1] Harmony and Management: Conceptual Implications

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Conceptual skills in management and challenges they undergo today

1.1.1. A brief review on conceptual skills

It is well known that the history of governance and management can be traced back to the ancient time when 'tribes' and 'states' came into being. Effective management has been an old and significant issue throughout history across civilizations. Numerous studies have been delivered in the vast era of centuries. However, although management is as old as history itself and each period showed its unique social impacts on managerial thoughts, there was "no clear transitions to support a historical (management) analysis", even if there were some scripts on management, usually they were "arbitrary, assigned to particular time without adequate evidence and of academic writing about management rather than a history of doing it" (Spender, 2015). Scholars on management constantly devoted enthusiastically to searching for recipes for effective management but ideas varying so much that minds got confused and canon thoughts were not agreed till middle of last century.

In 1955, influential 'thought leader' journal in management *Harvard Business Review* (HBR) published an article entitled as "*Skills of an effective administrator*". It

[1] *Laozi* (老子 Lao Ztu), Chinese philosopher, （571BC- unknown） (Wang, 1999).

was written by Robert L. Katz and was the only article reprinted by the journal at that year, which "had a solid impact on the management field" ever since (Peterson & Fleet, 2004).

According to Katz, although there were agreed need for selection and development of good administrators, there were little agreement on "what makes a good administrator". To answer this question, Katz imported 'skill' concept, and defined that "*a skill* implies an ability which can be developed, not necessarily inborn; it's an ability to translate knowledge into action". Based on these assumptions, consequent skillfulness that embodies in performance and action, shall be effective under different conditions. Under this approach, "*three basic developable skills"* were suggested (Katz, 1955):

- Technical skills: performing technical activities, accomplishing mechanics of the particular job being responsble for;
- Human skills: understanding and motivating individuals and groups, being a good team member and building cooperative and effective team;
- Conceptual skills: recognizing interrelationships of various factors, coordinating and integrating all the activities and interests toward a common objective, and to achieve maximum good for the total organization.

Although each skill category explained independently, the three skills are interrelated when applied to managerial problems. There is some ideal, but different mix of these skills which is required at each managerial level within the organization (Peterson & Fleet, 2004).

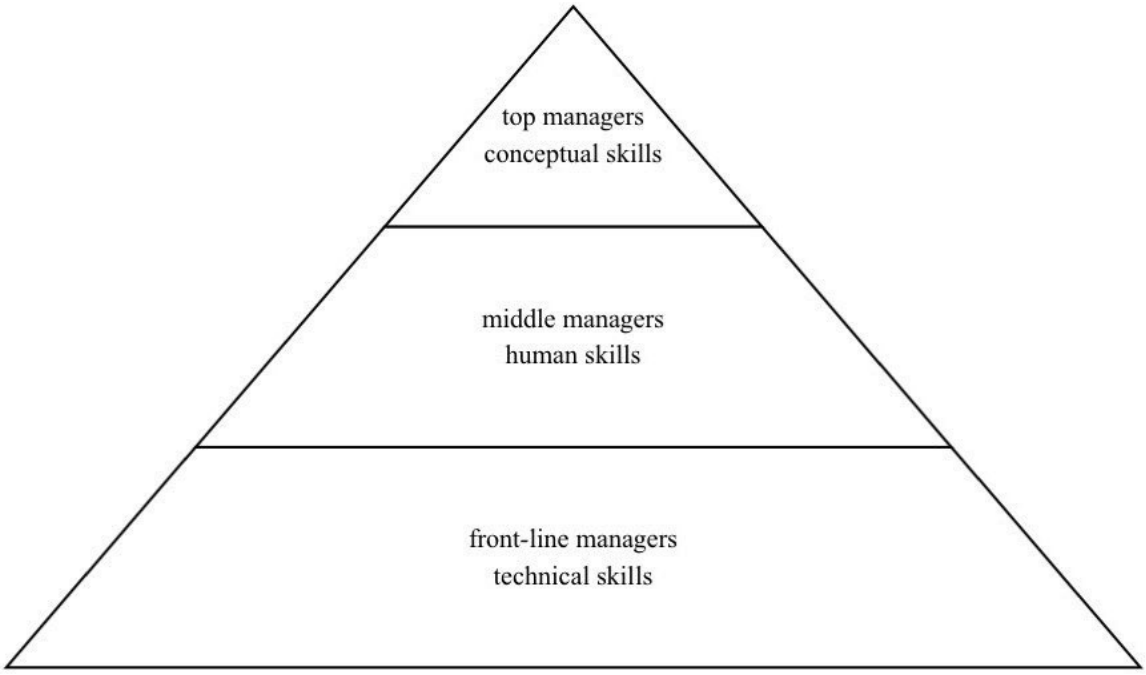


Figure 1.1. Three basic skills necessary in different management levels, adapted from "Skills of an Effective Administrator," by R. L. Katz, 1955, Harvard Business Review, 33(1),33–42.

The purpose of this typology study, as stated by Katz was for analyses, formulating executive objective, placement and selection, as well as implications for executives to develop skills (Katz, 1974). It was the first scientific, structured and widely recognized discussion on management skills in recent century.

When numerous more abilities could be identified, Katz's observations of the three broad categories were the essential set of managerial skills. Over the years, numerous articles and books have been published aligning the same topic no more than the two themes (Peterson & Fleet, 2004):

(1) add to the fundamental core managerial skills; or

(2) more clearly delineate the specific tasks which make up each of the core skills.

In Katz's managerial pyramid, conceptual skills are located at the top management: the **decision-making** position in an organization and in management hierarchy. More specifically, problem representation, solution implementation, and performance

evaluation are all cognitive processes that require specific cognitive activities (Peterson, 2004). As illustrated, conceptual skills are not only decisive in formulating ideas but also functionally pervasive in the whole process.

It's recognized that conceptual skills by all means work as the 'brain' of initiating activities and are crucial for management applications. Efforts to define, describe and clarify 'conceptual skills' have been taken and its scope developed, more dimension are adopted into the ring.

Conceptual skills are the ability to see the enterprise as a whole, recognizing dependency and mutual effects between various functions, extending such wholeness view into industry, community, all forces of the nation as a whole (Katz, 1974). Conceptual skills are regarded as specialized knowledge based cognitive process that individuals based on as specialized tools to move away from technical specialization and step into the managerial positions (Bowen and Siehl, 1997; Cross, 2000; Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Tosi and Tosi, 1986). Some other studies link conceptual skills to vision and strategic planning to organization, taking conceptual skills as the ability to think strategically, to take the broad, long-term view, and to identify, evaluate, and solve complex problems (Mumford & Campion, 2007); ability to form vision and strategic plan for organization, and shape meaning for principles and policies of organization (Northouse, 2018).

The notion of conceptual skills sharpens and visualizes position and function of conceptual ability in management pyramid as core mental power of the whole ecosystem. Theses interpretations on conceptual skills in management, integrate the notion with managerial functions as well including goal setting, strategic planning, mapping, decision making, operating and policy making.

Along with those clarifications, **the wholeness viewpoint,** stands out as the essential pillar setting of the discussion. In the New Era of Management, Daft adhered to this wholeness viewpoint to explain conceptual skills for management as: the cognitive

ability to the see the organization as a whole system and the relationships among its parts (Daft, 2012)

It is noticeable that the recent definitions on conceptual skills are reinforcing its original claims by Katz, in terms of wholeness view, vision, visualizing the relationship of the firm to the external environment, and the executive's creative ability, taking the internal and external interaction into this wholeness stand.

Barnard uttered similar idea that 'sensing the organization as a whole, and the total situation around it', but Bernard raised intellectual methods pertinent to 'feeling', 'judgement', 'sense', 'proportion', 'balance', 'appropriateness' so much that it is rather an art than science, aesthetic than logic (Barnard, 1968).

Besides cognitive awareness on wholeness, Barnard added intuitional codes and balance, which partially echoed in Zukowski and Gudowski's study. The latter addressed conceptual skills as specific intellectual potentials allowing imagination and abstract thinking, combining analytical skills with intuition and experience so as to integrating various components into one, balancing private interests and the common good (Zukowski & Gudowski, 2014)

In essence, conceptual skills in management, are to 'think', to 'sense', involving inner mental activity, cognitive process, therefore inherently a notion being abstract, cognitive and hypothetical. It's recognized as significant, decisive but elusive for deep understanding and applicable orientation. The representative studies as above mentioned on conceptual skills in management, although varying from one to another, are fundamentally meaningful and instructive to construct a general outline and framework for initial understanding. But they are not enough for drawing out detailed, applicable roadmaps. None of them provided supporting details elaborating how to enhance conceptual skills in management in an applicable or operational base. Related studies are sporadic, separately addressing and descriptive only to certain extent with limited illustrations. Careful scrutinization are necessary but so far there has not been

a coherent, cohesive, comprehensive, detailed and systematic cognitive route for conceptual skills in management.

Meanwhile new developments challenging conceptual skills framework to response in a broader sense keep coming into being.

1.1.2. New developments challenging studies on conceptual skills in management

1.1.2.1. Inclusiveness trend

Conceptual skills are no longer the skills only elite top managers require but skills that a broader population search for. In this era of management itself, there are rising demands of conceptual skills to be more inclusive for at least four reasons:

(1) More people are involved into management fields

Everybody is a manager. Whenever there is effort consciously directed toward the attainment of a goal, there is management (Schell, 1960). Everybody struggles to achieve work-life balance, combat unemployment, extensive competitions, in a 'massive and far-reaching social, technological and economic changes', in which stability is a myth, legends of business stars fading (Daft, 2012). As necessary and primarily needed skills in every practice and process of management, whenever and where there is 'management', there is supposed to be conceptual skills involved. The awareness of management is higher and stronger than ever before, and among needed skills conceptual ones prior to others in particular.

(2) Flatter structure in organizations

Traditional management model is based on corporations and organizations with established vertical hierarchy. Authority, responsibility and accountability are vertically defined accordingly. Planning, organizing, leading and controlling are intensively aligned with collective forces within vertical allocation of authority. However new paradigm claims that such design is based on "closed equilibrium system" thinking, which is inadequate to deal with complexity-based

world with new, virtual trends under hyper change and competition (D'Aveni, 1994). Flatter structures with less layer of management are promoted, in which individuals are empowered and expected to take responsibility for a range of traditionally managerial decisions in their daily routines (Rishipa, 2014). More empowered individuals in flatter management structure have more demands for conceptual skills to a broader extension.

1.1.2.2. Self-management model

The self-management model gained attention in the new era of business. In this new model of management, no one has boss and everyone is a manager. Employees both take responsibilities accountable and address failures directly (Gino el al, 2013). Such a model, blurs distinction between skills defined and categorized by authority hierarchy. It brings employees into management mindsets, increases involvement of mental actitivities in scale and search for conceptual skills.

1.1.2.3. Era of information, communication and digitalization

Uprise of information, communication and digitalization is another key factor that pushes conceptual skills in management to be more 'inclusive'. The all-around open platform of information exchange, digital platforms, social media and virtual communication channels, from icon culture to personal branding, from e-commerce to livestreaming, individuals are involved extensively into 'management' in act, in influence, in process, in outcome more than ever. Everybody, is not *potentially* a 'manager' but *actually* a manager, which intensifies the need for conceptual skills in management knowledge to be more inclusive and accessible in essence, form and presentation.

1.1.3. Inadequacy and challenges conceptual skills in management undergo

Such inclusiveness in various dimensions, lay challenges to conceptual skills in management to a great extent. Meanwhile, studies on conceptual skills in management are based mostly on West context, with Kazt's findings as central codes, so they are inherently embodied with following features:

- Insights illustrated sporadically with limited illustrations
- Available illustrations on conceptual skills in management are not gathered under a same theme or framework for further explorations
- Available studies on conceptual skills in managment are based on West context
- The time span that conceptual skills management covers is shorter than management contexts
- The present new challenges have not been taken into account in conceptual skills in management
- No fundamental breakthroughs in relevant studies

In order to respond those challenges, a journey to alternative or complementary approaches and insights seems necessary. Here is a proposal from an old and established tradition: Chinese harmony.

1.2. Chinese harmony as complementary and/or alternative approach for conceptual skills in management

Harmony is of the oldest tradition at all times. It has been an influential concept and value in various social contexts. Harmony is recorded in Greek as 'αρμονία', as 'ahenk' in Islamic thoughts, as 'kwanciyar hankali' in African Hausa community, and as '和 (hé)' in Chinese culture. Harmony is not only a concept being embedded in old traditions but also being developed, applied, enriched across cultures, surpassing time and space. Though individually diversified according to context, harmony can still be described as an agreeable totality of agreeable parts, whereas

- each part of the totality is related to other;

- all parts contribute to the formation of the totality in sense of wholeness;
- it is a dynamic process of time and space. (Cheng, 1989)

In terms of harmony tradition, although similar concept of harmony can be found in West, but they do not play decisive role as what it is in Asia (Yau & P.M.Chow, 2007). Chinese synthetic attitude applies the Chinese spirit of harmony in the realm of the intellect and in the realm of religion as well as in the practical and ethical life of man (Moore, 1967). As one of the uninterrupted enduring civilizations, China itself is a live case of survival longevity, despite of all kinds of natural and social adversities. The inherent core value of this endurance, has also been the key research question of Chinese scholars for thousands of years. As an 'internally strong' tradition, China survived numerous adversities including natural, social, human disasters, upheavals and complexities. The answer lies in its core value: harmony.

Harmony has been studied, pursued and applied by proficient administrators, and is commonly adapted among Chinese as psychological character and value judging criteria. (Chang, 2007) In Chinese tradition, harmony was the prominent elaborations of philosophers.

The earliest formation of harmony can be traced back to scholar Shi Bo (史伯) in Western Zhou (1046–771 BCE) period. Based on observational insights from real life, he illustrated harmony and presented analytical evidence: various objects, one thing and another, cooperate and reach appropriate state for all, achieve balance, and it is called harmony. Variety supported harmony is productive while sameness does not sustain.[2] As time moved on, interpretations on harmony developed. Guangya (广雅) regarded harmony as a state of existence, a state when hardness and softness being properly integrated. At different historical stage, harmony concept developed and was applied to almost all social aspects in Chinese tradition. Harmony is recognized as one of the core values of Chinese culture and is alive in at least 10 aspects of Chinese

[2] 合实生物，同则不继: elaborated by the author into English.

tradition from ancient time to modern time including philosophies, virtues, politics, ethic relations, religions, aesthetics, medical sciences, harmonious unity of human and universe, academic thoughts and folk cultures (Cheng, 2010).

Confucianism and Taoism are the pillar schools of Chinese traditions. They intertwin and vary. In Confucian view, all pressing issues, from micro to the macro, they are either harmony or disharmony. Human beings are not only to promote harmony within humanity, but to the entire universe, through equilibrium and moral cultivation. Significant systematical developments are achieved in Confucian views of harmony. Its 'harmony but not sameness' notion got due recognition, in which an appropriety and respect for social norms, is considered the best way to realize harmony (Wei & Li: 2013).

Confucianism and Taoism both committed to argue that heaven, earth, people, and things are closely related, forming an organic wholeness, and network system characterized by interdependence. Any split of the system or destruction of the overall harmony caused by human behaviors, will lead to imbalance between heaven and earth, resulting in social chaos and endangering self-safety. Harmony is not to deny the contradictions between people, between people and society, between people and nature, but to always adhere to the cognition that the state of thinking should be the resolution and harmony of contradictions, so as to achieve the order of the system and the harmony and unity of the whole (Zhang, 2013)。

Harmony is both theory and practice not only in history but also in contemporary administration context in China. In 2004, to construct a "harmonious society" was set as strategic goal of Chinese public administration to tackle various social challenges, integrate all force. Thereafter consequent applications carried out. Its major dimensions include 'peacefulness, development, cooperation and inclusiveness'. By coordinating the relationship between multiple forces and mobilizing all positive factors to the fullest, "harmonious society" construction is very timely the key to solving conflicts in the process of social transformation during reform (Li, 2008).

Chinese harmony framework, with a very brief introduction above presented, already shows itself as a promising instrument to accommodate conceptual skills in management as a complementary and alternative concept. The fact that Chinese harmony is far more rooted, established, comprehensive in both theory and practice makes it a territory worthy of exploration. As illustrated above, conceptual skills in management are discussed to some extent, with vision, wholeness awareness, strategic thinking, long-term orientation, and sense of balance as their key features. But all of them is separately meaningful, not being integrated in or generalized in one single framework: which is basic for comprehension and application. Moreover, none of available conceptual skills interpretations is built up on a well-developed and established old tradition with profound philosophical or theoretical framework and rich accumulations. They also undergo challenges including inclusiveness, gaps, absent collaboration cross borders and comprehensive holism as stated above. Here a systematical study on Chinese harmony is necessary to clarify to what extent it can or cannot response those challenges that studies and applications of conceptual skills in management undergo.

1.3. Significance of the research

Gaps, inadequacy and challenges in conceptual skills in management shall be anwered by studies in management. If available mindsets and literature are not effective in doing so, there shall be explorations on alternative and/or complementary approaches. If familiar literature under West context does not provide ready remedy, unfamiliar literature non-Western contexts can be a choice worthy of explorations. Rooted and well-established Oriental and Chinese traditions are among those promising territories to provide insightful implications for this issue in conceptual skills in management.

Chinese harmony is potentially enlightening in being an accommodating framework to meet the ‘inclusiveness’ in an era of ‘everyone is a manager’, with its born coherent,

cohesive and comprehensive characteristics as well as its human orientation in cognition.

Collaboration is not alternative but necessity. In this era of digitalized and information society, time is "scarce resource" and efficiency in time use, is important. communications are frequent, channels are all around open. Yet efficiency remains a question. In this sense, genuine cooperation and collaboration is the key to achieve "high-quality, focused interactions" and improved "productivity, speed, innovation" (Smet et al., 2022). Cooperation and collaboration, are needed more than ever in concrete daily base, which requires a sound and cohesive theoretical framework to facilitate.

Interpreting conceptual skills in management by Chinese harmony is also an effort to describe and probe into harmony by conceptual skills in management as a parameter. Integrating such a holistic thinking model and rooted tradition as Chinese harmony into Western oriented management studies will not only potentially enlightening in increasing conceptual skills but also of enriching territory of management both in theory and in practice. It might also even be meaningful for presenting insights for combating adversities human society undergo in a far more reaching realm.

1.4. Research methodology

Conceptual skills in management are inherently an issue of abstractness. The type of the relevant study is naturally and inevitably conceptual. The concept of Chinese harmony is a tradition considerably alien for West mindsets and familiar management literature; it is something 'hard to understand'. The methodology is accordingly and inevitably to be descriptive literature review. Resources are partially English partially Chinese: some of them have, some of them have not been introduced into West context.

Therefore, this study is a pioneering effort in at least the following three senses:

(1) Initial effort to present responses for challenges that conceptual skills in management undergo by integrating Chinese harmony into conceptual skills in management

(2) Initial effort to describe Chinese harmony for purpose of conceptual skills in management

(3) Initial effort to describe Chinese harmony to audience most of whom have no accumulated knowledge on harmony nor Chinese tradition or Chinese language

Language difference is of significant importance in this specific topic since cognitive intuition is involved in the whole comprehension process and stands at the center stage of the meaning generation[3]. This will be further illustrated with evidences in Chapter 1.

Since the targeted audience bears inclusiveness in scope and realm, the selection, design and illustration of the whole study attach importance to its conciseness, comprehensibility and simplicity. As the saying goes: "*Songs of a highbrow type will find very few people to join in the chorus*"[4]. Instead of aiming for 'elite' segment, this is a study for a broader audience in this all-around communication, digital era with tremendous involvement of individuals as 'manager'.

One more reason that this study adopts descriptive literature review, is about its indigenous intention to present harmony as an approach, which is a pioneering and initial effort. As known and to be mentioned later, pioneering studies usually adopt descriptive methodology, although very likely to be criticized as being lack of adequate evidences if judged by recent academic paradigm. In Chapter 3, for example, as renowned as Maslow, does he be one of the pioneers being criticized as lack of adequate evidences for his findings on human needs pyramid, although his studies became fundamental and recognized in many disciplines, practices and studies. In this era of innovation and creation, pioneering indigenous studies in management are

---

[3] For example: in Chinese, business is 生意（shēng yì）: 生 shēng means life, living, liveliness, give birth, create, develop, dynamism, sustainability, 意 yì, containing a radical 心(xīn heart) at bottom, means intent, determination, mind, feelings, thoughts, meanings. The meaning and methodology of doing business can be SEEN and PERCEIVED at the single sight of the word.

[4] Chinese idiom: 曲高和寡

among those studies being encouraged rather than among those being precluded by rigid adherence to familiar norms nor cognitive 'comfortable zone'.

When creativity is called for in most fields, creativity in management studies includes integrating existent systems, ideas or insights, which is to be clarified and proved in Chapter 3 too.

Another method adopted is experimental observation. The author is a professional interpreter working for bilateral communications between China and Turkey, as well as for international organizations including UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification), TÜSİAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association), DEİK (Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey), CCPIT (China Council for the Promotion of International Trade). With experimental accumulation of more than 500 international conferences, panels, seminars, visits for over 2,000 hours working in front line of cross-culture communications on politics, economics, finance, culture, crisis management, resource management, the author embodies those first-hand observations into the study: genuine cooperation and collaboration are called for in every level, every business, every communication, yet collaborative mindsets are not facilitated with established approach(es) with systematic cognitive codes easy to understand and to apply.

1.5. Scope of the research

Chinese harmony is a rooted and rich tradition. Numerous figures and thoughts are prominent and enlightening. Since Confucianism and Taoism are the two major representative school of Chinese traditions. Since the founders of Confucianism and Taoism are recognized as Confucius and Laozi, this research will focus mainly on the two major figures and their thoughts on harmony, in terms of perceptions on harmony, process of harmony and ways to facilitate harmony. As stated above, representative ideas on conceptual skills in management focus on wholeness view, cognitive

experience and outcome. Therefore, the scope of this research concentrates on the following themes:

- To illustrate Chinese harmony in a systematic way, while focus its most representative features while prioritizing *Laozi* harmony
- To extract *Laozi* harmony into cognitive codes to interpret conceptual skills in management
- To provide integrated framework of Laozi harmony for enhancing conceptual skills in management
- To clarify how Laozi harmony can answer the challenges that conceptual skills in management undergo

This research has relevance to the fields of scholarly study: Skills Approach, Business and Management, Culture Values, Cognitive Psychology, Philosophy, Oriental Traditions

1.6. Research question:

This research aims to answer the following key question and its sub-questions for conceptual skills in management.

The key question:

How challenges conceptual skills in management undergo can be responded by complementary or alternative approach by integrating Chinese harmony with the available studies?

Sub-questions

(1) What are the challenges conceptual skills in management undergo?

(2) What is Chinese harmony and its characteristics?

(3) Why and how Chinese harmony can contribute to conceptual skills in management?

(4) How to integrate Chinese harmony with conceptual skills in management?

1.7. Design of the contents:

First of all, the introduction part makes a brief review on the field of conceptual skills in management under West context, which is followed by the brief introduction on gaps in the field, necessity of this research, and proposal of Chinese harmony as an alternative/complementary approach.

Chapter 1 is a representative descriptive study on Chinese harmony. Its origin, developments and major representative figures and their thoughts are introduced according to their relevance and contributions to Chinese harmony concept. After that, other traditions with harmony concept are also mentioned to assist understanding on how rooted and deep harmony is, and how rich its accumulated knowledge and wisdom might be meaningful for conceptual skills in management. An analytical study is also delivered to integrate extracted insights of Chinese harmony into facilitating conceptual skills in management under West context based on familiar management literature.

Chapter 2 is a focus study on Laozi harmony in a comprehensive descriptive method. Laozi's influence, his major thoughts relevant to harmony are extracted, elaborated, and developed into a proposal for its being an approach alone for conceptual skills in management. Based on Laozi's thoughts, perception, process of harmony and approach to facilitate harmony are illustrated with underlined evidences from Laozi's worldwide known masterpiece DDJ (Dao De Jing, The Way). An analytical study is also delivered to integrate extracted insights of Laozi harmony into facilitating conceptual skills in management under West context based on familiar management literature.

Chapter 3 is a comparative study between Laozi harmony and harmonization and four prominent management scholars under West context aligning with time order. The four figures are: Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-1970), Michael Eugene Porter (1947-), and Itay Talgam (1958-). The selection of the four figures is based on an order of timeline they lived/ live and the principle of

representativeness in significance of recognition in management, relevance with Laozi harmony and harmonization, and importance on avail the visibility of conceptual implications for management from Laozi harmony and harmonization. A brief short illustration on convergency between Laozi harmony and other traditions is also attached after this part. Insights implied from Laozi harmony and harmonization, creativity and future preparation are also discussed in the end of this chapter.

Conclusion part makes a brief summary on findings, limits of the study, and explains the further studies to be delivered along with the same theme of harmony, Chinese harmony, Laozi harmony, as well as other traditions that might deepen understanding and broaden possible contribution of harmony concept to conceptual skills in management and the alike both in theory and in practice.

Chapter 2 Harmony in Chinese Tradition and its Implications for Conceptual Skill in Management

2.1. Origin and developments of harmony concept in Chinese tradition

2.1.1. Chinese harmony in etymology perspective

The languages we speak affect the way we perceive the world. There are various different languages. Each of them provides its own cognitive toolkit and encapsulates the knowledge and worldview that has developed thousands of years within the specific culture (Boroditsky,2011).

Among the oldest languages inherently alive today, the way Chinese is as a language, plays a part in its unique cognitive experience in formulating their worldview. When we look into its significant cognitive heritage of 和 hé (harmony), it would be reasonable to start with language perspective.

Modern Chinese character 和 hé (harmony) is one of the oldest core concepts and values in Chinese tradition. It has records in various dictionaries throughout history. Original connotation of 和 hé (harmony) conveys its basic interpretation on its meaning from etymology perspective, namely one of the Six Categories (六书 Liu Shu) of Chinese character classification in word building[5]: method of Associative Compound[6], with compound 禾 at its left side and compound 口 right side. Each compound 禾 and 口 is formed by method of pictogram, and their meaning can be visually perceived through their original forms in the ancient Chinese writing Oracle(甲骨文 Jia Gu Wen), in which 禾 (crops) is written as  , the collective name of all kinds of crops according to the first graphically organized Chinese dictionary

[5] Method of Chinese Word building:造字法, the way each Chinese character is formed with.

[6] Associative Compound:会意, one of the Six Categories Chinese character is formed by, compounds of two or more pictographic or ideographic characters, the meaning of the word is associated with compounds.

Shuowen Jiezi[7] , and 口 (mouth) is written as  , implying combination of 'crops' and 'mouths', may there be corresponding agreeable response[8]. The way native Chinese perceive meaning of harmony, is therefore fundamentally different from those non-Chinese, who have no direct access to its meaning by a visual reading. Yet from a delicate descriptive illustration, the deep meaning of its historical and social merits will to some extent be accessible through the following studies.

In Chinese tradition, there are various and rich interpretations and developments on this notion throughout time and across disciplines, bringing about implications and applications in different social rings.

2.1.2. Chinese harmony in different dimensions

2.1.2.1. Origin

According to Shuowen Jiezi, 和 hé（harmony）initially means 'musical performance or accordance of singing sounds'. The first surviving Chinese dictionary Erya (尔雅) described 和 hé (harmony) as a kind of ancient musical instrument that can play melody with harmony (Cheng, 2010).

Based on its connotations connected with music, flavors (Lu, 2004) cooking (Fung, 1962), and poetry (Holzman, 1978)[9], interpretations on 和 hé (harmony) developed into broader dimensions to holistic, conceptual and social levels.

---

[7] Shuowen Jiezi(说文解字), translated as 'Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters' or Origin of Chinese Characters', the first recognized Chinese dictionary, 100-121 CE, compiled by Later Han (25-220 CE) Chinese scholar Xu Shen （许慎）(58-147).

[8] Shuowen Jiezi:《说文解字》；"和，相应也，从口禾"；《说文·禾部》："禾，嘉穀也。二月始生，八月而孰，得時之中，故謂之禾。禾，木也。木王而生，金王而死。从木，从省。邪象其穗。凡禾之屬皆从禾。"

[9] It's a piece of translation from 尚书 the Book of Documents: *"poetry puts into words what we have in our hearts; song prolongs those words into chants; and the notes that follow the chant are put into harmony with the scale. When the eight instruments are in good accord and do not enncroach upon one another, the the spririt and man will be brought into harmony."*

Chinese harmony concept is extracted from observation of nature and accumulation of experiences. The practices of pursuing harmony are based on the old wisdom and knowledge passed by through generations.

2.1.2.2. Heaven, Earth, Humankind

Chinese harmony is inherently holistic with deep discussions on nature, universe, and man.

In terms of cognizing the world and everything, The Five-Elements-Theory is essential for understanding, which can be traced back to 1600 BC. (Legge, 2000). The theory describes the basic elements, processes of nature, containing a naturalistic cycle. It defines that the 5 stages of this cycle are Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, and Metal. While each of these elements has a unique feature, they also have effect on the others in the process, coexisting with mutual promotion and refrain (WEB_1, 2018).[10] It discusses the harmonious relations and interactions of heaven 天 (Tian), earth 地 (Di) and human beings 人 (Ren), who are interconnected by universal powers that generate creative and destructive impact (Lee, 2012).

Aligning with the ancient claims, Laozi (老子 also translated as Lao Ztu), Chinese philosopher, （B.C.571- unknown） (Wang, 1999), founder of Daoism put order into the tri-element interaction.

Human beings should follow or be consistent with the way Earth works, Earth consistent with Heaven, Dao consistent with Nature/Universe[11] (Lee, 2003; Lee, Han et al., 2008). This points out Daoist view that human shall be in harmonious tie with the external world since human beings are just a small part of the natural world/universe which they don't think human beings can be superior to (Lee et al., 2009).

---

[10] 《尚书·洪范》: "五行" ;相生相克

[11] 人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然: Dao De Jing, Chapter 25

One of the oldest Chinese classics, *Yijing* (易经 also written as *I Ching*, translated as Book of Changes), was written in the same era Shi Bo had lived: the West Zhou Dynasty Period (1000–750 BC). *Yijing* was regarded as the root of "ultimate harmony" [12] in Chinese way of thinking, which addresses that a harmonious interaction and togetherness between Heaven(天 tian), Earth(地 di) and Humankind(人 ren) comprise the cosmos as a whole. "Everything obtains its proper nature as appointed (by the mind of Heaven); and (thereafter the conditions of) ultimate harmony are preserved in union. The result is what is advantageous, correct and firm. Heaven creates everything, and the myriad states are all at peace" (Legge, 1995).

Standing on a holistic view in a broad sense, harmony has been enriched, adopted, and integrated in social context as an influential framework, guideline, core value and approach from ancient China to contemporary era.

2.1.2.3. Harmony as a concept in social context

Conceptually, Chinese harmony's root gained its abstractness with time. *Guangya* (广雅) regarded harmony as a state of existence, a state when hardness and softness be properly integrated [13]. (Cheng, 2010) Conceptual duality was attached in interpreting harmony here[14].

The first Chinese scholar who raised up harmony as a concept is credited to Shi Bo 史伯 in Western Zhou (1046–771 BC) period, when he was a known philosopher and significant high ranked administrator for the Dynasty responsible composing official

---

[12] 太和: ultimate harmony defined by Zhang Zai (1020–1077), the Chinese philosopher and politician in his commentary studies on Yijing

[13] 《广雅·释估》

[14] In theology, a 'dualist' is someone who believes that Good and Evil are independent and more or less equal forces in the world. Dualism contrasts with monism. In the philosophy of mind, dualism is the theory that the mental and the physical – or mind and body or mind and brain – are, in some sense, radically different kinds of thing (Robinson, 2020). But here the 'conceptual duality' means the opposite features embodied inherently in yin and yang concepts of Daoism.

documents and compiling history books. Once he commented and explained Western Zhou administration was doomed because true harmony that enables all things to prosper came from differences and what Zhou Dynasty did was not only failure in encouraging diversity but also cultivation in sameness[15]. This comment literarily means if cooperation of different things/forces achieved, there will be harmony from which prosperity encouraged and other things/forces integrated; but if sameness overwhelms while differences eliminated, then failures pervade.[16]

Distinction between harmony and sameness was clarified by Shi Bo, the essence of productivity was corelated with diversity with harmony. More importantly, he integrated harmony into management in social context at that time.

His comments disclosed that the gloomy future of Western Zhou Dynasty's governance was due to Emperor Zhou's wrongdoings by not listening to different ideas from righteous opposite voice but only listening to those of similar minds to Emperor himself. This illustration explicitly highlighted the core power to facilitate productivity lies in harmony with variety while in contrast uniformity ruins growth. As an experienced administrator and thinker, Shi Bo contributes greatly to harmony concept. Thanks to him, harmony started to become a recognized notion relevant to management and a parameter for numerous scholarly studies in hereafter Chinese social contexts.

The leading Confucian classic book Zhong Yong (The Doctrine of the Mean) also made important depictions on harmony, in the connotative sense of advocating the middle path between the extremes:

"Pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy: before they emerge they are called centred; emerging by the proper rhythms they are called harmonious. Centred: this the great root of the world. Harmonious: this

---

[15] 以他平他谓之和，故能丰长而物归之，以同裨同，尽乃弃矣

[16] The resource is in Chinee, and it is translated and further elaborated by the author. The original Chinese resource is available: https://baike.sogou.com/v16569.htm

is the ultimate Dao of the world. Reaching centred harmony, heaven and earth take their proper places and the things of the world are nurtured thereby"[17] (Eno, 2016).

From emotion to concept, from definition to methodology, from description to process and outcome, this passage delineated harmony in a quite comprehensive scale, indicatively fundamental for whole society as a central value in various aspects. Human's due portion was defined accordingly.

Between the universe and the earth, only does when harmony achieved and preserved, will their appropriate positions be sustainable; human beings are undoubtedly the major pushing power of the realization of this harmony[18] (Lee, 2014).

Dong Zhongshu (179–104 BC), Chinese philosopher and politician of the Han Dynasty, explicitly integrated the universal harmony and human behavior, claiming that if man do wrongdoings, the universe will punish him while man do good, the universe will award him[19]. Thus, the close affinity between the universe and man was established by Dong's deliberate awareness promotion under social context based on former studies (Lee, 2014).

Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692), Chinese historian and philosopher of the late Ming, early Qing dynasties, illustrated with adequate reasonings that the two opposite sides of Things during conflicts, are both apart and united, opposite and integrated; since the two are interdependent both in mutual benefits and constraints, the cooperation and collaboration is a have to for self-good. As a result, harmony is a wise choice for both[20] (Cheng, 2010).

It seems that harmony has been studied, practiced and constantly expanded as an inherent concept in Chinese culture and society for millennia. Their meanings and

---

[17] 中庸: 喜怒哀乐未发谓之中，发而皆中节谓之和。中也者，天下之大本也。和也者，天下之达道也。致中和，天地位焉，万物育焉。

[18] 致中和

[19] 天人感应

[20] 和同而不相悖；不能不取物以自利

connotations have been transformed into detailed insights by the joint efforts of scientists from various angles at different times. The common ground is the important positive functions and outcomes of harmony.It emphasized due appropriateness of internal reaction towards external impacts, as well as harmony's function as the key for all Things to flourish. Ming Dynasty Chinese scholar Zhu Xi[21] commented on the same quotation above on harmony and added the role human shall play is to assist harmony to be achieved by following, fostering and spreading the due appropriateness in Mean and harmonization[22] (Yue, 2012).

Another Confucian classic book *Liji* (Record of Rites[23]) defined 和 hé (harmony) as harmony among different objects, when they act differently (Cheng, 2010). *Liji* described a Great Harmony (Da Tong[24]) for societies in which:

"When the Great Way prevails, the world will belong to all. They chose people of talent and ability whose words were sincere, and they cultivated harmony. Thus, people did not only love their own parents, not only nurture their own children… In this way selfish schemes did not arise. Robbers, thieves, rebels, and traitors had no place, and thus outer doors were not closed. This is called the Great Harmony"[25] (DE Bary, 1960).

Harmony from time to time has been frequently explicitly integrated into society management. It depicted an ideal mode of societies, in which there is harmony-with-diversity, Great Harmony that creates perfection through a unified order, a Chinese vision of future world order (Callahan, 2012). Moreover, Chinese harmony therefore

---

[21] 朱熹

[22] 裁成辅相

[23] 礼记

[24] 大同

[25] 大道之行也，天下为公。选贤与能，讲信修睦。故人不独亲其亲，不独子其子，使老有所终，壮有所用，幼有所长，矜、寡、孤、独、废疾者皆有所养，男有分，女有归。货恶其弃于地也，不必藏于己；力恶其不出于身也，不必为己。是故谋闭而不兴，盗窃乱贼而不作，故外户而不闭。是谓大同。

actually envisions a foreword thinking as a conceptual effort, after historical and social cognitive accumulation reached a certain point by then.

Based on the agreed recognition on harmony as central core framework for society, universe and interactions between them and human being, methods to achieve harmony have been constantly discussed, elaborated, and enriched. As for the methods to achieve a harmonious order, targeting in different levels, there are varying opinions among Chinese scholars. Harmony is a collective wisdom of Chinese traditions and numerous scholars, while each school of thoughts in Chinese tradition has different interpretations and applications on harmony.

But Confucian views stand in such a prominent position that it is reasonable to say that harmony is a concept essential to Confucianism' (Li, 2013). Since Confucian harmony itself has become an approach alone, descriptions on Confucian harmony will give a representative clue on how Chinese harmony is more than a concept but a well-developed system with rich application accumulations.

2.2. Confucian harmony

Confucianism regards harmony as the existence of different things and certain favorable relationship among them (Wei & Li, 2013). Confucian school includes many philosophers with three prominent representative figures better known: Confucius 孔子 (551–479 BC), Mencius 孟子 (372–289 BC), and *Xunzi* 荀子（313—238BC). They disagreed on nature of human beings as for the answer of man are born being good or bad. Confucius believed man are born alike which will become 'far distant' through practice[26] under certain social environment, emphasizing transforming power of education and ethics. Mencius believed human nature is good (Van Norden, 2019)[27].

[26] 《论语·阳货》:"性相近，习相远"； The Analects of Confucius (version 2.2), Robert Eno (translator), 2015, XII, 94.

[27] 性本善

Xunzi believed human nature is evil (Goldin, 2018)[28], "his goodness is only acquired by training" (WEB_2, 2017). While being consistent with Confucius in believing cultivation of ethical morals, *Xunzi* further advocated parallel application of both ethical norms and legislation methods[29], hence he did have contribution for the developments of ancient law legislations (Liu, 2001). They all accept that *li* 礼, the rituals, regulatory etiquette, namely propriety and social norms, shall be the efficient way to realize harmony in human relations. Harmonious relations and coexistence were considered crucial for achieving social goals. Han Dynasty Confucian scholar *Dong Dongshu*[30] also holds the same idea that harmonization ability is precious for the world. Confucian views on harmony bear four features with core stressing on (i)ethical behavior, (ii)by nature relational with parties of equal importance, (iii) coexistence with differences remaining, (iv) harmony's sustainability counting on generated dynamism through interactions of differences in creative tension (Wei & Li, 2013).

To deepen the understanding of harmony in Confucian view, here is a detailed elaboration on Confucius harmony based on the book of his sayings: Analects(论语, Lun Yu). The description will be constructed in line with four key issues addressed in his teachings in particular:

- Knowledge learning
- Ethical codes
- State of equilibrium
- Embracing differences
- Hierarchy order

[28] 人性恶

[29] 礼法并施

[30] 董仲舒（179-104BC）

2.2.1. Knowledge learning

Confucian harmony approach emphasizes importance of knowledge learning and education. Confucius himself is said to have 3,000 students (Si and Wen, 2015)[31]. He traveled to neighboring and other regions to spread his thoughts and at the same time collected useful resources for his learning. According to Confucius, the key to real learning is being humble and modest as both an active learner and critical thinker.

The Master said: "*when walking in a group of three, my teachers are always pre- sent. I draw out what is good in them so as to emulate it myself, and what is not good in them so as to alter it in myself.*" [32]

Learning is a lifetime engagement that shall be equipped with open mindedness in his teachings, which has been a major legacy in learning tradition in China till today. It's source of respect in his teachings[33], putting knowledge learning to a central place in his intellectual wits.

Besides attitude on learning, Confucius' concern on methods and self-actualization of knowledge acquiring and learning are validated in many practical arguments between he and his students.

The method of reviewing while keeping learning new knowledge is a constant keen pursuit[34]. To gain knowledge, aligning with his own exemplary travelling and teaching as emphases on experimental observation, Confucius encourages intuitional thinking essentially.

---

[31] 《史记·孔子世家》：“孔子以诗、书、礼、乐教，弟子盖三千焉，身通六艺者七十有二人。”

[32]三人行，必有我师焉；择其善者而从之，其不善者而改之;The Analects of Confucius (version 2.2), Robert Eno (translator), 2015, VII, 33.

33 敏而好学，不耻下问; loved learning, and unashamed to ask questions of those below him. The Analects of Confucius (version 2.2), Robert Eno (translator), 2015, V, 20.

[34] 温故而知新，可以为师矣

"To study and at due times practice what one has studied, is this not a pleasure?" [35]

"If you study but don't reflect you'll be lost. If you reflect but don't study you'll get into trouble." [36]

The process of acquiring knowledge based on Confucian approach, is self-knowledge system, and is not only about skills, but also about beliefs, and a type of intuition, so it is different from Western philosophical tradition (Chienchih, 2005).

The attitude, methods and way of thinking Confucius holds in knowledge learning is important for Confucius harmony approach, because the gravity of self-cultivation constructed out of humble and intrinsic learning in the whole Confucius harmony architecture, is in this way of cohesive meaning. Confucius's curriculum would bring a lifetime of joy, community engagement, and harmonious existence, aimed to effect social harmony (Berthel, 2017).

2.2.2. Ethical codes

In Chinese value and virtue system, the five fundamental Confucian virtue codes have inherently become the core ones. They are: *ren* (仁 benevolence), *yi* (义 righteousness) , *li* (礼 ritual propriety), *zhi* (智 wisdom), and *xin* (信 faith). These virtue codes appeared highly frequently in the book Analect, among which *ren* appeared 110 times, *yi* 24, *li* 75, *zhi* 118, and *xin* 38 times (Zhang, 2021).

Ethical values play constructive and applicable part in Confucius harmony. It reflects how Chinese harmony is achieved through 'self-discipline, high moral value, social order rather than strict law and penal system'. (Fung, 2006)

"In the practice of li, Harmony is the key.

---

35 学而时习之，不亦说乎；The Analects of Confucius (version 2.2), Robert Eno (translator), 2015, I, 1.

36 学而不思则罔，思而不学则殆；The Analects of Confucius (version 2.2), Robert Eno (translator), 2015, II,7.

In the Dao of the kings of old, this was the beauty.

In all affairs, great and small, follow this.

Yet there is one respect in which one does not.

To act in harmony simply because one understands what is harmonious,

but not to regulate one's conduct according to li: indeed, one cannot act in that way".[37]

Here Confucius emphasizes that a natural ease in achieving harmony will be rewarded if the rules of conformity are followed. In other words, propriety precedes harmony. Propriety, ritual codes, morality weigh over other values that individual and society should follow. Confucius takes adherence to propriety as access to harmonious society and world. Since balance is the schema of the cosmos, harmony is the path of life as illustrated in The Doctrine of the Mean, people should never tend to be selfish and partial, nor be narrow and stubborn but to be between middle of extremes, to be impartial and harmonious by adequate reciprocal (Fang, 1987).

In order to attain the aim of great harmony, Confucius thinks that good relationship between people in society should be maintained from good family relationship to good social relationship. It is possible if society is full of morally noble man of virtues of honesty, sincerity, empathy, and related qualities, as described by Confucius' denoted *junzi*[38] (Rozi, 2020), ideally ethical and capable (Eno, 2015).

Confucius states that as the social norm, propriety means self-restraint, benevolence comes from self-refrain and revival of *li*,[39] in different levels of relations between man, *li* (ritual norm) is the daily etiquette to disciplines of personal conduct when alone (Eno, 2015).

By achieving self-restraint, one either as individual or unity, can he be able to avoid conflicts of interest, or chaos arising from lack of or insufficient constraint. Here we

---

[37] 礼之用，和为贵。先王之道，斯为美；小大由之。有所不行，知和而和，不以礼节之，亦不可行也;The Analects of Confucius (version 2.2), Robert Eno (translator), 2015, I, 3.

[38] 君子

[39] 克己复礼为仁。

can see that Confucian approach emphasizes propriety, principles of morality, justice, and order. In many other similar statements from Confucius, the similar ideas are reiterated. It is not exaggerating to say that self- restraint is not only the core point in harmony but also of the same function for another crucial concept in Confucian values, benevolence. Self-refrain is the backbone in Confucian harmony.

Virtue building is the main theme of all Confucian thoughts. In a human-oriented view, Confucian approach is not deeply involved with the argument on two extremes on human nature: man is born to be good or bad. Instead, he avoids holding any end. As quoted above Confucius believes that by nature men are nearly alike and then by practice, they start to be different. Based on this basic perception, he develops his framework on educational teachings, prioritizing function of ethics and virtue building. The importance of virtue building in societal education and social instruction in Confucian approach, is given a logical reasoning here.

> *"Master Zeng said: Each day I examine myself upon three points. In planning for others, have I been loyal? In company with friends, have I been trustworthy? And have I practiced what has been passed on to me?"*[40]

In daily practice, interaction between people, virtue inspection from self and individual level, is exemplified in Confucian harmony. Filiality (*xiao* 孝) defines obedience to parents and elderly persons, raised to a subtle level of fundamental self-discipline and character building; Right / Righteousness (*yi* 义), complementary to benevolence (*ren* 仁), denoting morally correct action choices, or the moral vision that allows one to make them. From family relationship to friendship and partnership and further to social links, in most basic and micro level, virtue building infrastructure is well-established in Confucius harmony system. A solid and specific ground infilled

[40] 曾子曰："吾日三省吾身——为人谋而不忠乎？与朋友交而不信乎？传不习乎？"; The Analects of Confucius (version 2.2), Robert Eno (translator), 2015, I, 1.

with Confucian ethical codes are inherited through formal and informal channels in Chinese society with its wide spreading throughout the time till today. Such codes are invisible social genres inherently embodied in daily behaviors under Chinese social context.

Beside inner harmony within the society, such ethical codes are also meaningful for interaction with external world.

> *Ziqin asked Zigong, "When our Master travels to a state, he always learns the affairs of its government. Does he seek out the information or do people give it to him of their own accord?"*
>
> *Zigong said, "Our Master obtains this information by being friendly, straightforward, reverential, frugal, and modest. The way our Master seeks things is different from the way others do!"* [41]

This dialogue was between students of Confucius Ziqing and Zigong. The topic was on how Confucius travelled to other states to do research and succeeded in collecting information. They concluded that it is because of his virtues of being a good person that enable Confucius to get what he asked for. It's implied that being a good person is rewarding in social interaction and communication with external world.

Thus, in the Confucian approach, harmony is both the goal and the result of propriety; propriety is the method and way of harmony.

2.2.3. State of Equilibrium and Harmony

Confucian classic The Doctrine of the Mean states: 'Centred: this the great root of the world'. The original Chinese of The Doctrine of the Mean is Zhongyong (中庸): etymologically Zhong literally means centrality, middle and inside. It means to avoid extremes is essential to harmony, because extreme actions tend to disrupt harmony.

---

[41]子禽问于子贡曰：夫子至于是邦也，必闻其政，求之与？抑与之与？子贡曰：夫子温、良、恭、俭、让以得之，夫子之求之也，其诸异乎人之求之与。"The Analects of Confucius (version 2.2), Robert Eno (translator), 2015, I, 2.

Yet specific time and situation should be taken into consideration since there are certain situations when extreme actions may be needed to counterbalance other forces, for sake of central harmony. Confucius did not advocate passiveness. In another word, there is adaptive and active path to achieve harmony by man. Centrality is realized in the large picture of human affairs (Li, 2004).

Chan (1963) renders Mean as 'equilibrium', identified as the substance of harmony (Wei & Li, 2013). Equilibrium and harmony, slightly varying in expression but basically compensating each other on the same ground, were highly valued in Confucian approach.

Confucius takes state of equilibrium and harmony as ideal state for all acts in individual, social and universal levels while each pair being interconnected. The accord of emotions within a person is a harmony of self. Ordering of emotion can be essential to a person's character, which contributes to the prosperity of society. Meanwhile an individual attaining of harmony simply conforms to the way of nature (Kirkendall, 2017).

It depicts the mapping of pursuit for state of equilibrium and harmony as proper feelings and acts in due degree, from micro to macro dimensions, from individual to general. It cohesively supports his principle of propriety leading to harmony.

When "equilibrium" is coupled with "harmony", it indicates the state of harmony acquired by the principle of correctness. It is on this account that the state of harmony is not only endurable, but beneficial to all under Heaven (Wang, 2018).

Equilibrium and harmony have been held as the gravity center in individual, social and universe paradigm. Social order and harmony are the goal and task of community. Human beings are actors in complex social web. And advancing towards such an order and harmony in society, according to Confucius, counts on human relationships. The relationship between human beings is considered as a system. Human beings' position and relation, their individuality and sociality, deeply concerns their play as human existence. It is Confucius that first discovered the concept (Kang, 1997).

In Confucianism harmonious relationship is regarded as the cornerstone of social structure under which each human shall be upheld with due respect, dignity, value, and esteem. As for dealing with interpersonal relationships, Confucius advocates mutual just: what one does not wish others to do to him, one shall not wish to do to others.[42] It's another evidence that reflects equilibrium and harmony pursuit to a great extent with detailed instruction for application in social life. Here is another saying famous in every Chinese household:

"A human shall establish good relations with other humans otherwise he cannot be called as a human. People shall treat others as family, since in the world within the four seas, all men are his brothers".[43]

2.2.4. Embracing differences

Inherited from Shi Bo's intellectual legacy, harmony with diversity was a core meaning deeply adopted in Chinese harmony concept for thousands of years till today. Confucius is one the those who revitalized and enriched it. Another core perspective of harmony in Confucius view, is actually 'agree to disagree'[44]. It means that real harmony between junzi (ideal person[45]), is to keep harmonious relationship with one another, but it does not mean that one has to agree with others on specific issues; to be agreeable with others on specific issues but holding different stands inside is thus a wrong attitude, which is not true harmony.

---

[42] 己所不欲，勿施于人

[43] 四海之内皆兄弟

[44]《论语·子路》和而不同

[45] Junzi, different translations on this Confucius include: Gentleman, noble son, lord, son, etc. However, it actually is an ideal image to encourage people take as model of life under Confucian doctrines. For this reason, I put 'ideal person' in this paper.

"The junzi is inclusive and not a partisan; the small man is a partisan and not inclusive".[46]

The applicable meaning does not only comply with human relationship but education and abstract concepts. The way how Confucius sees diversity on many levels are also beneficial in contemporary liberal education context. (Berthel, 2017) In Confucius harmony approach, it recognizes differences between individuals, welcomes and encourages differences among people, and draws a clear instruction for people to distinguish real and fake harmony by how differences are treated. According to him, harmony is not only tolerating differences but also cultivating varieties.

"Where there is harmony, the myriad living things are in accord; when there is order, all things are differentiated"[47].

Variety, from the birth of Chinese harmony to its developed stage, remains being at the central of the discussions and findings.

2.2.5. Hierarchy and order

At his time, the purpose that Confucius advocated harmony was to serve for his political ideas to protect and revive an orderly society since at his era China was composed of several kingdoms fighting to one another. He made great efforts to travel among a few kingdoms and spread his virtual, social, and political ideas. His focus on self-refrain and propriety, and his application harmony to personal relations, social relations meant to serve for a type of social unity and order.

Hierarchy is something dominates Confucian approach, even though it gives credit to avail broader applications. According to Chinese scholar Chengyan Li, Confucian harmony operates on five hierarchically interrelated scale-levels.

---

[46] 君子和而不同，小人同而不和。I The Analects of Confucius (version 2.2), Robert Eno (translator), 2015, I, 7.

[47] The Book of Rites, Zehou Li, 18.

Elementary level: the individual-personal awareness and desire to self-cultivate one's internal harmonization as a moral duty to the keeping of order in society; this is the foundation of a moral society.

The second level: it concerns "a nexus of human relationship" (Li, 2008)[48], namely, the five major interpersonal/ethical relationships in which the individual self exists: between ruler and minister, parent and child, husband, and wife, or between siblings, and between friends.

The third level of harmony: is to do with the governance politics of the state. Harmonious governance is to bring about order in society through the virtuous functioning of government officials rather than penal laws.

The fourth level: promoting harmony as peaceful coexistence beyond the state borders, in the world.

And at the top level, harmony is applicable as a universal law and a cosmological order generated by the interactive process of balancing human, nature, and society (Li 2008).

To understand this hierarchy explicitly, we can put the five levels into a visual pyramid shape:

[48] Li, C., (2008), The philosophy of harmony in classical Confucianism, Philosophy Compass, 3(3), 429

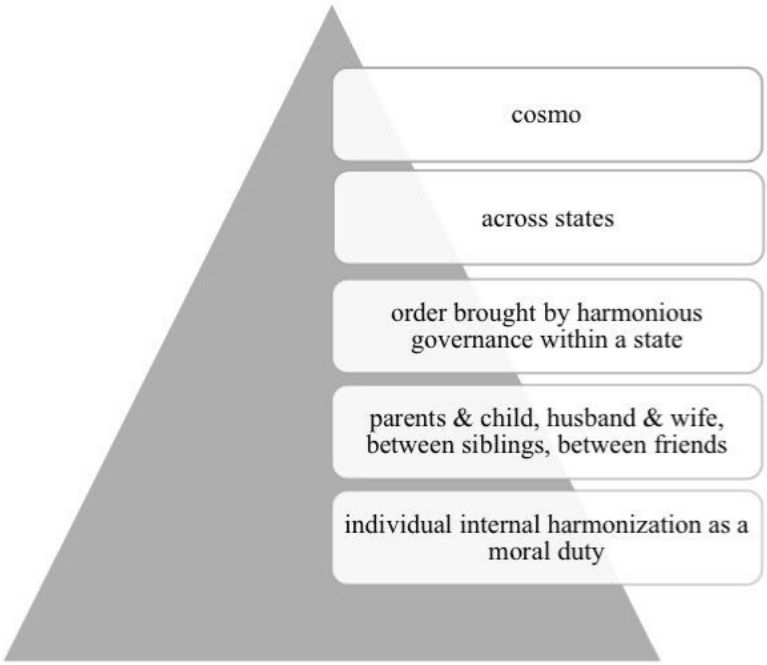


Figure 2.1. Confucius harmony hierarchy diagram, adapted from Li, C. (2008), The philosophy of harmony in classical Confucianism, Philosophy Compass, 3(3), 429

The moral and ritual ethical building, meanwhile always remain being basic cell in this tremendous thought, behavior, and spirit construction. How well it's knitted and interfaced in every organic unit can be seen from his teachings as elaborated above in part of ethical codes.

Confucius harmony undoubtedly is comprehensive and highly developed and applicable for real social context. It turned out to be that Confucius became prominent figure throughout Chinese Empire periods, when obviously hierarchy in authority in Empire context was naturally embraced and recognized as canon. But it may also cause partial accessibility to the whole picture of Chinese harmony.

The overwhelming perspective of Confucian harmony will be a partial interpretation of differences in harmony concept of Chinese tradition. Confucian perception on 'differences' are rooted in a wider soil of the time earlier than his existence, although Confucius' fame claims him representative status, such recognized fame meanwhile filters the access to more original and richer resources.

Another very important fact that strengthens such filtered feature is that the historical political act of 'Deposed 100 (other Schools of Thoughts), only Confucianism[49]' application. It was suggested by Dong Zhongshu at B.C.140, which was adopted by Emperor of the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC- 8 AD) to consolidate the dominant status of Confucianism in China. Although Confucianism by that time already developed by absorbing ideas from other Chinese traditions including Taoism, School of Legalism, this movement still exhibits how Confucian harmony approach is closely relevant to hierarchy and order under certain pattern, which is preferably referred to as governance strategy and historical ideal model.

Confucian harmony and its approach is undoubtedly very instructive for understanding core essence of harmony in Chinese traditions. However, harmony in Chinese traditions is far more than Confucian harmony. It does represent one perspective of harmony in Chinese tradition, but it is not solely representative. Identity of Confucian thoughts being canon, makes other thoughts vaguer, less noticeable.

Harmony in Chinese tradition has much more general and dynamic meanings. To gain an unfolding clue on harmony in Chinese tradition, we shall shed an eye on the other figures.

2.3. Other views enriching Chinese harmony

2.3.1. Mozi harmony

Mozi (470BC – 391BC), is the first systematic philosophical critic of Confucianism (Ivanhoe, 1998). When Confucianism put order, affinity differences into family, community and social solidarity based on ethical construction, there are its limits. Its cultivation was limited to 'true gentlemen' *junzi* namely the Sage; there is subordination; there is inside and outside; there is range and border. Different from this, for sake of true harmony in social realm, the defined distinctions between borders

[49] 罢黜百家，独尊儒术

should be lifted, according to Mozi. He raised concept of inclusive and impartial love for all: originally in Chinese it is 兼爱 *jian ai*, literally means to love others just like to love oneself, a love without order, here love is a kind of universal love without any borders, in which every person and object is equally subjective and eligible for due love. Mohist ideas of inclusive concern and care, became the cultivation of commonality for all (Yan, 2011).

Mozi's harmony conception is not purely ideal. It has concrete practical connotations by combining universal impartial love and pragmatic pursuit for wealth, fame, and other material desires. He grounds ethics in maximizing overall benefit or profit (Fraser, 2022).

According to Mozi, management should start from identifying where chaos come from and for what reasons[50]. Social chaos such as fights, problems, conflicts, betrayals, disharmonies taking place in kingdoms, clans, communities, administrations, families are all due to lack of such a cross border love.[51] Ethics should not be elusive, and, profits should be incorporated into ethics. He argued that profits and ethics are not inherently contradictory but a pair possible to coexist and be integrated. However, if harmonious state of relation and social order is desired for, selfishness and egoism should be avoided, and mutual benefit should be the core value cherished by parties of each pair relations.[52]

---

[50] In recent scholar studies, concept of'chaos' and chaos theory, has taken roote in social sciences (Erçetin & Bağcı, 2016), although the process of its being scientifical is relatively new (Akçin & Zengin,2020). Chaos refers to the order within the disorder while the initial conditions that appear small may have great consequences. From the standpoint of social work discipline, whose history dates back to the existence of man, it is important to use the holistic perspective for regular, fair and humane transformation of the chaos experienced in the society (Akçin & Zengin, 2020).

[51] 是故诸侯不相爱则必野战，家主不相爱则必相篡，人与人不相爱则必相贼，君臣不相爱则不惠忠，父子不相爱则不慈孝，兄弟不相爱则不和调。

[52] 亏父而自利、亏子而自利、亏兄而自利、亏弟而自利、亏君而自利、亏臣而自利、乱异家以利其家、攻异国以利其国

Mozi also advocated professionalism, expertise development and respect on human talents.[53] Another intellectual legacy from *Mozi* is his call for austerity and simplicity in lifestyle to maintain social savings for more appropriate use on behalf of goodness for all[54].

2.3.2. Laozi harmony

Founder of Daoism Laozi is a contemporary philosopher with Confucius. It's said that Confucius once asked him for advice on the rites of the Zhou Dynasty[55].

When Confucianism is greatly concerned with morality and people's way of conduct in maintaining interpersonal and social relations, Taoism has a much more individualistic and mystical feature, appealing to instinct and conscience to govern one's conduct (He, 2008). For this reason, harmony of Laozi, requires intensive cognitive efforts to understand and apply (Xing, 2022).

To achieve harmony, according to Laozi, is more an intrinsic journey. One shall optimize self-management from mind, soul, attitude, awareness to behavior, from internal enlightment to external reflection

Such a cognitive process includes (Xing, 2022):

(1) Ignorance awareness: to be a life-long learner, a heart of void of greedy desires, admitting self blind dots;

(2) Self-identification avoid over-confidence: to avoid over estimation on self capacity, power, longevity, dominance or life circle;

(3) Conscious *wu wei(无为)*: to follow natural flow and law of Things, events, not to interfere unduely to cost more

---

[53] 尚贤

[54] 节用

[55] Gu Zhengkun., *Lao Tzu: The Book of Tao and Teh: An Introduction*, Pekin University Press, Beijing 1995, 23.

When Confucius harmony focuses positions of human being in complicated social web and attempted to reshape orders by organized education and ethical codes, Laozi's stand is different. Laozi himself turned out to retreat form social life lived in seclusion in his late years (Gu, 2007). He was keen on internal cognitive peace and external universal peace. Based on the view that human beings are just a small part of the natural world or universe, Laozi's harmony focuses on being in harmony with nature, the universe (Lee et al., 2009). Therefore, people should conduct properly so as to be in harmony with the Dao, the infinite and eternal law of the universe. It is the ultimate pursuit of being Oneness, namely the human world and the external universe are united into one, which is different from Western view (Lee, 2003; Lee, Han et al., 2008).

Harmony, according to Laozi, is an endless circle with duality. The interwin of the two opposite states, *yin* and *yang*, tells duality state of things in totality, during constant changes reflected in harmony under due balance (Xing, 2022).

2.3.3. Zhuangzi harmony

Zhangzi (approximately 369BC-286BC) is an influential Chinese philosopher, whose skillfully composed book Zhangzi is one of the foundations of Daoism. Along with themes attributed to Laozi, Zhuangzi's naturalism helped shape Chan Buddhism (禅) (Japanese Zen)- guidance for focused engagement in our daily lifestyle (Hansen, 2021). Nowadays well-known minimalism's root, for example, is attributed to Japanese Zen (Haimes, 2020).

Zhuangzi harmony, offers a profound concept of harmony: he thinks that it's the in-determined power of self-affection that constitutes the nature of life (Maliavin, 2008). Harmony has its self-transformational nature in a definite infinity with definite qualities. The vacuity of mind is access to all Things. Heart and mind, spiritual experience with its play and delight are integrated in Zhangzi harmony. Such equation introduced by Zhuangzi became traditional for Chinese thought. Things and people have limits. Once ego abandoned, will it open transcendental dimension for inner

experience; a self's awareness expansion enables one go beyond split of subject and object (Maliavin, 2008), inner and outer aspects be brought together (Maliavin, 2005).

Zhuangzi harmony is also characterized by pure spirituality. He is different from Confucian harmony essentially by being against to ethical teachings, Sageness. According to him, the true life is something natural, so all sorts of advocates, ethical and moral teachings belong to something unnatural an deven hypochracy (伪 wei)[56]; the true freedom of heart and mind as well as inner peace, do not have to rely on anything external, which can be achieved by open mindedness in spirit and overcoming selfness, conscious non-action and a true naturalness.[57]

The keenness and endless chasing on material life, including wealth, fame, social secular success and profits, according to Zhuangzi, are nothing but sources of burdens that barrier true essence of life, make people blind of life's real meanings and beauties. His thoughts have been regarded as source of inspiration for Chinese artists for spiritual freedom and creativity.

Zhangzi harmony is also a response to dark, complicated, unfair social realities for sake of individual inner protection (Zhang, 1998).

2.3.4. Wang Fuzi (1619-1692) harmony

Wang Fuzi reinforced and enriched harmony to a more human-oriented level, with more clarified reasoning each individual shall do his due part in terms of both cognition and behavior.

(1) Cause and remedy of social conflict and chaos

Similar to Mozi, Wang Fuzi also attempted to address his ideas on identifying cause of chaos. He regarded that it's human being who violently disturbed the

[56] Wang Chonglü 王充闾, Xiao Yao You: Zhuangzi Quan Zhuan, Pekin: Pekin University Press, 逍遥游：庄子全传，北京：北京大学出版社，2019：459-469

[57] 无待；心斋；坐忘

cosmic harmony, life force and energy *qi* (气), with their immorality and misconduct, thus consequently caused crisis and conflict. In turn, the disturbed cosmo was draw into disharmony, so more evil-minded people produced, more disasters initiated.

Therefore, if human beings wanted to end this vicious circle, it was a must for whole society each individual to conduct morally, to cultivate his own *qi* properly, contribute to harmony formation.

(2) Inclusiveness in promoting harmony awareness

In order to appeal large engagement from individuals to contribute to cosmic harmony, Wang Fuzhi quoted his peer Gu Yanwu's words: *"The rise and fall of a state is the responsibility of its every citizen"* to advocate its spirit to a universal sense. Each individual in the world should shoulder his responsibility for universal harmony and do due part. It is only by maintenance of this universal harmony that the meaning of a person's life was fulfilled and the disasters and conflicts were eliminated in advance (Tan, 2010).

Similar to Confucius, the time Wang Fuzi lived was transformative in social system and administration. Problems and conflicts in politics and culture were sharp and severe. He connected social disasters with universal disasters and defined people's role and responsibility, giving harmony a new socio-cultural practical application.

Another leap that Wang Fuzi bestowed on harmony is that, on the basis of reinforcing nobility, humanity, and righteousness, he unites the meaning of one's life with harmony, bringing harmony to an overwhelming position in personal cognition.

2.4. Modern Chinese harmony

The pursuit of Chinese people at ancient time goes on and on throughout thousands of years, the eager for a social political ideal state, a state in which people are against severe social upheaval, conflicts, and instability, against psychological scarce,

nervousness and uneasiness. People continuously seek for orderly, relaxed, quiet and harmonious social atmosphere. As described in the Great Harmony Datong[58]: a society where people help each other friendly, each family lives stably and happily, there is no difference, nor conflict or war. Such an awareness is so widely recognized that practice in daily management finds no difficulty in incorporate this unanimous universe harmony into governance.

In modern China, the leading management of Chinese government raised up the concept to 'construct a harmonial society （构建和谐社会）' as a social development strategical aim in Sep. 2004. This strategical aim hereafter become a core concept to describe the political management strategy[59]. Many academic and research papers have been released in China ever since to explain the connotation and applicable details of this strategy. The main content of this harmonious society strategy is to achieve a society where 'democracy and legislation, fairness and justice, honesty and friendliness pervade, society is full of dynamism, being stable and orderly, people and nature coexist in harmony'[60]. This recent macro and overwhelming management practice of harmony reflects its inherent nature in China and deep socio-cultural basement.

2.5. Chinese harmony and implications for conceptual skills in management

From Qin Dynasty （221 - 207 BC） to Ming Dynasty （1368—1644）and Qing Dynasty (1636-1912), for almost two thousand years, however upheavals and dramatical changes took place in Chinese society, its social nature, political structure,

[58] 大同世界：《礼运篇》

[59] The 16th Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Congress 中国共产党第十六届中央委员会

[60] 民主法治、公平正义、诚信友爱、充满活力、安定有序、人与自然和谐相处

and legislation system remained being in a super stable state. It should have been credited to Chinese harmony thoughts that have been deeply rooted in Chinese community, in its political and economic soils. On the other hand, they have accumulatively transformed into the deep personality and psychological core values of Chinese people (Liu, 2001).

Such a deeply cultivated root and wide spread value in Chinese tradition, for sure is result of Chinese harmony as a collective whole rather than merits of certain scholars. It's only one glimpse of the panorama. Yet as the saying depicts, a straw shows which way the wind blows. Insights from selected above descriptions will be extracted for comparative analyses.

When this study discusses Chinese harmony, it shoud be clarified that just as each tradition has its own distinguishing routes and unduplicable grounds, Chinese harmony is a system cohesively formulated with its own path.

2.5.1. Socio-historical uniqueness

Chinese harmony came into being and flourished in Chinese tradition and civilization. It has distinctive background that might explain why it is relatively less rooted and developed in other socio-historical soils. There are roughly three reasons:

(1) Geographical enviornment: in ancient China, from road transportation perspective, it was surrounded by high mountains, deserts, forests and seas. Thus it was naturally blocked away from external disturbance while its inner lands were extraordinarily vast and spacious for sufficient and independent development.

(2) Economic production features: ancient China was an agriculture nation and was well developed thanks to rich and fertile land, water resources and moderate climate conditions. Agricultural activities affected people pychologically. Harmonious tie between nature and human was attached great importance. Practical, solid attitude and appropriateness in mind and heart were cherished as daily mood.

(3) Social system: ancient China adopted Patriarchal Clan System, in which clans were the unit and people resided collectively. In clans, family tie and norms were applied with the father at the top of the hierarchy. The hierarchy system had its well knitted network and delicate orders, in which all kinds of relations between people were explicitly defined by related norms, including relationship between king-minister, father-son, husband-wife, brothers, friends, and so on (Cheng, 2010).

Chinese harmony originated from and evolved under deep natural conditions and accumulative historical and social grounds. It's role of being the core value and tradition of Chinese civilization is a natural process, flow, objective outcome, and trend. The evolution and development in its application are the same inevitable and continuous.

It has a specific meaning for adaptive implications: not to be applicable in general for various socio-historical context, but to be implicative for suitable appropriate context. It means to work on suitable usage, adoption, transformation only, but not for comprehensive transplantation. Context is an issue accumulative, which is inherently evolved, fostered, developed in certain settings.

Yet Chinese harmony is fundamentally meaningful and enlightening when it's been considered as a concept, approach and intellectual architecture.

2.5.2. Chinese harmony as a case study for conceptual insights

Chinese harmony is not only a rooted tradition shaped and developed during thousands of years of evolution, with rich accumulations both in theories and in practices, but also an open-ended dynamic approach constantly revitalized as a concept. When presenting knowledge and insights, it meanwhile invites dynamic elaboration and application, as shown in its own traits. A brief extraction on its major features will provide a convenient cognitive route for conceptual purpose.

- Chinese harmony is composed by intents to address problems and challenges of the time each philosopher and administrators lived.

- Harmony is an accommodating, well-knitted system in Chinese tradition. It means coexistence of varities with equilium and balance. It's a dynamic process rather than static; it's self-transformational, evolving and changing.
- Although varying on definition and approach, it's agreed in Chinese harmony that: harmony is productive, positive while disharmony is harmful in individual, social and cosmotical levels.
- Combination of different approaches presents comprehensive suggestive solutions for understanding and tacking almost all major issues of mankind including: human nature, social order, ethical codes, knowledge building, meaning of life, attitude and life style,relations between human, nature and universe, human behaviors, cognitive and intrinsic journey, sustainability.

It's striking to reiterate the fact that all of issues have been addressed aligning with one single theme under harmony; Chinese scholars and administrators have consensus on harmony's deep meaning and awarding contribution to realities despite span over time and gap in context.

It is not exaggerating to claim that it takes a lifetime to dive into the ocean of Chinese harmony. It should be stated that this study is an initial and pioneering effort to draw attention to this profound and promising theme.

2.5.3. Other harmony thoughts from different traditions

Harmony is of the oldest tradition at all times. It has been an influential concept and value in various social contexts.

Harmony is recorded in Greek as 'αρμονία' as an aesthetic notion. Dance, music and poetry were the three elements formulating the education of the ancient Greeks concepts of aesthetics 'αρμονία' (harmony) (Georgios et al., 2017). In ancient Greek, 'μουσικη', namely music, was perceived as the harmonious cultivation of the soul, the spirit and the body (Mouratidis, 1998); dance, expressed an emotional state that brought together social harmony with cosmic harmony (Miller, 1986).

Harmony is recorded as ‘ahenk’ (accord, order, rhythm, symmetry) and 'ahilik' (friendliness, in harmony with, togetherness, order, ahi-community) in Turkish tradition. It was a loaned word from Persian, but developed in Turkish tradition in its philosophical and Islamic thoughts spheres. The true goodness and beauty, embodies in harmony, was extended beyond mind and will in Turkish tradition, and was connected with consciences, ethics and virtues (WEB_3, 1988). Prominent Turkish philosopher and folk poet Yunus Emre (1238-1328) is regarded as the one who greatly influenced Turkish culture. He lived in a turbulent time with emerging petty kingdoms, rebellions and external interventions. He described how community with order shall be built with ideal person with proper virtues. He compared virtues between "self (greed) and spirit (richness of heart)", "self-complacency and humbleness", "anger and patience", "jealousy/stinginess and generosity", and "gossip/slander and rightness" in details (Boz, 2021). According to Yunus Emre, love is regarded as the element that renders human being a real human being; lover corresponds to the perfect human being, who owns morality and perfectness (Büyüközkara, 2021).

Harmony is a central value in many West African nations, where ‘ajumorin’ or ‘ijeyepo’ stands for harmony in Yoruba, ‘kwanciyar hankali’ in Hausa language. In modern time, harmony has been a major cultural value among the Igbo of Nigeria, as well as a national goal (Anedo, 2012). Igbo, the same as Chinese, approaches interpersonal disagreements and social clashes with a harmony perspective (Gabrenya & Hwang, 1996; Huang, 1999). In its philosophical view, African term ‘*ubuntu’*, stands for human excellence that is to be realized by living harmoniously with others in the community (Li, 2016).

Harmony is not only a concept being embedded in old traditions but also being developed, applied, enriched across cultures, surpassing time and space. This study on Chinese harmony for management, intends to draw attention not only to rooted and systematically well-developed harmony insights such as how it’s prospered in Chinese

tradition, but also to other indigenous ideas from different civilizations, under the same theme of harmony.

2.6. Challenges and recipe for conceptual skills in managements

Effective management has been at the center of numerous scholarly studies since last century. There were many skills that came to the fore after the Industrial Revolution. Conceptual skills are one of them. Katz has addressed the issue here as management skills. Katz's observations of managerial skills, namely, technical, human and conceptual the three broad categories, are the essential set of managerial skills that numerous articles and books have been aligned with. When numerous more abilities could be identified, Katz's observations of the three broad categories were the essential set of managerial skills. Conceptual skills in management is at the top of the pyramid of three core skills in Katz's study that formulates fundamental framework of studies on managerial skills. Conceptual skills are to see the organization as a whole system and the relationships among its parts (Katz, 1955; Bernad,1968; Daft, 2012). They include to form vision and strategic planning, to take the broad, long-term view, to identify, evaluate, and solve complex problems (Mumford & Campion, 2007), and to shape meaning for principles and policies of organization based on vision and strategic planning (Northouse, 2018). The task of conceptual skills are to achieve organizational goal (Katz, 1974).

Over the years, numerous articles and books have been published aligning the same topic no more than the two themes (Peterson & Fleet, 2004):

(1) add to the fundamental core managerial skills; or

(2) more clearly delineate the specific tasks which make up each of the core skills.

Conceptual skills in management are regarded as crucial for effective management. Conceptual skills are regarded as specialized knowledge based cognitive process that individuals based on as specialized tools to move away from technical specialization and step into the managerial positions (Bowen and Siehl, 1997; Cross, 2000;

Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Tosi and Tosi, 1986). Although these skills have gained more importance in the transition to the information age, the issue of how the cognitive approach should be has not been examined much.

While available studies remain being sporadic and limited the essence of conceptual skills in management remains being gathered around the findings of initial studies under West context.

However due to its abstractness of being conceptual, sporadic illustrations on the issue from available studies under West context, are far from applicable cognition nor satisfiable for inclusive needs emerging and enlarging constantly.

2.6.1. Existent gaps and conceptual needs

There are gaps in conceptual skills in management experience in the following aspects, which lead to difficulties and deadlocks in the management of businesses:

(1) Dilemma for managers: "*to be or not to be*"?

There is no certain patterns on effective managers since who come in 'all shapes and sizes' (Druker, 1985). But it's believed that ability to manage well can be learnt. Equipped with formalized codes, proper aims and social purposes, management can be a true profession (Khurana & Nohria, 2008). Management as a science or an art have been scrutinized (O'Gorman & Farrington & Gregor,2015). Instructions and different dimensions of management have been introduced with details. A study delivered recently on management skills covered as many as 28 aspects including: learning, coaching, communication, building team, goal setting; social, cultural, and spiritual intelligence as well as self-confidence, motivation and time-management (Amini,2016). Descriptions are established. But for individuals in reality, the journey to be an effective manager is still turbulent.

(2) Expectations from the manager continue to increase.

Multi-tasking and multifunction are expected from managers, ranging from satisfying shareholders/stakeholders to being social and communicative to facilitate

image of corporate culture. Even for a short-term project manager, his/her tasks go beyond various departments, within or cross organizations. The managers' job is extremely stressful, requires good health, assertiveness and resilience (Zukowski & Gudowski, 2014). Being manager is so tough that workers do not want to be managers, due to loads of responsibility, work-life balance, more commitment, options to moving up limited in flatter structure and traditional 'careers' vanishing (Torres, 2014).

On the other hand, criticism on inefficiency of management structure keeps growing, and new management models arising.

There are arguments that managers should be fired since the internal weight of complexity of management hierarchy and structure is overloaded and expensive, decision making is uncontestable, responses are slow, and encouraging authorities that may kill creativity and demotivate lower-level employees to contribute or due to authority tyranny (Hamel, 2011).

Communications expand to an unprecedented level with emerging paradigm of digitalization, empowerment and involvement of larger population of the globe from various cultures and traditions, requires conceptual dimension in management to be more 'inclusive' and appealing to practical cognitive digestion and application. Rather than sporadic, solely West context orientated, solely elite oriented, separately meaningful without cohesive systematic established approach, a systematic, cohesive, coherent and comprehensive approach or framework is a timely necessity for conceptual skills in management, very probably, not only conceptual skills but conceptual competency.

Obviously more practical conceptual and cognitive routes for retrospection and for application enhancing awareness as well as competency are still in needs. Integration beween alternative and complementary insights and the familiar literature is a considerate method for deeper understanding and further exploration.

2.6.2. Wholeness view is not at its place in reality

In individual, organizational and social levels, wholeness view is emphasized in conceptual skills in management. It showed a forward thinking in the world today when the connectivity and interdependency in the globe is tighter more than ever and deepens further, with the advancement in technology, international business, supply chain, internet of Things. Common fate awareness arises in particular in post Covid-19 for togetherness in combating adversities and global problems including natural disasters, climate changes, environmental pollution, global criminal crimes and all kinds of security issues in digital era. Therefore UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development put revitalization of global partnership at all levels into its goals (WEB_4, 2015). But stakeholders insist on separate stands. Political frictions upgrade, regional war lay devastating impact to all. Local, sectoral, national protectionism, various barriers are common practices. Collaborations across borders in act leg behind awareness. Agreeable mindsets are far away being pervasive but peripheral, not mentioning consequent cooperative practices at different levels.

The facts challenge the conceptual skills of management so far to strengthen its holistic view and make it applicable to the growing population, to initiate and enable systems, to persuade individuals and institutions. The expected outcome of collaboration and partnership at all levels will be at the relevant information and roadmap stage. That is, the approach that will enable conceptual skills to facilitate mindsets that develop harmonious minds and transform ideas into action or reality should be taken into this cognitive area. Another dimension that conceptual skills in management today shall also add into its horizon is holistic dimension to consider human society as a whole. A matter concerning human beings be properly coexist with nature and universe. Therefore, the cognitive codes and awareness supporting broader holism is also necessary for conceptual skills in management.

To sum up, the issue of conceptual skills in management faces the challenges below that request complementary and/or alternative approach:

- It has been studies sporadically with limited illustrations without an established system
- It has been developed into various directions, while varying ideas have not been addressed in one accommodating architecture
- It has been illustrated since 1955 without much accumulated resources in theory and practice in broader time and space horizon
- It has been addressed from the origin targetting top management elite, while contemporary new developments request for more inclusiveness
- It has been studied under West context while the Oriental context and traditions have not been integrated yet
- It has been studied with larger ring and dimensions while much more holistic stand is also of increasing concern of human society as a whole
- It has been studied with human orientation to a great extent, including intuition, while further probing into it has not been delivered, nor an approach formed to enable self-reproductive, self-generating adaptiveness
- It has been studied combing thoughts and acts aiming to be constructively directive, while further elaborations have not been done so still remain being vague for formulating applicable step by step cohesive cognitive route

To respond to above stated challenges studies and applications of conceptual skills in management encounter, aligning with available studies so far, complementary and alternative approach from different traditions or territories might be promising to fill up the gaps.

2.6.3. Oriental approach to meet the challenges and to close the gaps

Conceptual skills in management are an issue involving architecture of thoughts and perceptions. When both West and East are in management realm, conceptual skills in management have been addressed widely from scholars of the West. Traditions and wisdom from non-Western are also enlightening resources but there have not been

such studies focusing integrating non-Western traditions with conceptual skills in management. There were no management textbooks from the ancient world, however very competent management existed; live cases such as Egypt and China are excellent examples of early management (O'Gorman & Farrington & Gregor, 2015). It's well known that history repeats itself; old traditions are always inspiring from which new practices absorb insights.

New vocabulary and multidisciplinary expansion in management studies do not necessarily mean old traditions do not fit in present unpredictable and dynamically changing world. On the contrary, ancient philosophical and strategic thinking could remain being dynamic and inspiring: Chinese ancient philosopher Fan Li (范蠡) prescribed precursor of SWOT analysis while French military and political leader Napoléon touched upon the essence of motivation and communication for management. Moreover, integrating East-West thoughts by in-depth comparative studies facilitate 'coalescence of Chinese and Western ideas for managing globally' (Foo, 2015).

The fact that thoughts are significantly different between the West and East also sheds light on search from East traditions for new insights and to rethink conceptual skills in management (Moore, 1967):

- The Western tendency to think in terms of "either/or," Chinese mind holds attitude of "both-and";
- Chinese tradition has pervasive theoretical and practical principle and ideal of harmony: fully developed and implemented more than any other tradition, Eastern or Western;
- Chinese thought-and-culture tradition is characterized by humanism, with an inner tranquility of spirit that pervades life in both prosperity and adversity, a tranquility born of a sense of harmony with Nature and one's fellow men.

Both China and the West highlight the comprehensive application of multiple thinking modes. Western thinkers focus on practical problems in the material world while Chinese philosophers focus on improving the individual realm to solve the

contradictions inside oneself. While the west is excelled in using logical and analytical thinking modes and utilizing rational cognition, China is far better at using dialectical and holistic thinking modes and applying intuitive comprehension (Wang el al, 2021).

The challenges in conceptual skills in the management world of today include enhancing wholeness awareness and outcome of partnership, collaboration and togetherness. As 'storehouse of important ideas' (Moore, 1967), Chinese tradition with harmony as its core value presents a rich resource for implications for conceptual skills in managements.

Based on highlighted representative thoughts on conceptual skills available, the major ideas can be briefly extracted into four themes, for sake of convenient understanding:

(1) Wholeness view(katz, 1955; bernad,1968; daft, 2012)

(2) Long-term view (mumford & campion, 2007)

(3) Complex problems (mumford & campion, 2007)

(4) Achieving organizational goal(Katz, 1955)

As an alien concept and system for Western context, Chinese harmony remains being an elusive territory. Chinese harmony will be elaborated under the same theoretical skeleton in these four themes above to expand deeper understanding on the gournd of familiar knowledge. As an initial effort to cater inclusive audience for accesible cognitive route, in this study only representative harmony thoughts of previously stated Chinese scholars will be referred to.

Conceptual skills in management is to work with abstract ideas, concepts and thoughts (Katz, 1955). Aligning with its nature as a concept, and scope of discussion across time and space, it shall be clarified that 'Chinese harmony' in the following passages, is used in a conceptual dimension rather than geographical, historical or cultural term. Implications are extracted in conceptual sense as well.

2.7. Chinese harmony and implications for conceptual skills in management

2.7.1. Wholeness view

Conceptual skills in management require a wholeness view that see the organization as a whole system and the relationships among its parts (Katz, 1955; Bernad,1968; Daft, 2012). As stated in Introduction part, inclusiveness that challenges studies on trypology managerial skills today include: (i) organizations are no longer dominantly vertical but also horizontal oriented; (ii) conceptual skills are no longer only elite oriented but more ordinary and daily in this all-around communicative and digital era; (iii) each individual is more empowered to be one part of the whole.

In micro level for specific organization, Chinese harmony reminds of interrelation between each part, namely each individual, each department, each element all are involved, meanwhile the relation between each part, either harmonious or not, effects the organization consequently as a whole. The total and overall harmonious or disharmonious outcome is directly connected with productivity and prosperity of the organization. It's how harmony is defined and works: each part of the totality is related to other, all parts contribute to the formation of the totality in sense of wholeness (Cheng, 1989). This means to attach due importance on each individual accordingly rather than accounting on filtered, limited judgement of 'leaders' at all levels. Ignorance of gravity of each individual in the organization will be cause of disharmony and consequences of disproductivity and disprosperity and disturbance for all. The split autonomy of each department or each element within an organization shall also be given a life-up, and only by then expected harmonious interrelation shall be possible. After all, in harmony, the wholeness is the coherence and responsiveness between the parts and between the parts with the whole (Xiang, 2020).

Since organizations today are in a more connected enviornment both in social and universal context, corporate responsibilities are discussed to a great extent. In macro level, Chinese harmony presents a wholeness view tri-angle beween human, nature and universe, suggesting a harmonious setting, road map and commonality for each level, meanwhile reminding their interdependency and mutual effects.

As a part of the entire world and universe, each organization is one part of the wholeness as an actor of the whole society, meanwhile as a part of nature and universal community under mankind identity. As suggested by harmony concept, to foresee the trend, is to stick to a standing point on behalf of organization, society, humankind, nature as well as the cosmo. Based on this standing point, to shape meaning for principles, policies (Northouse, 2018) is to incorporate harmony concept into decision makings and to formulate vision and goal of the whole organization.

Wholeness view in conceptual skills management studies under West context, has its limits, in which scope of parts and scope of the whole is not as comprehensive as the holism in Chinese harmony. Holism, in recent studies, has been identified as one of the key cultural values distinguishing the East and the West and holism means to see everything not as separate components but as a whole including the universe, nature, world, humans, physical elements, behavioral elements, as separate components (Lim, 2009; Lim & Giles 2007). This suggests that if incorporate Chinese harmony into conceptual skills in management, it gains for this territory not only holism perspective as a concept but also related accumulations in the East traditions.

2.7.2. Long-term view

Since harmony is a dynamic process of time and space (Cheng, 1989), it answers the long-term concern in conceptual skills of management (Mumford & Campion, 2007) in a broader sense: the up and downs, imbalance, inequilium situations over spans are part of harmony process, during which favorable and disfavorable situations are equally accounted as part of the whole process. It requires a tolerant attitude towards adversities, temporary failures and sacrifices if necessary.

A long-term view also means to hold commonality values. Above all of the actions to take, awareness of harmony shall be infilled into basic cognition of each individual, each element. It's beyond ethical codes or corporate value, but objective reason for sustainable survival of an organization, if put under harmony framework to think

conceptually. There are different approaches to enhance and facilitate harmony in various Chinese harmony tradition: ethical virtue building with structure and order, exemplary ideals and self-cultivation (Confucius approach); ignorance awareness and consious non-action (Laozi approach); mind-heart integration and intuitive spiritual experience (Zhuangzi approach); material profit be incorporated with impartial love (Mozi approach); meaning of life embodies in harmony pursuit and devotion (Wang Fuzi approach) and many others not coverd in this study.

When long-term vision and strategy for an organization is on the table to draw up, it's crucial to define and identify a proper and sustainable self-position. According to *Laozi* harmony, duality is inherently embodied within harmony itself that the two opposite states are spontaneously self-transformative (Xing, 2022). Due importance shall also be given to foresee necessary building of immunity to prepare for disfavorable situations, including disturbance, interference, disasters, calamities, and other harmful elements.

2.7.3. Complex problems

Conceptual skills in management requires ability to identify, evaluate, and solve complex problems (Mumford & Campion, 2007). Conflicts, differences/varieties, uncertainty, change are among complex problems that organizations witness. Chinese harmony presents an alternative perspective by an attitude of determination to resolve conflicts by harmonization rather than conquest (Li, 2006).

Chinese harmony concept recognizes conflicts and differences. It recognizes existence of conflicts and differences as something natural, contained in everything of universe. It opposes intolerance, and emphasizes the integration of different and opposite factors to form harmonious and uniform unity (Wang, 2009)

Chinese harmony concept regards conflicts and differences as two sides of one united object, as opposite but interdependent, meanwhile it advocates the two sides of

being under conflicts and difference to be self-restraint or harmonized to achieve mutual stability and balance.

Chinese harmony believes that root of chaos and conflicts is disharmony, thus addresses cohesively that solution of such problems shall lie in harmony construction, calling for broad encouragement on and involvement into harmony awareness enhancing. On the other hand, it means that any acts accelerating disharmony would result in intensified splits and negative impacts.

With the coherence and and responsiveness between the parts and between the parts with the whole (Xiang, 2020), the true organic harmony is like phenomenon of diversity in one body[61] (Fei, 1999). It is of the philosophical meaning that sameness is barrier to harmony, harmony invites variety by nature; harmony embodies differences that are power of productivity and prosperity in essence. It means that similar mentality is not real harmony.

Variety means to admit self-limits. Humility and ignorance awareness in Chinese harmony concept is especially meaningful in defining default knowledge, values and thoughts, namely prevailing ones. Default knowledge of source and target audience, expecially of those who are decision making positions, need such 'diversity in one body' awareness.

For example, in case of outbreak of Covid-19. It's a situation with uncertainty plus adversity: harmony with variety here means to allow different tries so as to achieve positive unity as a whole to combat uncertainty and adversity; admitting self-ignorance, and to eradicate differences or varieties means to block possible remedy for adversity and uncertainty in case of self-failure, and it means to block chance of remedy for all.

Different exploration means a try on behalf of all, either failure or success, both are meaningful for remedy of situation. When prevailing dominant solution fails to control

[61] 多元一体: diversity in one body, is a borrowed term from Chinese contemporary philosopher Fei Xiaotong,who innovatively raised a concept of 56 ethnic groups in China is integrated into organic One and defines it as Chinese ethnic groups are Chinese'diversity in one body'.中华民族多元一体格局，费孝通，1999，中央民族大学出版社

or mitigate severe suffering and losses, apart from dominant solutions different tries are also contributive for all; if they fail, it's understood to try others, if succeed, it's exemplary for others to adopt. Unfortunately, very often the dominant 'ideas' prevail and try to eradicate different tries to show how 'correct' they are: while actually it only shows how 'dominant' they are. But failure is failure to all as a whole, since each part is highly interconnected and interdependent, 'cohesive and responsive' between parts and between parts and the whole...

Diversities in many levels is harmony's essence and source of productivity. As shown in Mozi approach, harmony-bearing-variety facilitates artistic creation. The diversity, variety and difference welcoming essence of Chinese harmony, gives clue to encourage and foster innovation and creativity.

2.7.4. Achieving the organizational goal (Katz, 1955)

Conceptual skills shall result in outcome of achieved organizational goal. When defining the goal of the 'organization', in the present inclusive context, it might mean an enterprise, institution, in international, local or sub-local level, as an individual involved in managment or not, or as an influencer in social media.

When in reality the world is frustrated by crises from natural and human/anthropocentric disasters, when each individual is under impact of regional war, clashes, security concerns, trans-border crimes and various crises, it's inevitable to formulate an organization goal based on such turbulance. Chinese harmony reminds of the origin of harmony was to tackle upheavals and severe adversing problems in society. It to a great extent matches the present social context. The search and earnest need for unity and collaboration today, from supply chain to cross-border combating against desertification is no different from what Chinese harmony underwent[62].

[62] Experimental observation from the author's working experience as online English-Chinese simultaneous interpreter for UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) during July 2021-May 2022 and onsite interpreter for other bilateral international events held by TÜSİAD, CCPIT and De.

When connectivity and dependency rise up with globalization and deepening communication all-around, cooperation and coordination are pushing power of all parts' developments. In disaster, crisis and adversity situations, togetherness cross borders becomes the path to common goal of each entity, either as individual, organization, stakeholder or as human being as a whole. However, the scholarly merits of conceptual skills in management have not sufficient accumulation to respond to such urgent and profound need. Chinese harmony in this sense, has the potential to address this need with its rooted, well-developed system and varying approaches.

2.8. Conceptual framework of Chinese harmony

Distinguished work on tackling land degradation and improving life from the Global Economic Forum, organizations as diverse as UNCCD, TÜSİAD, CCPIT, and perspectives such as McKinsey's collective insight report argue that genuine collaboration is both a need and a necessity. However, there is a serious gap in elaboration on where and what the conceptual framework should be based on.

When conceptual frameworok in management face challenges that familiar approaches can not answer, there is need for new exploration, new model. Among the challenges, inclusiveness is one of the key words. With the flatter structure of organizations, empowerment of individuals via digitalization and influence, demands for conceptual skills are rising. With emerging natural, political, economical crises affecting global rings intensifying, demands for collaborative mindsets and actions are rising. With vulnerability of human being as a whole under disasters such as pandemic, dissertification, drought and climate change being recalled clearly once connectivity across borders and communities are interrupted, the inclusive involvement and engagement from all stakeholders have been more focused in various agendas. From awareness to mindset, from theory to practice, there is rising need for new explorations to respond accordingly, cohesively, and systematically.

From inclusiveness to comprehensive engagement, the key might lie in harmony, which is absent but most needed for, and exactly fort his reason, which might be the conceptual tool to integrate theory and practice. From concept to approach and to practice, timely solution and broader engagement of stakeholders in the process, therefore, might be encouraged by harmony awareness enhancing and spreading. In this architectural design of Mission Harmony, conceptual framework from available accumulations can be regarded as insightful. Concretely, improvement on work life and business ecosystem, can also be inspired by harmony approach, and the conceptual framework beneath it.

Here is the suggested conceptual framework extracted in a mixed way from selected representative thoughts.

- Rather than an ideal imagination or goal, harmony is reality in individual, social and universal level both respectively and comprehensively.
- In harmony ecosystem, the Earth, the Mankind, the nature, the universe, is regarded as a Oneness as a whole.
- Harmony is a dynamic and changing process.
- Harmony is a state of agreeable equilibrium in which each component plays a due part.
- Loss of harmony, is usually due to misunderstanding and misconducts from human beings.
- Harmony is productivity, positiveness and prosperity while disharmony is destruction, negativeness and declination.
- There are various proposed approaches to facilitate harmony, but in general, harmony inherently contains holistic standing point as a whole and components of the whole, can be defined also as opposite pairs, bear duality nature of interdependent, complementary, and reversing feature within one another.

- Approaches to facilitate harmony, diversify from one to another, which shows itself an open ended and dynamic territory gathered under the same theme as accomodating as harmony.

A diagram can help visualize features of harmony and disharmony.

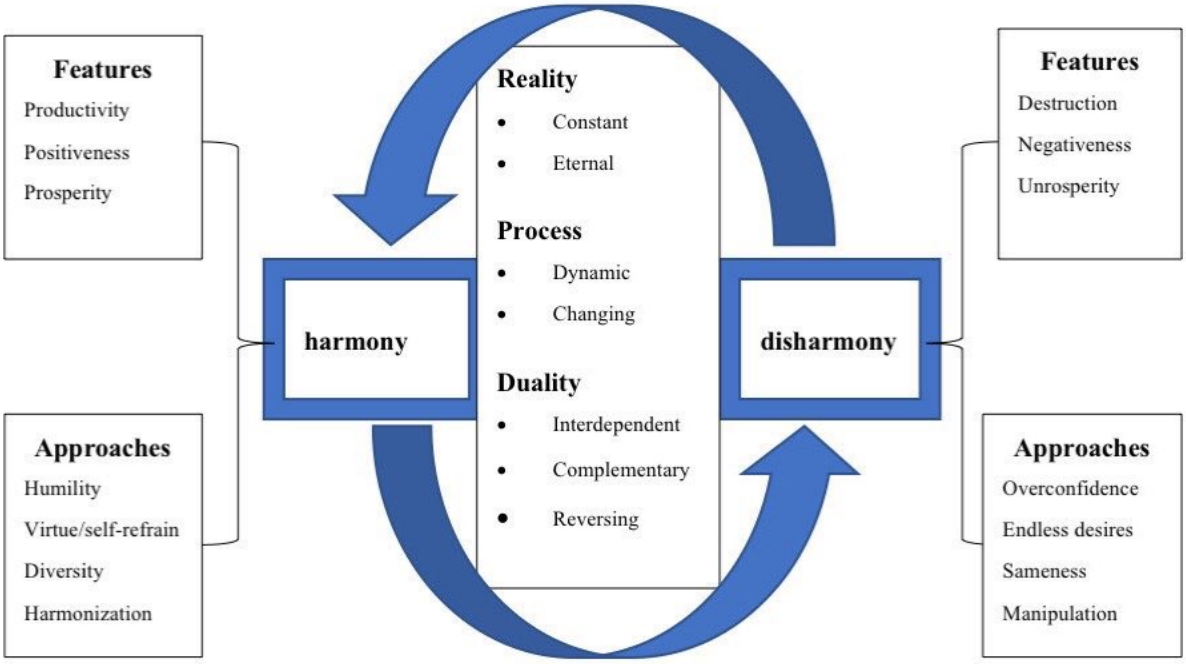


Figure 2.2. theoretical harmony diagram extracted from Chinese harmony, developed by the author

The awareness among elite scholars that collaboration is necessary, might not be pervasive enough to all stakeholders; the sporadic practical advices and approaches might not be persuasive enough for stakeholders who are not likely to embrace idealistic perfection and generous humanism. There are obviously needs for deep reasonings for why collaboration is not ideally necessary but objectively effective in answering challenges for all and benefitting for all. Conceptual competency for collaboration shall be supported by rich cognitive codes to draw clear routes to follow.

By embracing harmony concept, one will be able to acquire a holistic view within one single framework, by integrating harmony approach(es) one will be able to digest and tackle complicated issues with a harmonious competency, which leads to

productivity, positiveness and prosperity. However, harmony is not just a concept, it's a system, dynamic and open territory. It takes great efforts to gain and develop.

Further study on one of the varying approaches of Chinese harmony shall be necessary to dive into its subtle texture to grasp deeper understanding on this promising territory for more conceptual implications.

Chapter 3 Laozi Harmony and its Implications for Conceptual Skills in Management

3.1. Laozi: an introduction

3.1.1. Laozi and his influences

The three major schools of thoughts in China are Daoism/Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. It's believed that the main stream of Chinese philosophy is Daoism, since most of the principal concepts in traditional Chinese philosophy originate from it (Chen, 1999). From ancient time to today, Daoism remains being influential in Chinese culture. Even for today it's a penetrating framework to understand China in terms of daily life, arts, management, strategy, and perspectives of health, agricultural and environmental issues. Daoism actually an important part of the backbone of every aspect of Chinese civilization (Chan, 1963). Daoism is based on Laozi (老子 Lao Ztu) and Zhuangzi thoughts and Laozi, is regarded as the founder of Daoism: this depicts how Laozi is essential for Chinese tradition and for understanding of it.

Dates of Laozi's life are debatable among scholars. Some thought his later yearunknown (Wang, 1999), and had a life-span of more than 160 years (Gu, 1995); some believed he lived 571BC -471 BC (Zhang, 2022). He was head of the imperial library of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770BC-256BC) (Sima, 1980) and had a striking memory so even Confucius went him for advices (Gu, 1995).

His only written record is the book Dao De Jing (DDJ), which is the second most translated text in the world only after the Holy Bible and had over 50 translations available (Co, 2009). DDJ is a highly abstract and deep masterpiece. It's poetic, full of metaphor, paradox and is vague with indefinite manners. For this reason, even though being composed by just 5,250 Chinese characters, translation is a difficult endeavor (Abarca, 2015).

Bearing the mystical nature, the book DDJ captivated interests of different audience over thousands of years. It's believed that Laozi tried to describe the indescribable (Ho, 2002), and tell the truth about the human mind, and about the universal mind. Similarities between thoughts of Laozi and Joseph Conrad could be found on their views on nature of human mind and on how minds shall be sought from inner side of human rather than outside (Ho, 2002).

In social context, his thoughts can be transformed from metaphysical level to social behavioral level, help people understand the real society and adopt a new way of thinking (Chen & Holt, 2002). As for pioneering role in management studies, Laozi was also recognized as one of the fifty key figures in management both for East and West. His thoughts were renowned as root of French economic concept *laisses-faire*, and root of Adam Smith's metaphor for free market the 'invisible hand' (Witzel, 2003). All of the studies are generally based on Laozi's script DDJ, whose interpretations keep varying, evoving and adaptive with time and theme.

3.1.2. Dao Jing 道经, De Jing 德经 and harmony

Dao De Jing is composed by two parts: Dao Jing 道经 and De Jing 德经. Dao is the central theme of the Dao Jing. Dao is 道 in original Chinese version, it can be interpreted as a road, a path, the way it is, the way of nature, the Way of Ultimate Reality, the Rules/Laws of Nature (Lee et al, 2019). Dao does not only mean to the way the nature and universe operates but the original Reality that the universe evolves (Blakney, 1955). De 德 means humanistic behavior/virtues, character, influence, or moral forces (Lee et al, 2019).

Dao and De explains the Truth, the Absolute, the Reality and the Right Path, whereas (Co, 2009):

- The Dao as truth means the absolute, the all-pervading reality.
- The Dao as Nature means the totality of nature and the universal law.

The right path that embodies naturalistic, humanistic and cosmotic orientation, is integrated into one single theme under harmony by mutual complementary and supportive Dao and De.

Dao and De address harmony between man and nature, between man and man, whereas (Lee et al, 2019):

- *"Dao means harmony with nature including all animals, plants, and objects in the natural world".*
- *"De means harmony with other human species".*

The right path is implicable for dimensions all around, from a person may take in life to a society may adopt to formulate social order. For specific pursuit of management, it's meaningful for individual inner peace and balance (Johnson, 2000) and for management models (Messing, 1992). For both professional and personal fulfillment, Dao and De principles, together with its emphasis on harmony and collaboration (Messing, 1992), will make practioners more collaborative, creative and flexible (Lee et al, 2019).

Ken Baskin described *Dao* as *Wu-wei (*conscious non-action*)* harmony to be of the evidences to support his claim that Chinese thoughts can transform management practice (Baskin, 2011):

- The *Dao* is the way by which all the interconnected things and events in the world develop and transform.
- The *Dao* is the world around us and all the forces from which it emerges, interacting to create a natural rhythm and harmony.
- Everything is related to everything else and those relationships work best when they operate according the nature harmony.
- In *Wu-wei* harmony, if one understands that rhythm and cooperates with it, all things are possible; if one interferes, trying to enforce his or her own will, then undesired consequences will likely result.

It's echoed from Baskin's study that (i) the harmony is the key for things to achieve desirable interactions; (ii) Laozi's *Dao,* discloses how all forces create harmony; (iii) there do exist ways to facilitate harmony, and one of them is to cooperate with natural rhythm of things (Xing, 2022).

Delineation on harmony of Laozi requires active cognitive activity. Beside its linguistic vagueness and poetic components, the contents have individualistic and mystical feature, appealing to instinct and conscience to govern one's conduct (He, 2008). Laozi's thoughts are characterized as 'order and harmony at all levels' (Chan, 2018), and here is a representative brief description on harmony of Laozi prioritizing three themes:

(1) Laozi's perception on harmony
(2) How Laozi views harmony as a dynamic process
(3) Laozi approach to facilitate harmony

3.2. Laozi harmony[63]

3.2.1. Overview

Compared with Confucian harmony, Laozi harmony focuses more on individual cognitive self-cultivation and self-integration rather than social order and norms by ethical codes, a standing point more realistic human oriented for conceptual application. The reason that this study prefers Laozi harmony to other approaches are:

(1) Inclusiveness in conceptual skills management needs approach more individually applicable in self-cultivation, while social order and norm is something far beyond individual's hands. At the same time, cognitive route for conceptual exercise is need in daily base.

[63] Part of this section, has been presented by the author in the 4th International Conference on Advanced Research in Management, Business & Finance, Berlin Germany, 11-13 March, 2022. Besides revision and modification based on the presented part, new ideas are improved in this chapter.

(2) In practices of mixed use of Confucian and Daoism thoughts, people follow Confucian thoughts in public life and Daoism thoughts in private life (Chan, 1963).

(3) Its deep spiritual dimension enables one to penetrate physical creation by spiritual forces (Maurer, 1982) and learn how to integrate physical creation and spiritual into a one.

As the major influential two philosophical schools of Chinese traditions, Confucianism and Taoism both intertwine and vary to a great extent. They both agree that state of things is either harmony or disharmony, taking heaven, earth, people, and things as organic parts closely related as one wholeness; human beings are not only to promote harmony within humanity, but to the entire universe. But Confucian views, count on equilibrium and moral cultivation, advocating propriety and respect for social norms as the best way to realize harmony (Wei & Li: 2013). Significant systematical developments are achieved in Confucian views of harmony. But the distinctive social order and norm orientation in Confucian harmony, cannot be found in Laozi harmony. Laozi's thoughts do not take morality as remedy for social order and reminds the opposite:

"When the Great Tao is abandoned,

There are human-heartedness and righteousness;

When knowledge and wisdom arise,

There is great hypocrisy

When the six relations are not in accord,

There are filial piety and paternal affection;

When a country is in disorder,

There are loyal ministers"[64]*. (DDJ, Chapter 18)*

Laozi's arguments imply that virtue/ethical codes and evil come from the same source (Paul, 1977). The advocates of virtual rites in family, society, country arise only

[64] Dao De Jing translation and comments in this study are quoted from Pau, J. L, (1977), A Translation of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary, *Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies* No.30, 6-120.

when they are already abandoned, the more they are advocated, the little they do exist. In fact, the true harmony between father and son, older and younger brother, husband and wife is not something to be promoted by knowledge or virtue, but something natural and self-regulated; promotions are signs of hypocrisy. Craftiness to discern treachery and induces people to see the appearances of things, so when knowledge and wisdom arise, there is great hypocrisy[65] (Paul, 1977).

Contrast to great efforts in Confucian harmony taken in enhancing morality and people's way of conduct in maintaining interpersonal and social relations, Laozi harmony is more naturally oriented holistic in macro sense and more intrinsic in micro level.

Laozi harmony explicitly illustrates how things are corelated with mutual interdependent and adaptive nature. Therefore, they inherently know how to fit each other in harmony without extra external efforts. Just like Chinese legend tells how fishes in rivers and lakes do not know each other, but when the waters dry up, they have to join together and live by breathing each other's spit (Paul, 1977). So, allowing things to be what they are is the way to allow harmony to take place. Laozi harmony contains insights that all individuals can apply regardless of their place in society. When left alone, people obey natural laws and society as a whole can benefit. But if people who govern don't recognize the interrelationship of objects and event, new problems created despite their intent to solve (Johnson,1997). 'The cost of following the Tao/Dao is high' (Johnson, 2000), a deep understanding and adaptive use requires intensive cognitive efforts.

Laozi's only written script *Dao De Jing*, is composed of 81 chapters in total. It is the second most translated text after Holy Bible (Garrett, 1993), and has been roughly translated as *Book of the Way*, interpreted and reinterpreted throughout ages across cultures. Delineations on his thoughts are all based on these translated, retranslated

[65] Pau, J. L, (1977), A Translation of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary, *Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies* No.30, 32-33

and commented texts. Laozi scholars argue Laozi holds harmony as his core concept, and his major notion is intensively addressed with harmony.

- *Dao*, is harmony with the external/natural world or the universe;
- *De*, is harmony with other human beings. (Lee et al, 2014)

It's seen in *Dao De Jing (DDJ) / Book of the Way* that harmony was illustrated explicitly 7 times in an internally systematic consistency (Xing, 2022):

Original quotation[66]	**Chapter No. in *Dao De Jing (The Way)***	**English translation**	**Explanation and implication**[67]
音声相**和**，前后相随。	2	*"sound and voice harmonize with each other, front and back follow each other".*	Existence of harmony is regarded as reality. Musical harmony is metaphorical example of natural, social and universal harmony.
六亲不**和**有孝慈。	18	*"When the six relations are not in accord,* *There are filial piety and paternal affection".*	Social harmony is implied through family harmony; appearance of emphases on virtues is due to lack of virtue in dominant positions; disharmony comes together with lack of virtues from the top.
万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为**和**。	42	*"All things carry the female and embrace the male.* *And by breathing together, they live in harmony".*	Universal harmony is holistic approach for everything; harmony is everywhere by form of duality *yin* and *yang*.
终日呼而不嗄，**和**之至也。	55	*"Howling and screaming all day without getting hoarse;* *This is the zenith of harmony".*	Being void of ambitions and desires, an infant does not lose any energy even after screaming a whole day. Being free of unnecessary desires, and with pureness, there is humanistic and spiritual harmony, which enables everlasting energy; individual, natural, social perspectives in harmony, where heart and soul management play a role.

[66] The Chinese resource is from the book Lazozi-Zhuangzi 老子·庄子, Huawen Publishing House, 2009 edition

[67] This part is illuminated by the author

知**和**曰常，知常曰明。	55	*"To know harmony means to be constant;* *To know constancy means enlightenment."*	Harmony awareness is constant wisdom, the access to such wisdom is to follow the natural eternal rules rather than to overestimate human ability, self-ability.
和其光，同其尘。	56	*"Blend with light.* *Become one with the dust".*	The sage is concerned with all lives, integrated plainly with light and dust, void of egoism, superiority, disputes, trouble, thus only left with harmony. It tells cognitive harmony; self-management, integration with surroundings and things, and is a holistic approach for disputes, competitions, conflicts, differences and changes.
和大怨，必有余怨。	79	*"The settlement of great grudge always leaves some residue grudge"!*	It analyzed social harmony between governing and governed; if being governed are obliged to feel too much resentment, even if it's settled somewhat, the conflicts remain and will be far away from harmony, thus correspondent disasters come close. The governing side shall be humanistic and virtuous. Once disharmony cultivated, undesirable consequences are inevitable. Consequently speaking, harmony seeds shall be planted at root, disharmony shall be avoided from the origin.

Figure 3.1. *Laozi*'s illustrations on harmony, designed and developed by the author

As elaborated in the table above, harmony was explained in musical, individual, social, cognitive and universal levels by *Laozi*, knitting scattered ideas on different aspects into one single cohesive and depictive framework. His harmony approach is established with its highlights.

3.2.2. Laozi's perception on harmony

3.2.2.1. Harmony as a state

"Man abides by earth,

Earth abides by heaven,

Heaven abides by Tao,

Tao/Dao abides by nature". (DDJ, Chapter 25)

As one part of the universe, human beings are not superior to others in nature and universe. Harmony is a state that does exist, despite of being perceived or not. Harmony has its eternal feature by nature, it can be an ideal goal or ultimate pursuit and can be achieved by efforts. Just as how all things prosper without human being, the harmony in nature and universe is the essence and the basis for the lives of all things in the universe. The universe is originally in perfect harmony if human does not intentionally break the inherent harmony (Xu, 2005).

"To know harmony means to be constant;

To know constancy means enlightenment". (DDJ, Chapter 55)

The thing regards harmony as its constancy. Therefore, to know harmony is to be constant (Pau,1977). According to *Laozi*, harmony awareness is essential in insights construction, the backbone of knowledge, observation, and wisdom; absence of this awareness may result in undesirable consequences. Existing harmony can be found in everything, in arts, nature, human body, society and universe. Forces are either in state of harmony or disharmony. Prosperity and productivity result from harmony; disorder, disputes, disasters from disharmony. Just as absolute as how harmony is the state of eternity, as definite does be that its absence leads to disharmony and problems, harms. As an absolute dynamic cycle, though invisible and elusive in physical sense, harmony can be cognitively perceived by minds with tranquility and openness (DDJ, Chapter 2-8-16-18-42-55-56-79).

"Empty your mind of all thoughts,

Maintain the deepest harmony.

Become a part of All Things,

In this way, I perceive the cycles.

Indeed, things are numerous;

But each cycle merges with the source.

Merging with the source is called harmonizing;

This is known as the cycle of destiny.

The cycle of destiny is called the Absolute;

Knowing the Absolute is called insight.

To not know the Absolute

Is to recklessly become a part of misfortune". (DDJ, Chapter 16)[68]

3.2.2.2. Harmony as a dynamic process

Harmony was described by Laozi as a cycle of destiny or change (Lee el al, 2008). In endless cycle of change, harmony is embodied in duality, via *yin* and *yang*, the complementary opposites (Garrett,1993). The opposite two sides of things, lightness and darkness, prosperity and calamity, life, and death, are complementary to each other, changing, reversing, to the other end all the time, form circular movement. The universe operates as it should when these forces are in equilibrium (Johnson, 2000). The intertwining of *yin* and *yang*, tells duality state of things in totality, during constant changes reflected in harmony under due balance and disharmony under imbalance.

Circle of *yin* and *yang* keeps repeating itself and it tells eternal law of changes. As shown in nature as crops repeats circle from planting to harvest and in society dynasty replaces one another in Chinese history witnessing circle of chaos and prosperity each dynasty. This is the way circle tells clearly what could and what could not be effectively done at each point in the circle (Baskin, 2011).

[68] Wing's translation (Wing, 1986)

Point of balance and equilibrium, the desirable harmony, requires a due portion of each part, each segment. Everything, from music, to human relations, from society to nature, harmony in each level interplay and compose the total harmony. Vice versa, each segment's disharmony accumulated till certain point where the thing transforms to disharmony. It is the insatiable greed or desire for more possession that leads to the exploitation of man by man, discrimination, suffering and inevitably, a vicious circle in social and moral orders (Wang,1998)

Disharmony in people themselves, result in the split of body and spirit, imbalance of *yin* and *yang*, thus harming the mind and body, forming various diseases; disharmony between man and nature has led to land desertification, environmental pollutions; disharmony between people, between man and society, between states, religions has led to tensions and bloodshed (Zhang, 2013) Disharmony interrupts things natural flow, terminates their ongoing development and possible sustainability, becomes the barrier for things to be themselves or grow.

When the state turns into disharmony, the things, people, society, and universe itself, adjusts it spontaneously for sake of balance and harmony, with its own will and pace:

"Perhaps the Tao of heaven resembles the drawing of a bow.

When it is high, lower it.

When low, raise it.

When excessive, diminish it.

When deficient, replenish it." (DDJ, Chapter 77)

3.2.2.3. Harmony awareness for human beings

Human beings might not be inherently gifted with harmony awareness nor harmony competency. Can they be equipped with harmony awareness and competency only when enough preparations done. Human beings are usually very likely to be induced, hunted, distorted, infected by extravagant desires, secular/societal norms, values, and are tending

to be ignorant, void of *Dao*; well likely will they be deviated from harmony consciousness and competency:

"The five colors blind man's eyes.

The five notes deafen his ears.

The five tastes spoil his palate.

The chase and the hunt make his heart go mad.

The rare treasures constrain his actions". (DDJ, Chapter 12)

People value so much about external norms and profits that sometimes even more than their own self (Lao & Zhuang, 2009).

"Favor and disgrace are likely to cause fear.

Highly respect great trouble as one respects his own body". (DDJ, Chapter 13)

"The Tao (Dao) of heaven diminishes the excessive and replenishes the deficient.

The Tao (Dao) of man is not so—while decreasing the deficient, it supplies the excessive". (DDJ, Chapter 77)

As much as rewarding harmony awareness and ability could be, due efforts should be matching that much at their place. Harmony existent in nature and universe can be accessed by man of those self-integrated with the nature and laws of the nature; but such an architecture of harmonious world is not spontaneously revitalized by man. Man is likely to act without due awareness. According to *Laozi*, it is the unnecessary, improper interference of man, that distorts and interrupts the inherent harmony of things; if man let everything be what it can be or become without imposing, dominating, or taking any blind action, then *Dao* are to function as heart of the world and to benefit all thing (Wang,1998). So, if man behaves properly by following the laws of the nature, the things, and the universe, allowing things and people be what

they are, does harmony naturally be at its places and function, do prosperity, productivity and positiveness achieved as expected.

Laozi believes that man can catch up cognitive wisdom with self-reflective efforts (DDJ, Chapter 47), so he presented systematic approach to cultivate and facilitate harmony, with its self-cognitive characteristics in general.

3.3. *Laozi* harmony approach

3.3.1. Self-cultivation

One shall manage self before others (Drucker, 1999). To manage self well, *Laozi* harmony prioritizes self-cultivation with his perception with harmony by mind-heart serenity, attitude of austerity and life-long pursuit of perfection. While simplicity and austerity remain being the essential backbone of the system, conducts and behaviors reflect consistent thoughts.

"To know others is to be clever.

To know oneself is to have discernment.

To overcome others takes force.

To overcome oneself takes strength". (DDJ, Chapter 33)

Laozi believed that if human discards extravagant desires, and returns to the purest state of infancy, can there be integration and accord with the universe, harmony naturally be at its place and real power of life arises. (DDJ, Chapter 20-28-37-45-46)

"No crime is greater than having desires.

No calamity is greater than not knowing contentment.

No fault is greater than longing for gain". (DDJ, Chapter 46)

"Lustily the people seem to be enjoying a feast

Or ascending a tower in the springtime.

I alone am unmoved, showing no sentiment,

Like a baby who does not yet know how to smile". (DDJ, Chapter 20)

"If transformation raises desires,

I would suppress them with nameless simplicity.

Nameless simplicity means being without desires.

Being without desires and with tranquility,

The world will keep peace by itself". (DDJ, Chapter 37)

"Calmness and serenity

become the rectitude of the world". (DDJ, Chapter 45)

"One will not digress from constant virtue,

And will return to being a baby". (DDJ, Chapter 28)

These thoughts are meaningful for reality when resources face scarcity, distributions are not equal, little, and extreme consumptions coexist, gap and imbalance enlarge. In individual level, cognitive reasoning is necessary; in social level, balance and order are challenged; in natural world of ecosystem, biodiversity, resource balance and environment are in danger; in universal level, human being has to readjust and reevaluate its future for survival.

In Laozi harmony approach, the first step is to enable a mind with tranquility and openness, a heart with serenity, followed by an attitude with simplicity, a life-long pursuit for self-perfection and self-integration with everything external. A meditation in mind and heart, the calmness (静)，humbleness(虚) and pureness (明) (DDJ, Chapter 16) paves the path to harmony, during which a disposition towards self-reflection, self-investigation, and self-development in pursuit of harmony between body and mind will facilitate to obtain happiness and blessing (Dychtwald, 1992).

Quietness in mind avails true observation and builds up a sustainable attitude. It's to embrace austerity, simplicity, plainness and integrate into lifestyle (DDJ, Chapter 19). It's to explore discover a unique self by pursuing self-perfection. This constant internal self-perfection meets with outside world in the end. There is harmony with the world externally (Tang & Li, 2019).

In a holistic view, human beings are only part of the natural world and universe. Humans are not the center of the universe, nor can they conquer most others (Fung, 1948; Johnson, 1985), people should follow laws of nature and in harmony with nature and universe (Lee et al., 2009)

According to Laozi 'virtue resides in these three, namely constancy, returning, and staying behind' (Pau, 1977) Here 'returning' means to constantly try to be back to the original 'infancy' and pureness, carry out constant self-cultivation, get rid of the 'extreme, luxury and excessive attitude', lifestyle and value to regain authenticity. The existence of other forces including other people in society, "one should always consider for others and put interest of common people at the first place" (Ma, 2009) and other creatures in nature on behalf of human beings.

Daoist idea of social harmony is derived from pristine integrity of human practice that is highly cultivated, a virtuosity without external form (Maliavin, 2008). Yet people's quality can help define society of or not of harmony. In Laozi's view, harmonious society is composed of people with simplicity, austerity, virtue, sincerity rather than of people with complexity, luxury pursuit, egoism, hypocrisy. Disharmony of society are caused by extreme emphases on scarcity, fame, and wealth (Xing, 2022). Unfortunately, in a highly developed modern society today we live in, materialism: the importance placed on material possessions and wealth accumulation (Hudders & Pandelaere, 2012), is increasingly influencing people's way of living, and consumptions are extraordinary being encouraged. "Luxury", "brand", are promoted as something to be adored.

"The Sage desires no desires, values not the rare treasures"; "even small wishes and desires give rise to the conflicts" (Pau, 1977). Excessive pursuit of fame and gain implies more cost; excessive accumulation of wealth causes more disastrous damage (Ma, 2009). Being content with what one has and exert self-refraining from overdue greedy desires is advocated in Laozi harmony, because imbalanced gravity laid by over emphases on desires, tend to lead to destructive consequences. Excessive lust and existence of the fame, wealth destroys social harmony and threats the well-beings belonging to all.

"The contentment of knowing contentment is always contentment". (DDJ, Chapter 46)

"Begetting without possessing;

Acting without asserting;

Developing without controlling;

This is called mystical virtue". (DDJ, Chapter 51)

3.3.2. Self-localization

In interpersonal, social and universal level, in a complicated web of reality and Things, on might be frustrated on how to locate itself from where it could sustain and adapt. To obtain harmonious interpersonal, social and universal relations, one shall start from a proper self-localization and then to interact following the laws of the nature. It is acknowledging due positions of others that clarifies the proper position for one. Based on *Laozi*'s thoughts, such appropriate self localization is constructed by ignorance awareness, self-identification and conscious *wu wei (无为)*(Xing, 2022).

3.3.2.1. Ignorance awareness

Based on Laozi's illustrations, ignorance awareness has various dimensions:

- Humbleness, humility attitude is necessary for true learning. Emptying mind that is fully occupied by things, is the start of absorbing in knowledge. Just as the metaphor says: only an empty bowl can be filled in with stuff. The function of usefulness comes

from its emptiness. In order to take in and refresh, our minds shall be cleaned not only from emotional dusts but also from cognition, mode of thinking and conceptual perception.

- A heart void of contention or desires like an infant. Laozi explains a couple of time in DDJ that state of original infancy and pureness, is the true state being full of energy and vigor to self sufficient. For this reason, one heart with pureness is able to maitanin an abundance of virtue, and never offends anything. Consequently 'poisonous insects never sting him, therefore nothing will interfere with his perfection' (Pau, 1977). It is the internal virtuous power that makes one exempt from being targets of evils and harms. Such virtues, embrace serenity, austerity and simplicity and refuse extraordinary power and wealth. Instead of an uneasy, obsessed mind, it's the observation of a pure mind that opens door to true wisdom.
- Analytical view on prevailing 'knowledge' and ideas. According to Laozi, apparent wisdom might not be true. When there are agreed ideas on Things, there should be another perspective opposite to it. Just as when strong and hard forces are chased for, there are soft forces that are hidden behind appearances. So prevailing ideas are not necessarily 'true' in reality. The commonly recognized 'favorable' positions such as being large, strong, metaphorically powerful and the alike, are challenged by Laozi's arguments that those recognized being at 'unfavorable' poistions such as being small, weak are not necessarily powerless. It establishes the basis for 'soft power'.
- Constant self-reflective, self-criticizing mind-set. It's a highly intuitive activity to adopt Dao both in general and in daily base.

"In life, man is supple and tender.

In death, he becomes rigid and stark.

Myriad things such as grass and trees

are supple and frail in life,

And shrivelled and dry in death.

…

..the army that uses strength cannot win.

The tree that stands firm will break.

The strong and large are subordinate;

The soft and weak are superior." (DDJ, Chapter 76)

Self-ignorance awareness means to admit blind dots, weakness, limits that oneself has, more importantly, in a constant, adaptive and reflexive sense. It's not once for all, not once at a time but any time in any situation. It's meaningful for adopting life-long learning attitude, and for understanding duality of power and life circle. It's an adaptive practice for 'change of change' claim of Laozi, defining the nature of temporary of things. It implies abandoning of unrealistic pursuit for a certain position all the time, including 'favorable' and 'unfavorable' positions. Thus, it means constant adaptivity and flexibility.

Self-ignorance awareness avails open-mindedness to see variety, difference and diversity. modesty

3.3.2.2. Self-identification

"To be built well is not to be toppled.

To be held fast is not to slip.'

With this, children and grandchildren will never stop

offering sacrifice to their ancestors". (DDJ, Chapter 54)

One shall firm the foundation before building the top, and never covet too much; just match one's capacity, so it will not slip away. With this to cultivate oneself, the family, the community, the nation, the world (Pau, 1977) then it's the proper self-localization.

Overconfidence, ego, desire to control everything are not proper self-identification. Overconfidence is cause of improper self-assessment and wrong self-identification. If

infrastructure does not match a building's weight, it collapses. Overconfident on self capacity is devastating according to *Laozi*, the misconducts of over estimating self capacity, power, longevity, dominance or life circle, will cause or speed up its fall; both large/strong and small/weak sides shall stay low, adopt low profile to be accomodative and integrative instead of being arrogant, aggressive or irrationally confident (Xing, 2022).

The point is to think and behave, not on behalf of all including others, but to think and behave as one of the all, as beneath and for the all rather than as if being at the top of the all. By doing so, all will naturally united as One.

"To benefit one's own life is ill-fated.

To let one's heart direct vigor is to become stark.

Things in their prime will become old". (DDJ, Chapter 55)

"A large state is like the low land;

It is the focus point of the world

…

…the large state puts itself beneath the small state,

And thereby absorbs the small state.

The small state puts itself under the large state,

And thereby joins with the large state.

Therefore, one either puts himself beneath to absorb others,

Or puts himself under to join with others". (DDJ, Chapter 61)

Based on proper self-identification, what to do and what not to do are defined accordingly. In order to remind man of not conducting undue interference, not 'doing' more than necessary so as to release productivity, consciously conducting *wu wei (non-action/non-interference)* is advised in Laozi's teachings.

3.3.2.3. Conscious *wu wei (non-action, non-interference)*

Laozi, reminds man to be aware of the perfect and eternal harmony without man power. It operates in that way that has nothing to do with human's will. But there is certain law that it follows. When there is an overabundance of *yin* and *yang,* the *Dao* (laws of the nature/things) has a tendency to balance itself, maintaining the process of continuous opposition and mutual transformation (Wang,1998).

"*(The Sage) Reverses the faults of the people,*

And assists all things in their natural development,

Never daring to interfere". (DDJ, Chapter 64)

The inherent power of harmony concept by Laozi, reminds man not to be overconfident to interfere improperly or undue so as to cost more. Laozi suggests conscious *wu wei*, 'non-action' 'non-interference', to following the natural flow of events (like a surfer moving in harmony with a wave). Politically (for management in a general sense), it means minimalistic approach to govern and to educate people instead (Arp,2013), 'non-interference' does not mean no-action or passive management but good self-exampling and proper management, so it is deliberately active and conscious (Xing, 2022).

"In governing the people and serving heaven,

There is nothing like thriftiness.

…

Having accumulated virtue, one can overcome everything.

Having overcome everything, one can know no limits". (DDJ, Chapter 59)

"When the government is sluggish and dull,

The people are honest and content;

When the government is discriminating and exacting,

The people are wily and restless." (DDJ, Chapter 58)

Abiding by the inherent and natural functions, all things will achieve their own fulfillment (Pau,1977). *Wu wei* (non-interference) management has been echoed in modern management studies that express how improper managements are worse than non-management. Improper management and authority tyranny are inefficient and costly, making the internal weight overloaded and expensive, decision making uncontestable, responses slow and encouraging authorities that may kill creativity and demotivate lower-level employees (Hamel, 2011)

Price of unreasonable ambitions is costly. Dominance that does not match its virtues[69], pursuit of dominance does not match its competency, greedy minds that do not match what they deserve, all will interrupt natural harmony flow, cause disharmony, lead to disasters. Motivations originated from selfishness and egoism, are not capable of formulating harmony, but disharmony instead; accumulative resentment caused by such egoism and manipulative dominance pursuit are roots of undesirable results and unsettling conflicts, charging more costs of the society as a whole (Xing, 2022).

No matter it's in universe, society or community, each segment of the wholeness plays a role in the process of forming ultimate harmony or disharmony. A harmonious state results from the due portion of each element. A conscious participation in this dynamic process, invites proper self localization that can be achieved by ignorance awareness, proper self identification. Conscious *wu wei* helps one to define and install itslef in its proper position to allow forces to produce. It is also meaningful for moments of being beseiged by adversities and complicated conditions from nature, organization, society and universe. Doing, sometimes is worse than not doing. Conscious *wu wei*, can also be a kind of doing as part of harmonization.

[69] 德不配位：a Chinese idom, when virtue does not match one's power, there must be a disaster.

3.3.3. Self-integration

In a holistic framework of harmony, Laozi reasons and advocates human be in harmony with nature and in harmony with each other; related Daoist writings contain metaphysical principle that embraces a vast Oneness that generates diverse forms of the world. *Dao* refers the way of whole world operates, Reality from which universe has evolved. *De* means humanistic behavior, influence or moral force (Lee et al, 2008).

In process of dynamic, uninterrupted changes, *Dao* calls for following laws of nature, laws of things, of general trends. It is a path to harmony by absolute integration with the things and changes. Metaphoric use of light and dust are used to conceal and define the methods for integration.

"Dull the sharpness.

Loosen the tangles.

Blend with light.

Become one with the dust". (DDJ, Chapter 4, Chapter 56)

If light shines, it pervades everywhere; dust is light in weight and falls everywhere. They both represent ordinary and simple yet fundamental, enduring and overwhelmingly powerful existence. It tells the general applicability and absoluteness in integration for harmony. From going toward harmony to being in harmony, integration carries it through. Laozi further explained how to achieve integration by metaphorical uses of water and nature-man Oneness(天人合一).

3.3.3.1. Water-like

"The man of supreme goodness resembles water.

Water benefits all things

Without competing with them,

Staying in places that men despise;

Therefore, it's very close to Dao.

…

Just because he does not compete,

The man of supreme goodness frees himself of blame". (DDJ, Chapter 8)

Interactions are inevitable in coexistence with other forces. Confusion, uncertainty, conflicts are among the endless challenges one might face. The pursuit for harmony with self-integration sheds light on stepping out of complexities.

Water has the characteristics of being (1) altruism, (2) modesty/humility, (3) flexibility, (4) transparency and honesty, (5) gentleness with perseverance (Lee et al., 2008). Water-like metaphor provides a vivid sketch on how to personalize and conduct integration. Such an integration is of adaptability in any shape, any position, including unfavorable situation. It discloses strikingly the way to be sustainable: not to intentionally compete; to focus on constant self-cultivation and self-perfection; to willingly benefit others, to be devoted to producing rather than possessing, to harmonizing rather than controlling or dominating. Water flows naturally. Allowing things to thrive, supplying needed resources, humbly and willingly being at any position any shape, is water-like harmony competency. In this way, all forces function properly in a natural way. Just as how spontaneously integration and harmony come true.

"to perfect itself…; accomplishment cannot be claimed. The mother resides in constancy."

"the Sage administers without action, and instructs without words. He lets all things rise without dominating them, produces without attempting to possess, acts without asserting, achieves without taking credit. And because he does not take credit, it will never leave him." (DDJ, Chapter 2)

Water metaphor contains other implication on not to have sharp edges, to avoid sharpness. It's meaningful for conflict solution. It suggests that to eliminate the source of dispute, conflict, is to avoid aggressive, assertive acts and to behave impartially with modesty (Xing, 2022).

"It dulls sharpness,

and sorts tangles". (DDJ, Chapter 4, Chapter)

"Hammer and sharpen [an edge];

It cannot last long.

..

He who is rich, honored, and arrogant brings blame upon himself.

He who withdraws after achieving success and performing duty adheres to the Tao of heaven". (DDJ, Chapter 9)

"Hence one can be neither close to it, nor far from it;

One can neither benefit it, nor harm it

One can neither value it, nor despise it

Therefore, it is valued by the world". (DDJ, Chapter 56)

Water-like means to tolerate, to be soft and tender rather than to confront the tough with toughness. Conflicts melt away in water-like broadness and immenseness. Things that sustain are not necessarily those with harshness, hardness and overt features. Softness with endurance and perseverance are encouraged. Interaction in water-like is being adaptively integrating, with humility. It's exactly because of mindfulness of others, water-like integration brings about harmony with other people and harmony with external world.

Water-like metaphor presents another alternative for not being passively involved into competition, nor sticking to blind worship on power of competition. It implies an accommodating and yielding method that does not cultivate competition enthusiasm but does foster sustainable differentiation and segmentation.

3.3.3.2. Holistic Oneness

Holistic harmony and Oneness, namely the nature-man Oneness can be discovered in four dimensions (Wang, 1998):

i. In spiritual sense, man's destination in universe, self-identification with nature and pursuit of spontaneity and freedom from social ambitions
ii. In aesthetic sense, insiring interaction between limited stream of personal life and unlimited flow of universal change, which usually take place in one's emotional world or at the time when one contemplates external objects.
iii. In social sense, individuals adapt to the community as a group, improvement of teamwork in entire society, which is equivalent to 'unity' and 'harmony' in human relations.
iv. In environmental sense, man is directed to reconsider his place in Nature, thereby consolidating consciousness of environmental protection, and in turn ameliorates the quality of life in general.

Oneness in spiritual, aesthetic, social, environmental dimensions, composes a system of holistic harmony. It echoes the origin of harmony thoughts on Heaven, Earth, Humankind unity. Such a comprehensive and cohesive ground of Laozi harmony has a solid foundation for a relatively complete and inclusive conceptual experience.

Laozi harmony builds up on fostering 'self' rather than on changing others. It's a cohesive system for cognitive route, by human orientation and for human orientation. A well-constructed internal architecture of peaceful and mindful harmony approach is a solid shield for combating external disturbance and chaos. No matter the subject is individual or community, the construction process of harmony, involves devotion in all levels. But the order starts from self-management at mind, soul, attitude, awareness, and behavior. Inner enlightened souls, reflect externally as behaviors contributing to harmony.

Laozi harmony presents an intrinsic journey for understanding things, human and their interactions. It tells how harmony exists as reality, its compositions, challenges, process, and the route to achieve, helps to develop mindsets that are promisingly

contributive for a more harmonious world (Xing, 2022). It helps people to be more collaborative, creative, and flexible, while experiencing a sense of inner peace or balance (Johnson, 2000)

Laozi harmony, is a coherently cohesive and comprehensive system and approach. Based on the elaborations above, Laozi harmony approach can be visualized in a diagram as follows.

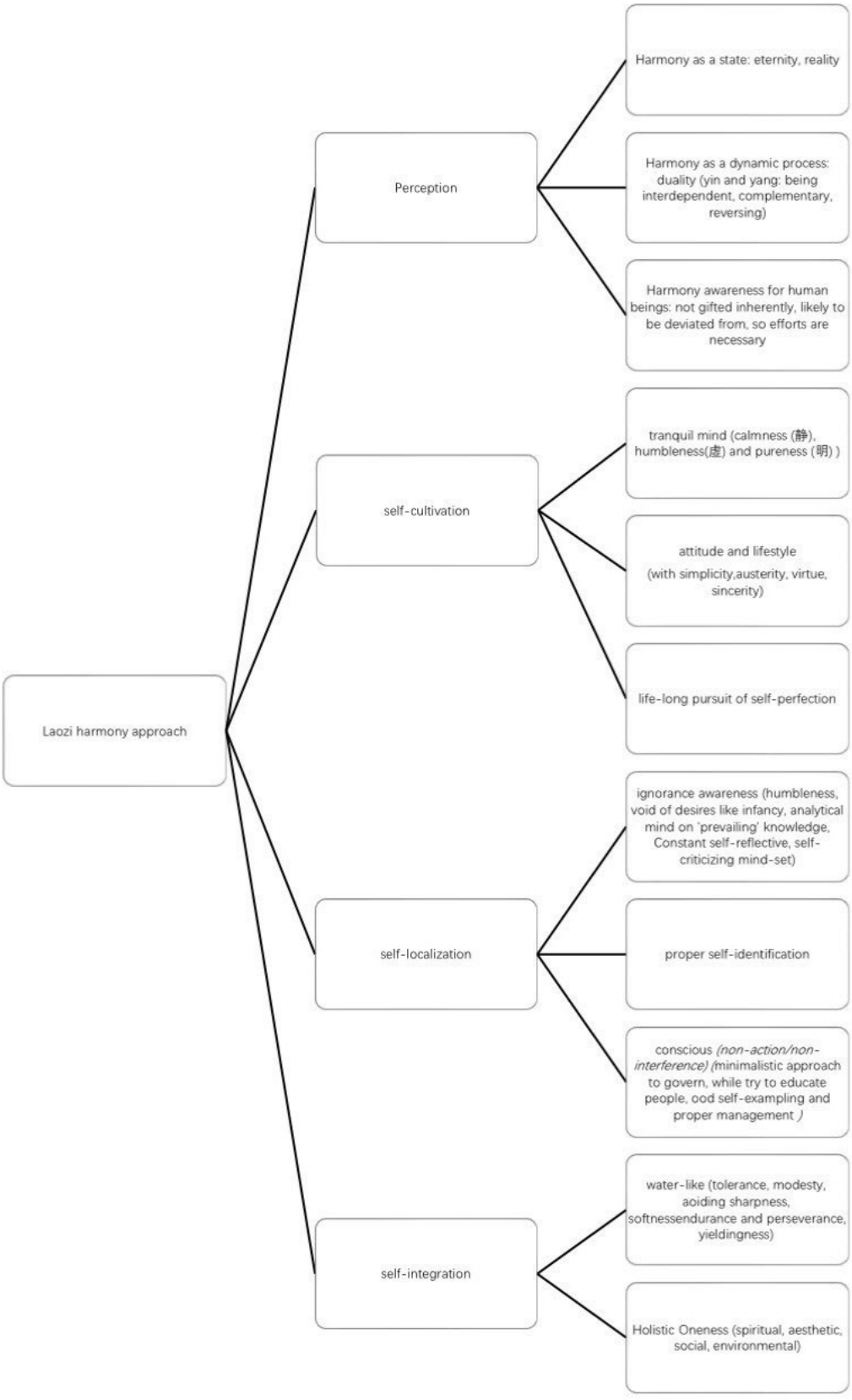


Figure 3.2. Laozi harmony approach, designed and developed by the author

Accommodating as is Laozi harmony approach, might it be capable of relative deeper and more comprehensive understanding on conceptual tasks, in one framework. Applying Laozi harmony can be practical for everyone, for community and for human beings as a whole. The interrelated and cohesive harmony approach of self-cultivation, self-localization, self-integration is meaningful for answering various cognitive concerns and curiosities. It bridges awareness and behavior.

3.4. Implications for conceptual skills in management

3.4.1. Laozi harmony and wholeness view

To achieve effective management, decision makers in various levels shall have a wholeness view, seeing through the relationships among the whole and its parts (Katz, 1955; Bernad,1968; Daft, 2012). Laozi harmony presents wholeness view in a system of holistic oneness with conceptual subtleness.

- Every existence is part of the whole, and each part plays a role in the process towards either harmony or disharmony. The process is dynamic and generative while the result is shared by each part.
- Each part interact and has effect on one another, all parts are meaningful each other since they are interdependent, complementary, reversing and counting on one another to grow or destroy: depending on total outcome of their interaction.
- Each state of the each part and the total as a whole, is changing. If desired result is aimed for, harmony shall be at its place, vice versa. Therefore, each part has a due portion to be counted in the wholeness calculation and assessment, before, during an after the process and interaction.
- Holistic Oneness has various dimensions, therefore, each level and each dimension shall be taken into consideration when formulating organization goal and foreseeing the future. Methods including self-

localization, identification and integration shall be align with the holistic oneness.

Laozi harmony with its holistic Oneness, explains how each part operates and plays a role as one part of the whole, during the dynamic change and defining ultimate outcome. It takes each part into account without neglecting nor prioritizing. It reminds of the possible undesireable results led to by over-estimation and over-confidence, which ignores possible contributions of other forces to oneself. Self-integration is the path to harmony and harmonization, while the act is to be within Oneness, instead of being above others. During the dynamic process, any state is temporary, dominance or being dwelled in unfavorable state does not last either, never last either. Interdepency and mutual effects between the parts function at states of harmony and disharmony. Based on these claims, it's reasonable to say that when being found in harmony, parts enjoy shared productivity and prosperity; when in adversity and crisis, attempts to eliminate the others, are doomed to (i) fastening itself to the opposite end (ii) when itself be in lowest point, since other forces with difference and variety eliminated, there would be no solutions since others have been eliminated.

Besides allowing to see the relationship between various elements of the system, the conceptual skills shall be forward-thinking to embrace the whole space of management issues as well (Zukowski & Gudowski, 2014). Laozi harmony combines time and space when it advocates things to be more in accord with natural flow than undue interference, harmonization rather than control, empowerment rather than overconfident egoism. In general, it allows full play of all parts in a horizontal way rather than a solo play in a vertical way. By achieving and maintaining harmony, Laozi harmony actualizes preventing or putting off disharmony. It involves future planning and foreseeing. In this sense, it actually presents a future oriented management thinking as to harmonize beyond that of to manage the moment.

3.4.2. Laozi harmony and long-term view

Laozi harmony explains process of evolving and developing by its nature of endless circle with duality. While inherently being of long-term perspective, it defines uncertainty with certainty, clarifies elusiveness with routes. The circle is with *yin* and *yang* duality, their opposite ends are interdependent, complementary and reversing; such dynamic certainty within uncertainty, take failure, loss, weakness, darkness into the wholeness as part of the natural flow. With this perspective, decision making is naturally long-term based, even potentially of foreseeing following state.

In this way, borders between assumed enemies, conflicts and hostilities are blurring. Patience and tolerance are cultivated. Harmony orientation replaces hostility orientation. Collaboration is preferable than competition. The awareness of clarifying which point of the circle involves self-localization and self-identification supported by ignorance awareness and acknowledging other forces. The well composed wholeness awareness is the start of long-term planning. The state that one as individual, organization, community finds itself be in, is not coincidence but an outcome of life circle evolution and interactions. The circle with duality functions at all-around with full play, across time and space.

> *"The substance of the cyclic and dynamic universe, Dao seems empty but full, static but dynamic; it contains spiritual and materialistic attributes, time and space; and it produces and regulates activities of all things"* (Chang, 1977)

Since this circle keeps dynamically moving, each state of one certain point, is temporary. The ultimate result is shared.

> *"a whirlwind does not last all morning,*
> *And a sudden shower does not last all day.*
> *Who causes this?*
> *Heaven and earth.*
> *If even Heaven and earth cannot last long,*
> *What can man do?". (DDJ, Chapter 23)*

For these reason, efforts are for sustainability only. It would be unrealistic to be the sole occupant of dominance, of overwhelmingly success, or of absolute favorable position in a lasting way. Long-term planning and long-term strategy, in this regard, shall be designed after discerning the proper point of the location in the circle.

A long-term attitude, inspired by *Laozi* harmony, can be captured by a pureness in mind, mindfulness in cognition. But they shall be facilitated by self-perfection pursuit to embrace austerity, simplicity, tolerance and adaptivity, in a life-long time span.

3.4.3. Laozi harmony and complex problems

Conceptual skills in management requires ability to identify, evaluate, and solve complex problems (Mumford & Campion, 2007). Conflicts, scarcity, imbalance, gap, change, competition, turbulence and the more to come, they all remain being challenging thematic issues for management.

(1) On conflicts

Laozi harmony accepts conflicts as natural part of the dynamic process of movements. Adopting the harmony thoughts is not to deny the contradictions between people, between people and society, between people and nature, but to always adhere to the cognition that the state of thinking should be the resolution and harmony of contradictions, to achieve the order of the system and the harmony and unity of the whole (Zhang, 2013). The sides holding conflicting ideas, stands, expectations, behaviors, and traditions are invited to see through the deeper interdependency, and mutual transformative power of the opposites.

It's noticeable that Laozi harmony, does not discuss the nature of human being is good or bad. It takes man as what they are, accepting both bright and dark sides of human as existed, a more realistic and holistic standing point. Among changeable conflicts, it raises an adaptive attitude like water, rather than being involved into the chaos and disputes, it suggests a real time reshaping, redefining without certain patterns. All forms of being 'water like', methods

including to avoid conflicts, to harmonize conflicts, to withdraw from conflicts can be extracted from its connotations.

(2) On balancing private interests and the common good (Zukowski & Gudowski, 2014)

"To yield is to have the whole,

To be crooked is to be straightened.

To be hollow is to be filled.

To be worn out is to be renewed.

To have a little is to get more.

To have a lot is to be confused". (DDJ, Chapter 22)

Laozi harmony implies that giving is obtaining and winning, even promisingly rewarding. Since all taking has a cost of losing; giving without being asked, is paying the due loss ahead thus putting itself in a foreseeing status. It also reminds of the hazards of owning too much is root of evils. According to Laozi's observation, man is likely to be induced by irrational desires, and his remedy of embracing simple and minimalism lifestyle, strengthens this claim. Holistic oneness system actually calls for a shared vision on common fate of mankind from individual to universal level. The call for devotion to the common good in *Laozi*'s thoughts is encouraged not as an ideal goal but as a necessity for sustainable survival.

(3) On differences and diversities

Laozi harmony explains how it is different from either-or thinking model, and how it embraces both-and thinking model. It embraces conflicts, failures, unfavorables, raising with a novelty to harmonize all forces, and to allow unconventional conceptual unity in a broader sense. It reinforeces the claims that diversity is force of growth and productivity; harmonization is driving ground; sameness is the of the barrier for creativity and productivity. Within constant changes, process is eternal and result is temporary. A self is never the

central force for transformation. To allow other forces is part of allowing and enhancing a self. Therefore, by emphasizing benefiting others in its water-like notion, Laozi harmony actually suggests a conceptual perspective transferring from self-serving to fostering others to serve all so as the self-benefit as well.

(4) On competition

"By not insisting on his view, he may become enlightened.

By not being self-righteous, he may become illustrious. By not boasting, he may receive credit.

By not being arrogant, he may last long.

And just because he does not compete,

the entire world cannot compete with him." (DDJ, Chapter 22)

Active participation and initiative actions to trigger competition, are not encouraged in Laozi harmony. Strategy of not being involved into competition is implied instead. Followed by water-like metaphor, non-competition tactic with accomodating, adaptive, beneficial to others, low-profile and flexible competence, discloses generative strategies for various situations.

Laozi's avoid-competition mentality has a significant meaning for management studies since competition is a rooted and influential notion in western business world. Darwin shall be credited to as the discovery of competitive dynamics and strategies developed on competition awareness (Handerson, 1989). When competition is regarded as pushing power in generating productivity and creativity, societies characterized by obsessive competitions might be disturbing and tend to be destructive for societies. Competition tends to ruin the balance of business ecosystem for example, competition has spread into all domains, all fields, sectors, meanwhile need for resources grow but resources remain scarce (Porter, 2008). Competition may also lead to shift of cost onto other social groups in the society and corrupted and unethical practices (Bennett, et. al., 2013). The alternative thinking model

on competition in Laozi harmony is echoed in evidences of management studies. It is a fact implying how accomodating it is and the potential to be developed into an approach alone.

3.4.4. Laozi harmony and achieving the organizational goal

Individual goal is integrated with organization goal in Laozi harmony. Pairs of the work-life correlation, the individual pursuit and organization pursuit are explained with the meaning of individual life as part of the grand integration. Value of individual life is accommodated into harmonious team. Desires, ambitions, ego, power and organization goal are gathered in one conceptual framework.

(1) Harmonious minds:

Inner peace is necessary for a healty mind, a healthy soil for healthy observation and decision making. An uneasy heart can hardly get access to deep subtleness beneath matters. Laozi harmony explicitly presents cognitive route for quietening noises in mind and obtaining serenity in mind that activates intuitive and insightful observations. It also advocates a pureness in mind, by being against to selfishness, egoism, extravagant desires, it gains power, leaves no space for weakness points such as greedy redandant desires, and is capable of adaptive thinking instead of being under control of certain norms defined by desires. Hences it allows more space and freedom for reflective and critical thinking. Putting processes of reflexivity in place to facilitate harmonizing refers to the person, as well as the community (Di, 2018). It helps to construct a harmonious structure and culture in an organization or in a community, thus become driving forces to achieve the common goal as a whole.

Mind serenity, allows adaptive thinking all the time; set too much definitions on things, only on certain sides, none is accommodating as Dao, Joy delight arise from spiritual content, not norms.

(2) Self-cultivation:

Laozi harmony, encourages and persuades internal forces to foster growth, initiates a strong desire to learn, to explore, to self-reflect and to self-criticize. It implies convincing reasons for being a learning self and a learning organization.

Inclusiveness in both content and methods is reflected to some extent in Laozi harmony. When it defines the nature of control, dominance and competitive advantages as being temporary, Laozi harmony embodies inclusiveness in an inherent way, because it means those being control, being dominated, and being less competitive are included in the movement and influence of all forces. Cohesive system of self-cultivation based on self-localization and self-identification, helps to enhance strategic thinking and decision making in various stages, including on what to be and how to do. From conceptual skills to magagerial skills, competency building is integrated in self-cultivation.

(3) Harmonious organization, society, and universe:

Harmony awareness should be spread over organization, society and university. Common fate of human beings as a whole, has been a rooted notion, however, it is not illustrated adequately in a coherent and systematic way both with deep theoretical and applicable framework. Any split of the system or destruction of the overall harmony caused by human behaviors, will lead to imbalance between heaven and earth, resulting in social chaos and endangering self-safety (Zhang, 2013). Stakeholders across sectors, industries, borders shall put it into their work agenda to enhance common ground of harmony awareness. Harmony awareness and application itslef is emergent and constantly changing.

Adaptive conceptual studies shall also be at its place to evolve. Rather than self-criticizing, prevailing mindsets spend great energy in criticizing others. Prevailing thoughts also tend to prioritize leadership rather than harmonization, while the latter with serenity and pureness in mind might be more mindful and

with constant adaptivity in thinking, the former might possibly filter secondary forces beside leading forces.

Conceptual skills in management work on abstract concepts and ideas, inviting for intuitive experience generating productivity, adaptivity and creativity. In a general sense, Laozi harmony, in both individual level and communicty level, helps to obtain spiritual pureness and is a kind of conceptual meditation, transformation and for some maybe adventure. By presenting a comprehensive approach on harmony, Laozi harmony enriches intuitive observation.

When being emerged with Dao, that's the moment the light shines everywhere as if there are no blocks, no shadows. It is when one starts to learn spontaneously from everything, which calls for three '**Re'**:

(1) Redefining self: the initial step is to abandon existent fullness, to be all-around self-critical with self-reflection at the front line.

(2) Reshaping: it is to discard edges, shapes, borders, and return to pure state like infancy, so as to accept, transform self into shape desired for at will, just like how dust and light be.

(3) Refreshing: it is the constant change of conceptual location, efforts to enlarge and refresh conceptual space.

Forces to reshape, reverse, redefine, reconstruct our conceptual territory are scrutinized in discovering *Laozi* harmony. A dynamic process of harmonization that calls for being tuned with the world, from the inner self toward the outward established in one inclusive ground. By emptying, redefining existent self-conceptual stands that refrain us from absorbing in new nutrition, we obtain alternative, complementary, or new stand. An emergent adaptive system to understand elusive abstractness and to draw explicit cognitive route are embodied for further exploration.

"The more you embody these (Taoist) teachings, the more the scattered parts of your life fall into place and become a seamless whole; work seems effortless; your heart opens by itself to all the people in your life; you have time for everything worthwhile; your mind becomes empty, transparent, serene; you embrace sorrow as much as joy, failure as much as success; you unthinkingly act with integrity and compassion; and you find that you have come to trust life completely" (Autry & Mitchell, 1998).

Chapter 4 Laozi Harmony and Management: Conceptual Implications

Comparison increases visibility. It's striking to observe that *Laozi* harmony has convergence with prominent management scholars in West context, to a great extent beyond familiar literature.

Based on methodology of descriptive literature review, such a comparative study on harmony conceptual skills across West and East borders will likely contribute to deeper understanding on harmony concept and its harmonization applications. In this chapter, fundamentally influential four figures in modern and contemporary management studies are deliberately selected and compared with Laozi harmony in their most relevant perspectives. Rather than the other numerous alternatives, the selection of the four figures is based on an order of timeline they lived/ live and the principle of:

i. Representativeness in mainstream management mindsets and degree of recognition

ii. Relevance with Laozi harmony in terms of managerial thoughts for conceptual implications

iii. Visibility in illustrating similarity or difference between recognized Western context and Laozi harmony context in terms of conceptual implications

The first figure is "universally famous" Italian diplomat, author and philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), who lived in the Renaissance era, whose book got banned that time by challenging Renaissance Humanism in an "unmasked" way (Parks, 2014); while contemporarily who has been recognized as "father of modern political philosophy and political science" (Whelan, 2004; Smith, 2008).

The second figure is renowned American psychologist, Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-1970), known as "the 10th most cited psychologist of the 20th century"

(Haggbloom et al., 2002); in management studies and applications today, Maslow's human need pyramid has been of "first and most remembered models" (Bridge et al., 2019) and its pyramid image has such an overwhelming "iconic appeal" (Peterson & Park, 2010) that it has been widely referred to and has even been "ingrained in our consciousness" (Bridge et al., 2019).

The third figure is a remarkable American academic scholar, teacher, and prominent business and management consultant Michael Eugene Porter (1947-) (WEB_5, 2022), who is not only "the most cited scholar today in economics and business (WEB_6, 2022)", but also a widely recognized researcher across disciplines, and around the globe (WEB_5, 2022), whose approach has been foundation and evidence of multidiscipline researches. It is Porter who defined fields of economic development and competitiveness, modern strategy, which thus turned himself the provider of cognitive codes that are "widely applied by both government policymakers and economic development practitioners globally (WEB_6, 2022)".

The fourth figure is Israel conductor, leadership scholar, and business consultant Itay Talgam (1958-) (Talgam, 2015), who is a successful experienced orchestra conductor, and famous active keynote speaker in leadership; in global leading live talks online media organization America based TED platform, Talgam's speech titled as "Lead like the great conductors" has been viewed more than 4 million times[70], and his thoughts on integrating conducting in orchestra into leadership have been absorbing and impacting for vast audience from the globe (Talgam, 2010/2011/2013).

Although the four figures vary in nationality, cultural background, and scope and degree of recognition, they all share the similar characteristics of being popular in management mindsets under Western context, and have close affinity with Laozi harmony and harmonization, either in a convergent or contradictory way but both so

[70] Talgam, I. (2009). Lead like the great conductors, TEDGLOBAL 2009, Retrieved on May 6th, 2022: https://www.ted.com/talks/itay_talgam_lead_like_the_great_conductors

distinguishingly apparent and sharp that they are of significant conceptual implications for management.

4.1. Laozi harmonization and Niccolo Machiavelli

4.1.1. Convergence between Machiavelli and Laozi in terms of managerial thoughts

Western management pioneer Niccolo Machiavelli, lived a dramatical life himself as both part of governing authority and abandoned intellectual elite by central power (Parks, 2014). He systematically illustrated his ideas on management by advising how to be become a prominent ruler in his book *The Prince*. In this book, he prescribed how rulers can establish leadership assessed by parameters of being loved, feared, and hated. He analyzed the risks of being loved by subordinates, of being feared, and of being generous in payment and gifts. Here are his relevant remarks: *"if you benefit them, they are all devoted to you", "friendships that are acquired by Money are paid for but not secured and prove unreliable just when they are needed", "a wise ruler should count on what is under his own control, not on what is under the control of others', and 'he should contrive only to avoid incurring hatred"* (Machiavelli, 1925).

It's noticeable to see that *Laozi* harmony illustrated his harmonization model with the same parameters about one thousand years earlier than *Machiavelli*.

Laozi expressed in *Dao De Jing* (道德经 *The Way*) that:

"Of the best, the people barely know of his existence.

Of the next best, the people love and praise him.

Of the next one, the people are afraid of him.

And of the next, the people despise him.

He who does not trust others enough will not be trusted by them.

Therefore, hesitating, one should carefully choose his words.

When he accomplishes his task and the things get done,

The people all say: We have done it by ourselves". (DDJ, Chapter 17)

Despite the similarity in reference to parameter framework, the distinction between Machiavelli and Laozi is sharply apparent:

Hierachy of leaders' category: assessment on governance/management competency	**Machiavelli**	**Laozi**
Best ruler/administrator	Both being loved and feared The power of rulers lie in authority	No need in emphases on whose existence while all jobs accomplished naturally The power of universe is to harmonize
Second best ruler/administrator	Being feared but not hated	Being praised
Third best ruler/administrator	Being loved	Being feared
The worst rule/administrator	Being hated	Being cursed

Figure 4.1. Hierachy of leaders' category: Machiavelli and Laozi, developed by the author

4.1.2. Conceptual difference between Machiavelli and Laozi in terms of managerial thoughts

In modern business management vocabulary, Machiavelli and Laozi disagree in terms of:

- the function of administrators: to 'lead' or to 'harmonize'
- the attitude on authority
- the ideal model of management
- the perception on administrator and adminstrated relationship
- the observative judgement on human nature
- the trust building process

- the perception on managerial duties as a whole
- the thickness of dimensions for leadership/administration/management

In Laozi's interpretation, rather than control nor authority, to follow *The Way*, *wu wei (conscious non-interference) er zhi (achieved desirable management)* naturally is the route to achieve orderly work flow, while those being administrated are not even aware of the administrator's existence.

Machiavelli emphasized that a rule should avoid anything that will make him either hated or despised, which would even make other censurable faults forgiven[71]. He listed causes that may lead rules to be hated as:

> *"Being rapacious and seizing the property or womenfolk of his subjects: he must avoid doing these things. If the majority of men are not deprived of their property and honor and honor they will live contentedly, and one will have to deal only with the ambition of a few men, which can easily be restrained in various ways".*[72]'

The distinctive difference between Machiavelli and Laozi, lies in to be 'hard' or to be 'soft' and to govern or to harmonize.

> *"What will make him (a ruler) is being despised is being considered inconstant, frivolous, effeminate, pusillanimous and irresolute: a ruler must avoid contempt as if it were a reef. He should contrive that his actions should display grandeur, courage, seriousness and strength, and his decisions about the private disputes of his subjects should be irrevocable. He should maintain this reputation, so that no one should think of lying to him or scheming to trick him."*

A determined, firm-handed image of a 'leader' vividly depicted in those lines in *Machiavelli'*s detailed illustrations, still very much alive in adored images of 'leaders' today. Irrevocable of the 'ruler/leader's decision, confirms his/her power, strength, authority and, prestige. In today's leadership context, even planning and strategy formulating on behalf of all, are counted on leaders' final decision. Just as how Katz's conceptual skills locates at the top of the managerial pyramid and top management is

---

[71] Machiavelli, N., (2003), The Prince, Cambridge University Press, Chapter XIX, 63.

[72] Machiavelli, N., (2003), The Prince, Cambridge University Press, Chapter XIX, 64.

valued as elite group in management arena and how they should have strategic vision for organization, 'leaders/rulers/top managers' are engifted an overwhelming power inherently from this angle, like a hero above ordinary people, or at least expected to be so.

It's is the similar story in planning, strategy formulating, and decision making. Traditional Western command-and-control management views strategic planning in terms of the heroic action (Taptiklis, 2008), which is regarded as feature of cause-effect Western thinking (Jullien, 2004), however, in emerging model of organizations, patterns are created by complex interactions which can be taken advantage of but not be controlled (Baskin, 2011). But it lags behind emerging complexity and inclusiveness in conceptual competency context.

"He who does not trust others enough will not be trusted by them." In this sentence, *Laozi* points to the man on top that "*if in regulating the body one destroys its quality, then disease will prevail; if in aiding all things one destroys their true nature, then disaster and rift will rise. If one's credibility is inadequate, people will not have trust. This is the way of nature. If one is lacking in his conduct, shrewdness cannot help*"[73].

This is to acknowledge power of others, acknowledge ignorance of self, as well as to abandon control, do not intend to destroy true nature of things and people; what is supposed to do is to encourage and to allow things and people to be what they are. Trust, genuineness and credibility are at the center of allowing and supporting. True nature and quality surpass perceptive behaviors and action speaks louder.

In Laozi harmony approach, charismatic figure with brilliant charmingness is not suggested. He reminds the essence of true values, like *Dao* itself, is plain, without color, tastes, even shape. According to Laozi, there is actually no explicit definition nor description on certain pattern or style of a ruler/administrator as idol. But he does depicts qualifications of such an ideal model, who is humble, talks little, listens deeply

[73] Pau, J. L, (1977), A Translation of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary, *Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies* No.30, 30.

all the time, and never chases for outstanding outlook of seemingly power but focuses on internal self-perfection and true respect towards other forces.

Appearance is not only deceptive but also stereotyping. When defining and depicting of image on ideal 'leaders/rulers/top managers' are attempted, there will be the stereotype and certain pattern arising. The invisible and staying at back stage of management figure, in Laozi's illustration, is not pursuing front stage, nor visibility. It is also a matter of self-localization: between governing power and being governed.

As previously stated, inclusiveness trend in management realm, such as empowerment of individuals in bargaining power, personal influence in digitalization era, puts on table of management studies more involvement of ordinary people.

Contrast to this Iron Hand's mindset, heroic image of 'leaders/rulers/managers', Laozi's approach is soft and democratic, without prioritizing self-power but to maximize powers of others. He advocates harmonization among people, both internally as individuals and externally between people, including leaders/rulers/managers and those being led, ruled and managed. Laozi harmony approach, is water-alike: to be beneficial to all, let things flow naturally; during the process each individual, force is allowed to exert fullest use, so that synergy shapes and functions, and in the end, things are done as they should, while the 'leaders/rulers/managers' do not necessarily have to show up.

In water-alike approach of Laozi, one important principle is to keep low profile, to be willing to stay at low, unfavorable positions. It means to be devoted to assist producing rather than to be thirsty for possessing, to harmonizing rather than controlling or dominating. By allowing things and people to be what they are, by supplying needed resources and possibilities, by being humbly and willingly at any position any shape, one activates water-like harmony competency. As a natural result, all resources, possibilities, and forces, function in synergy, which cannot be foreseen beforehand nor planned no matter how much the strategy is '*shrewded*', but since harmony spontaneously takes its shape, productivity occurs, out of a natural discourse.

The focus of Laozi harmony, is to allow and release infinite power of others, rather than maximizing self-strength, self-power, self-influence, nor being symbol of worship. A leaders/ruler/manager in Laozi's approach, does not even have to be known: what is more important is **things done, naturally and properly**, while people involved are able to claim: *"We have done it by ourselves"*. People at top of pyramid of administration/management, are supporter and harmonizer of forces, and they need to be responsible with their words.

"Therefore, hesitating, one should carefully choose his words". It means that each word shall be cautiously uttered and be counted. Consequences of words are inevitable; more talks do not necessarily bring out more actions nor more results. *Laozi* actually does not encourage too much talk. *Shao yan* 少言(speak less/little) is recognized as wise behavior in his teachings. It has there connotations:

(i) Before speaking, the nature of things/people must be carefully scrutinized, including the subtle complexities. No matter how hard one tries, it's not possible to cover all inclinations. Bearing ignorance awareness in an conscious way helps to harmonize.

(ii) Words once uttered, will not be reversible. Consequences must be calculated. "*Therefore, one must take time to honor his words. Residing in inaction, instructing without words"*[74]' Words have link to instruction and lead to results. So Laozi harmonization suggests to integrate *wu wei* (conscious non-inteference) with word-action application.

(iii) Frequency of 'words'/'speaking', which also means frequency of administrative regulations, managerial decisions, shall not be released too frequently.

"To rule a large nation is as to cook a small fish.

...

[74] Pau, J. L, (1977), A Translation of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary, *Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies* No.30, 31.

Not that God will not hurt the people,

But the Sage will not hurt them either.

When both will not hurt each other,

All virtue will converge to them". (DDJ, Chapter 60)

A small fish when being cooked, if turned over, it smashes, so the only way to cook a small fish is to try not to touch it after putting the fish into the pot, till the cook is sure the fish is fully cooked and then take the first and last action: to take the fish out of the pot. The metaphor tells that too frequent releasing or changing or regulations in any level of management, means to disturb the existed order and harmony, even if it's intended to bring order. If regulations and decisions are aligning with *Dao*, facilitating harmony, it should be not disturbing, not harming the nature and harmony of things and people. In general, Laozi suggests not to change too frequently the administrative/managerial decisions since each time, there are serious consequences and possible disturbance to things and people.

In order to make people involved in tasks genuinely claim: "*We have done it by ourselves*", Laozi harmonization provides another cognitive code: *gong cheng shen tui* 功成身退(when success achieved, the people, those in managerial positions in particular, are wise by not claiming credit for it and by being willing to keep invisibly unknown; it's wise to share success with all stakeholders, and even wiser to not to be enthusiastic for claiming success)

"He who is rich, honored, and arrogant brings blame upon himself

He who withdraws after achieving success and performing duty

adheres to the Tao of heaven". (DDJ, Chapter 9)

Laozi reminds eternal law of the nature that "*The four seasons evolve in turn, each completing its role and then moving on*[75]". By referring his observation on nature, he implies sustainability comes from following natural law and being against it would be

[75] Pau, J. L, (1977), A Translation of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary, *Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies* No.30, 16.

in vain. It gives clue on why after accomplishment of tasks or duties, one should not be indulged in claiming credit or profit from it. According to *Laozi*, being one of such accomplishment and success, each one did what is due duty laid on him/her as a part of the natural course; total success belongs to all parts playing due duties; by claiming honor and superior rights over others, one collects blame and despise on him/her, and it would ruin sustainability of his fame and duty. Just as how each season brings all prosperities and wonders of its season and leaves its space for new comers, its moving on avails due discourse of developments.

It echoes cohesively one of the characteristics of water-alike harmonization: to be beneficial to all, but never speaking out loudly to claim rewards for its contributions.

The recessive and dominant pair, are totally oppositely shown between *Machiavelli* and *Laozi*: the former, reinforces the mainstream recognized image of charismatic 'leader'; the latter prioritizes vast majority of people and depicts an invisible, indefinite but flexible and adaptive, image of harmonizer without certain form.

4.2. *Laozi* harmony and Maslow's human needs pyramid

4.2.1. Maslow's human needs pyramid

The human motivation theory developed by Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-1970) is an influential study for many disciplines. Maslow believes that each person has a hierarchy of needs from basic to high levels, ranging from the bottom physiological needs to the highest self-actualization; those needs are to be satisfied by order while the highest self-actualization satisfied, true health achieved[76]. Maslow's hierachy of needs model are implicable for management in many aspects including organizational performance (Kaur, 2013), organizational culture, human resources and employee's

[76] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Abraham Maslow". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 28 Mar. 2022, Available: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-H-Maslow.

performance (Jerome, 2013), thoughts on management and current practices (Maslow, 1998), cultural dimension (Jelavic & Ogilvie, 2010) and the alike.

Maslow argues that human nature decides people's needs are composed by basic needs physiological needs (feeding, sheltering, resting etc.) and safety needs (security, safety); psychological needs in the middle (belongingness and emotional needs such as intimacy, love, friendship, affinity; esteem such as sense of establishment, being respected, being taken seriously); self-actualization at the top (fullest achievement of self-existence, sense of self-value, potential and creativity). Human beings are born to be driven by motivations to meet those needs by order; the basic needs are for survival, which must be satisfied accordingly; if lower-level needs are not met, people would fail to chase for higher needs, which are also inherently embodies in everyone. (Maslow, 1943 & 1954). Maslow's early studies resulted in a five-stage model, which later was postulated into eight levels, with cognitive and aesthetic needs, transcendence needs added in his later studies (McLeod, 2020).

Transcendence, according to Maslow, is the ability to obtain a unity consciousness with other humans (Maslow, 1964/1968; Ventor, 2016), and being transcended means to view the self in a global perspective for his/her connection and relation with other people in society (Ventor, 2016). With transcended consciousness, the individuals go beyond themselves and often benefit others with selfless services (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). Cognitive needs point to "knowledge and understanding, curiosity, exploration for meaning and predictability"; and aesthetic needs, to "appreciation and search for beauty, balance" etc (McLeod, 2020).

Based on Maslow's study, human nature motivated human needs are categorized into eight stage hierarchical pyramid:

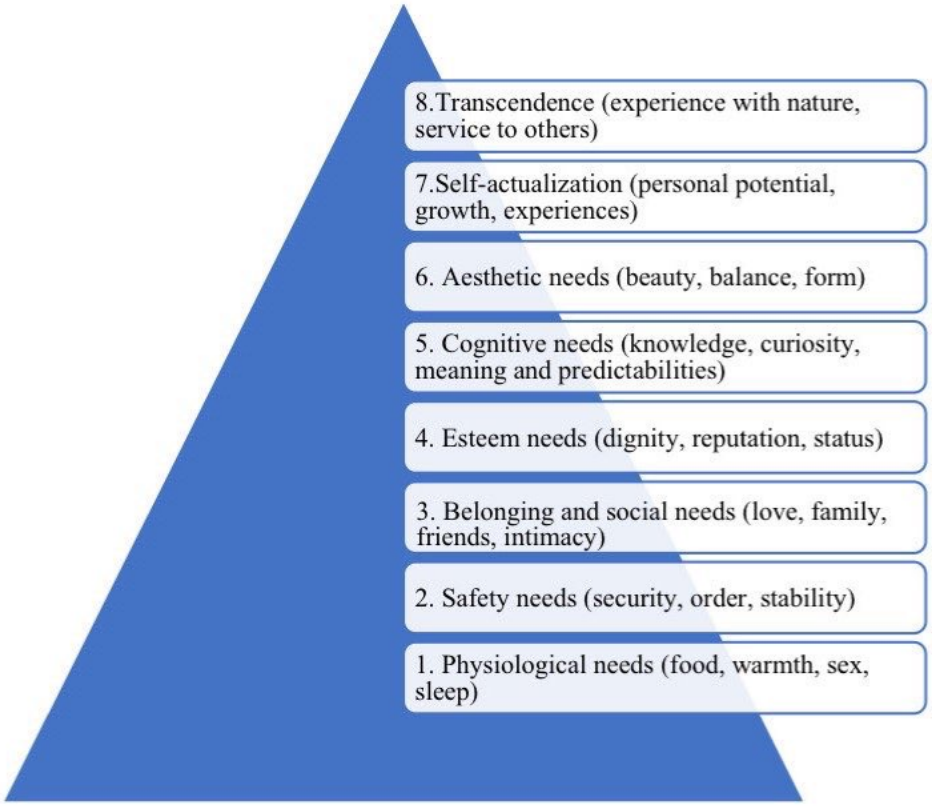


Figure 4.2. Maslow's eight stage hierarchical pyramid, adapted from Maslow's Motivation Model by McLeod 2020

The contributions of Maslow's work include being "practical for every management" (Greenberg & Baron, 2003; Kanur, 2013), providing a "richer conceptualization of the meaning of life dimension of worldviews" (Ventor, 2016), encouraging organizations to motivate employees by helping meet their needs (Kanur, 2013); the cricisms of Maslow's work include failure to receive sufficient support to specific notion it proposes (Greenberg & Baron, 2003), absence of empirical data, weak assumption of employees' being alike, situation being alike (Graham & Messner, 1998).

4.2.2. Connections between Maslow's thoughts and *Laozi* harmony approach

It's noticeable that Maslow's being values and perception/cognition are based on Daoism (Maslow, 1971; Lee, et al., 2008). Connections between Maslow's thoughts and Laozi harmony approach can be observed in comparative analyses.

The achieved "desirable management result without a word" model from Laozi, wu wei (non-interference) harmonization, was given supportive evidence in Maslow's example illustration. He explained that in basketball team, those members not being selfish and having team spirit, form the team in which the leader's power is not deliberately but voluntarily given by the particular people in the particular situation. The leadership is accomplished without influence or order (Maslow, 1965; Lee, et al., 2008): this echoes Laozi harmonization outcome when tasks accomplished and people involved claim: *"We have done it by ourselves"*. As an influential managerial study, Maslow's direct reference to *Laozi* and his efforts to strengthen Laozi's insights in *wu wei* (non-interference) harmonization via case study in management, provide inspiring route for further elaboration on harmony as an accomodating approach. It meanwhile exhibites a critical direct connection between Maslow and Laozi in terms of ideal competent model of management: spontaneous achieved *wu wei* harmony and management .

"*Maslow's eupsychian leadership style is very daoistic or wateristic - it is characterized by refraining from giving orders and having no power but being modest and gentle*" (Lee, et al., 2008). A direct connection between humanistic psychology and Daoism is established and explicitly seen through Maslow's work. The spontenously achieved successful temawork is applicable within particular people in particular situation, which echoes contingency theory (Lee, et al., 2008), and water-like harmonization in Laozi approach in terms of flexibility and adaptivity during process of integration in any situation at any position.

The second direct connection is their views on relation between the wholeness and component parts. Maslow believed that "*truly healthy people were self-actualizers because they satisfied the highest psychological needs, fully integrating the components of their personality, or self*"[77]. The positive outcome of integration of

[77] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Abraham Maslow". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 28 Mar. 2022, Available: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-H-Maslow.

components here, conceptually confirms the positiveness of agreeable wholeness of its parts, namely, positiveness of harmony. As for different components of needs of human being, the whole architecture is integrated into one structure with spontaneous feature. "*The integrated wholeness of the organism must be one of the foundation stones of motivation theory*" (Green, 2020): wholeness awareness is stressed as basic gound; "*rather than partial or superficial ones, it centers itself upon ultimate or basic goals, upon ends rather than means to these ends*" (Green, 2020): the goal of the wholeness is prioritized; "(it) implies a more central place for unconscious than for conscious motivations" (Green, 2020), and spontenity is internalized.

The third direct connection is on its transcendence connotation, in which Maslow focused on the interconnection within people in a broader sense of society, and advocated serving for well-beings of others: thus man is actually regarded as a whole community across borders. In Laozi harmony, it is contained in duality notion that things and people are interdependent, complementary and reversing to the opposite end and in holistic oneness, despite all inernal complexity and conflicts, man is a unity externally as a whole. When "s*elf-transcendent people are bound together with a common purpose, a global perspective, and joint responsibility for the fate of the planet"* (Ventor, 2016), in Laozi holistic oneness, it is harmonious interpersonal relationship, improvement of teamwork as entire society, awareness and actions to protect environment, to harmonize nature-man relation and to reconsider man's place in nature and readjustment of man's behavior.

The fourth direct connection, is the term 'motivation'. In Maslow's motivation theory, human needs and motivation are the key terms. In later expanded studies on management based on Maslow's work, motivation of human beings became focus of driven powers related to performance of individuals, organizations and management. In Laozi's harmonization teachings, his book *Dao De Jing* (*The Way*), *De*, is interpreted variously, from moral virtues acquried by being accord with *the way (Dao)* that underlines all beings (Addiss & Lombardo, 1993), to "**motivation** by inward

rectitude" (Blakney, 1955). Spontaneous motivation, therefore, to some extent, is an overlapped term between Maslow and Laozi.

In summary, the convergence between Maslow and Laozi harmony can be found in the following aspects, conceptually:

- Interaction between human beings and wholeness of man as one community
- Components of one wholeness when being agreeable, they emit desirable outcome
- Spontaneously formed teamwork and realized success achieved by *wu wei* (non-interference)
- Serving and benefitting others selfishlessly, across borders, it is water-like integration and harmonization in a holistic perspective
- Spontaneous motivation as internal force of human beings
- Spiritual dimension of human health is related to internal and external integration

4.2.3. Conceptual differences between Maslow and Laozi

Meanwhile the conceptual differences between Maslow and Laozi lie in:

- Initial purpose of Maslow's study was for psychological health, Laozi was for harmony in individual, social and universal levels
- Focuses of Maslow's human needs are in what they are and how to satisfy, Laozi harmony's focuses are how to eradicate hurdles against harmony and to facilitate harmonious mindsets, processes, and outcomes
- Sef-refrain was suggested by Laozi as important tool to embrace simple and plain life style, since human beings are likely to be lured away by greedy and vicious minds; Maslow's motivation framework is adopted more frequently to enhance individual and organizational performance
- Internal self-perfection pursuit is stressed in Laozi harmonization as key to achieve cognitive and application competency, for either individual or community. More than just awareness, self-perfection is a cohesive and

comprehensive system in Laozi harmonization, which contains perception, attitude and approach consistently cohesive with one another, embracing austerity, simplicity and minimalism. Maslow's self-actualization, is self-fufilment oriented, which is based on exploration on external world to reflect self to external world, it is to seek self-value, personal growth and maximum experiences, so there is need for science and knowledge to serve for such personal peak experience desires. The apparent difference here stands at pursuit on personal fufilment: Laozi approach is more internally spiritual simplicity oriented while Maslow's is more externally oriented with sense of personal establishment. As contrast to Maslow's encouragement on science and knowlege, Laozi is against overuse of wits and knowledge[78] and is more keen on pure mindedness and simple heartedness, as seen in infancy metaphor.

Maslow did refer to insights of Laozi to a great extent, the latter responds and enriches major concerns of Maslow's discussions. Laozi harmonization implies potential to be adopted into managerial fields that Maslow's framework has been applied to. Harmony dimension, in this sense, implies a deeper postulation on reinterpreting Maslow's motivation theory. For example, during the process of Laozi harmonization, the wholeness and components interrelation, duality of each part, each due play, all are basic stones for sustainable survival of all human beings. Sustainability in each stage, is shaped by human activities as a whole, in which each component, each individual plays a part; but if there is no holistic view in decision making stage of management, the natural course towards positive outcome would be disrupted or distorted. In Maslow's ideal outcome of agreeable teamwork achievement without deliberate order nor influence, the process is not addressed in details. Therefore, the process based on ignorance awareness, conscious *wu wei*, water-like

[78] 绝圣弃智 jue sheng qi zhi: by abandoning overuse of recognized 'wise' wits and 'knowledge', ordinary people will benefit a hundred times than continued use of them. It's from Chapter 19th of Dao De Jing, illustrated by the author.

Laozi harmonization, might be integrated to fit in, as delineation to concrete approach applicable for process before result. It can be expanded to vision and value imposed by organization to achieve common goal as well. If the ultimate goal is harmony and harmonization instead of self-actualization or transcendence, the whole process and system would turn into a broader and more consistent journey as in Laozi harmonization.

Further postulation by this comparative study between Maslow and Laozi harmony approach also implies that when human needs are analyses, the dimension of harmony harmonization might also be insightful to formulate and reformulate the hierarchical pyramid.

4.3. Laozi harmony and Porter's Five Forces

4.3.1. Porter's Five Forces framework

Contemporary prominent economist and business scholar Michael Porter (1947-) is undoubtedly a renowned figure in business management world. He made his career in Harvard Business school: the recognized elite center for shaping contemporary business mindsets. He conceptualized economic theories and strategies that answered most challenging issues that business world faces. As a much awarded and productive scholar, researcher and teacher, his theory and concepts range from marketing strategy to environment and health around the global across sectors and disciplines. Michael Porter is "the most cited scholar today in economics and business"[79]. Therefore, it is naturally understandable that his thoughts, formulate influentially what and how the economics and business are being managed, and scholarly cognitive codes developed today.

[79] https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/profile.aspx?facId=6532

"*Competition is at the core of the success of failure of firms*[80]" (Porter, 1985). Competition, according to Porter, is pervasive in business arena and turning it into the driving forces for the firm being survivor with sustainability, there shall be strategies to be developed based on complete awareness on both competition itself and all forces active. After analyzing other forces involved into the chain of industry, he proposed a five-force competition structure, as visually illustrated below.

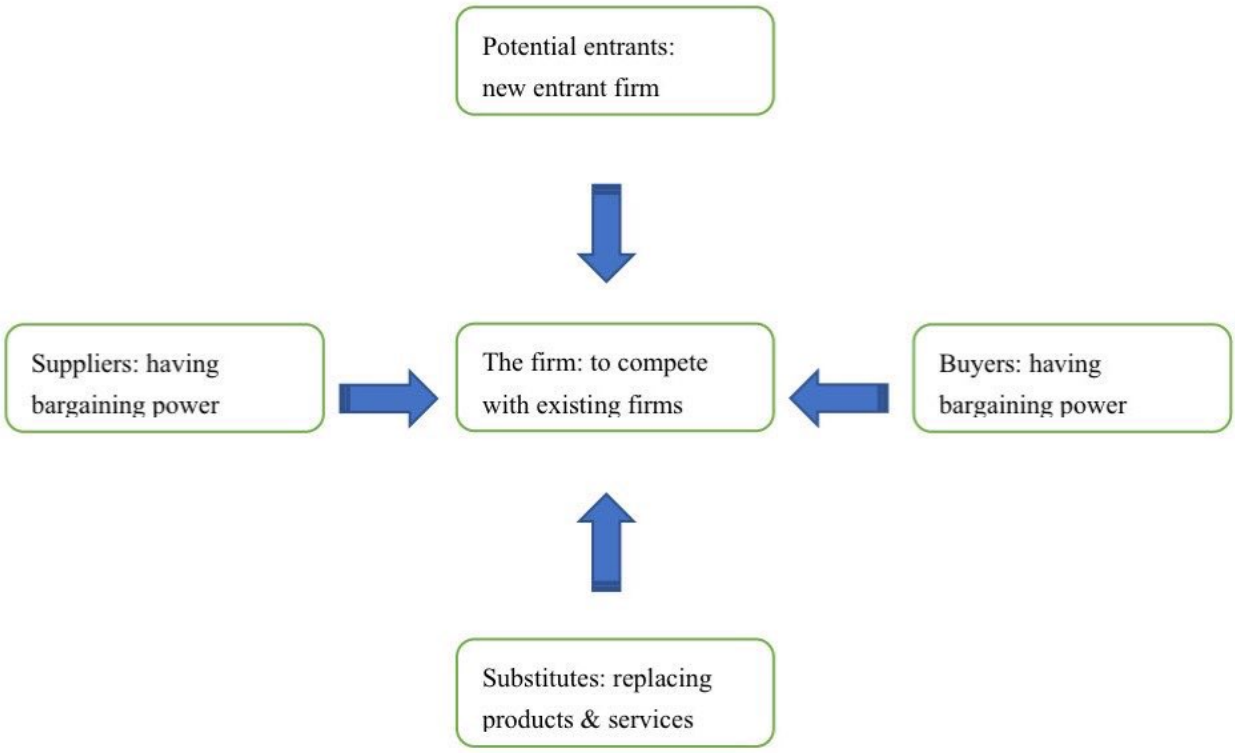


Figure 4.3. Porter's five competitive forces: adapted from "The five competitive forces that determine industry profitability" (Porter, 1985)

[80] Porter, M. E., (1985), Competitive Advantage, The Free Press, A Division of Maxwell Macmillan, Inc.: New York, 1.

The assumptions and insights of Porter, are supported by his observations on nature of competition, which enhanced the convincing power of this core structure. According to Porter (Porter, 1985),

- Competition's fundamental arena exists in industry where firms are dwelled in
- To succeed for a firm, is to win competition, which means to gain favorable position in the whole industry, among various threats and competitors
- Profitability is of the crucial criteria to judge competitiveness
- Relative dominance in an industry is of competitive advantage
- Superior or unique values that a firm creates for buyers, are encouraged, while the 'values' are not illustrated in a deep nor comprehensive method
- Although 'values' are not explicitly explained nor illustrated, Porter pointed out that values shall have the motivating power to drive buyers' willingness to pay higher

Competitive strategy has ever since been the major theme of managerial planning, operating, and functional applications. Being believed as useful remedy, power, elixir, competitive strategy and strategies have been constantly applauded and searched for. If a firm wants to obtain a sustainable position in the industry, (which is definitely what every firm is interested in), then the generic competitive strategies raised by Porter can help the firm (Tanwar, 2013) by well-defined and clarified strategies including: differentiation (uniqueness in value attached to products or services), cost leadership (cost advantage in the industry based on fullest use of resources), focus strategy (defining targeted segment in the industry and fitting in strategy to serve for it). These strategies have been embraced by numerous theorists and practitioners.

The definition of 'strategy' has been built on Porter's findings with competition as its core concern: "The essence of strategy formulation is coping with competition (Porter, 1979)". Strategy definition is based on Porter's study so greatly that strategy itself turns out to be "building a strong defense against the five competing factors (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021)".

Porter's five-force framework, being inherently practical for understanding and application, has been adopted by numerous business management professionals both in application and research, education communities. The convincing power of his five-force framework cater for business needs in terms of:

- Dimensions are considered in a comprehensive way, including horizontal forces (new entrants and substitues as well as other rivals in competition) and vertical forces (buyers' and customers' powers in bargaining) (Pringle & Huisman, 2011)
- Profitability, success, overcoming competition, are among most desired aims of business by essence

When competition taken as pervasive and inevitable in business arena, Porter's studies have become pervasive in business literature, his competitive strategies and logic building cognitive codes beneath are recognized as self-generative.

One of the most dynamic frontiers of business is marketing. Porter's thoughts on value shape marketing's definition just as deeply. According to Porter, "Competitive advantage grows fundamentally out of **value** a firm is able to **create** for its buyers that exceeds the firm's cost of creating it. **Value is what buyers are willing to pay**" (Porter, 1985). Value is linked closely with consumption and price and to create value that make buyers thrilled to pay are implied here. It is embraced by or echoed in marketing field, and had affinity with prevailing marketing concepts.

From product, production, to promoting, branding, and to customer orientation as well as channel, value and value creating takes a remarkable position.

> *"Marketing is the social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others."*
>
> — Philip Kotler, 1994[81]

[81] Kotler, P., (1994) Marketing Management, Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control, 8th ed., Prentice Hall, 6.

"Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."

— American Marketing Association[82]

Yet essence and elaboration on value and value creating remain open, value itself is an elusive and varying note under different context; and vagueness on what values are true values is not easy to be agreed on:

i. Criteria to judge values are geniune or not, how to judge, from the products and services, remain ambiguous;

ii. It is not creating value that defines marketing process; instead, it is to make created values be accepted as values that establishes meaning for marketing, after all, the receiver of the created values are buyer rather than creators. Hence persuasion competency in marketing practices arise as needed talent in individual, department and organizational levels.

Conceptually, both perception on values and persuasion competency involve other power paradigm such as 'propaganda' (Bernays, 1928).

More than two decades after his concepts and approaches on competitive strategies being widely adopted by business and management world globally, Porter also developed broader and deeper awareness on competition: when competition has spread into all domains, all fields, sectors, meanwhile "need for resources grow but resources remain scarce" (Porter, 2008). His later efforts were also spared on social affairs such as environmental issues, health system and non-profit organizations: concerns going far beyond business interests or consumption but public wellbeing. Interactions between

[82] WEB_7, (2022), Marketing Definition, American Marketing Association, Available: https://www.ama.org/topics/marketing-definition/, 11/05/2022.

4.3.2. Conceptual convergency and differences between Porter's thoughts and Laozi harmony

Compared with *Laozi* harmony, there are slightly converging points but apparent different points between Porter's thoughts and Laozi harmonization.

(1) On wholeness

When Porter include forces in various aspects of an industry, the focus is on self-localizing position of and enhancing competitiveness of a firm by standing on behalf of the firm: it is converging with Laozi harmony in terms of self-localizing and self-identification in a complex web of different forces. At this point, Laozi harmony is more holistic by including all elements into the wholeness from individual to community without classifying them into business defined categories while Porter's view is concentrated intensively on business chain, function, and profitable outcomes. The purpose of Porter wholeness awareness is for advantage of business goal while Laozi harmony is for harmonious outcome of individual, human community both respectively and as a whole, which is not specified for only business activities. The ignorance awareness is attached importance both in Porter's and *Laozi*'s thoughts, but the degree and scope vary largely: obviously in Porter's thoughts, it's clearly defined as five forces, while in Laozi harmony approach, ignorarnce awareness is something should be carried with consciously comprehensive in every aspect, process, and situation.

(2) On competition:

According to Porter, under a competition context, it is an inevitable choice to choose being a strategy equipped one so as to be a winner who occupies a favorable position. However, according to Laozi, is competition inevitable, is competition existent every corner and is competition a must for all, should be reasked and people should rethink the relation between Things and human beings.

"By not insisting on his view, he may become enlightened.

By not being self-righteous, he may become illustrious. By not boasting, he may receive credit.

By not being arrogant, he may last long.

And just because he does not compete,

the entire world cannot compete with him". (DDJ, Chapter 22)

According to Laozi, it is not a must to be enthusiastic about competition. The ways to be valuable is not to be shown by competing with others. The hidden mentality behind passion to be competitive, is related to arrogance that might hurdle one to be sustainable. The focus, rather than trying to be compete, should be put on self-perfection, by being tolerate in acknowledging other views, by being humble listener rather than a boaster. Once one abandons alertness and desire in competing but just be as good as possible, he/she would not have to compete and would just be at a position desirable, naturally. Laozi is against intentional competition, both in mind and in act. Not mentioning developing techniques to assist competition, Laozi simply objects competition. He reinforces his views on the natural law principle that all Things operate aligning with: people should not interfere with existing forces; with deliberate actions to interfere other forces, the inherent subtle texture would be distorted and essence changed, due portion of parts might consequently be destroyed. Instead of trying to reshape, transform, divert other forces, in Laozi harmony, being good enough as a self, is the key to be at the desirable position.

Another issue is cost. In competitions across sector, the costs belong to sectors. In competitions among nations, dominanc of one nation means the cost of being dominated of other nation(s). If human being taken as a community as whole, as in Laozi harmony, whatever the relative competitive advantages belong to whom, the cost arising from competition(s), belongs to all. Profits might not be shared by all but costs are shared by all. The costs include natural resources, environmental and climate issues, time, human energy, crimes and so on.

(3) On consumption

Porter's studies undoubtedly have supported consumption-oriented marketing to a tremendous degree. Added value for consumers has become classical slogan of brandings. Consumptions are encouraged, branded, popularized in a systematical, reasonable, and overwhelming way. Wether it is his original intent or not, because of his profound influence globally, Porter's findings have played a role in constructing foundation for highly consumption driven society today. In sharp contrast with this, Laozi harmony is firmly against consumption. It advocates plain, simple and austere lifestyle, criticizes enthusiastic attitude on consumption, on extravagant lifestyle in particular, and takes them as roots of ruining of social order and harmony, since such behaviors from governing/dominant powers will cause great resentment destructive for social structure (see Figure 2.1.)

(4) On mindsets building society

Above all of them, 'competition', is a term easily invoking 'rivalry' alertness in minds, what if all people in a team, an organzation, a community, embraces competition awareness deeply and take every kind of force(s) as potential rival rather than partner or unity/community member(s). The fact that Porter's thoughts have been "widely applied by both government policymakers and economic development practitioners globally", shows how prevailing management mindseets are competition orientation equipped.

Laozi harmony, suggests an alternative approach of not to look for competition, nor to be dominated with competitive advantage addiction, not to fight with force to forces, but to avoid being involved into competition; by being water-like, accomodating, adaptive, beneficial to others, low-profile and flexible competence, one will naturally discloses generative strategies for various situations.

As for strategical thinking, when Porter takes seriously as center of his arguments and reasoning for people to develop, Laozi suggests something totally different: pureness in mind without too much equippment of wits (智 zhi, not completely overlapped in meaning with wits, it also contains meanings of tricks, knowledge, virtues, etc, it is intended to mean things learnt after being born under certain social norms), like infancy. It might seem too ideal to be true, but what if this concept is embraced as much as how Porter's thoughts have been…

Competition vs. harmony: which one to prefer for a better self, team, society? By comparing Porter's five forces framework and Laozi harmony, we here encounter a standing point to rethink and dive into.

4.4. Laozi harmony and Itay Talgam

4.4.1. Conceptual convergency beween Laozi harmony and Itay Talgam

In *Laozi*'s interpretation, rather than control nor authority, to follow *The Way*, *wuwei (conscious non-interference) er zhi (achieved desirable management)* naturally is the route to achieve orderly work flow, while those being administrated are not even aware of the administrator's existence.

These ideas were echoed in Maslow's studies as previously illustrated. It is also converged with Talgam's 'nuance' interpretation on leadership (Talgam, 2015). A successful conductor is fine with feeling being redundant for an orchestra when every peice of the performance is at its place on musicians'/members' own (Talgam, 2010/2011). Being authentic and trying genuinely to become one of the team, is implied in this 'nuance' approach (Talgam, 2011).

As an active public speaker, his thoughts initially were delivered by speeches in live talk and online media platforms. In such a context, his thoughts usually were illustrated orally and were highly conceptual.

Talgam depicted a provoking leadership model extracted from orchestra conductor: a leadership with its ultimate challenge as creating perfect harmony without saying a word (Talgam, 2009). He illustrated a leadership with concepts of 'harmony', 'ignorance' and 'nuance', embracing different powers of sounds and participants, reminding the power of being humble listerner and of facilitating harmonization. In his book *Ignorant Maestro*, Talgam illustrated a harmony leadership composed of ignorance, gap and keynote listening (Talgam, 2015).

Ignorance has a striking positive meaning in Talgam leadership thoughts. It can be "now matter how far you go, there is always a limit" (Talgam, 2010). It can also be how "ignorant someone can teach other ignorants on something they are ignorant about", thus such ignorance awareness actually recognizes possibilities beyond available and ready knowledge. Gap means people gather at one team (either orchestra or generally any team, community) from diversified past, background, accumulations, norms etc., and as a team from gathering moment on, all members will be in tune. Talgam proposed an attitude of embracing the gap. He reminded the necessity to keep the gap, not to close the gap, but to encourage productivity by being keynote listerner, helping all members absorb into deep essence of the music itself rather than techniques (Talgam, 2013). Full control leads to dictatorship. To make the leashed power of musicians/members unleashed, the way is to "let go", to "set free", to "bring out sound in others" (Talgam, 2010). He reminded the obstacle originated in people in management/leadership position: if a great one talented in management, members would be able to do things individually they can not; if a bad one (an "idiot") in management, members would not be managed. When illustrating his ideas on interperson relation and team spirit, he referred to Maslow's human need pyramid for its transcendence need. He also stressed the importance of individual commitment and "shared meaning" for community (Talgam, 2010).

4.4.2. Harmony as an approach and Talgam's interpretations

Talgam explicitly adopted 'harmony' as a term defining his management thoughts. It is revolutionary, in a sense of embracing and integrating 'harmony' into management and developing it into an approach alone.

"Harmony is far from a state of Nirvana, a final, eternal, unchanging state of bliss. Harmony, in music and in life itself (including business life), is rather a continuous flow of well-coordinated movements and evolving relations between all who take part – sometimes dissonant relations, resolving in a higher state of agreement – creating a sense of achievement and joy" (Talgam, 2015). It is quite close to what Chinese harmony and Laozi harmony are defined by taking harmony as eternal, constant, changing process, and recognizing its ultimate positive outcomes of harmony.

In gnorance awareness, Talgam underlined features that are also seen in Laozi harmony: based on deep humbleness, being a sincere and devoted listener to others, is the way to inspire unpredictable brilliance; to release power of others prior to self-power. Non-doer concept in Talgam is close to wu wei (non-interference) in Laozi harmony; and his metaphor of conductor in an orchestra, vividly showed a harmonizer in a group, facilitated the whole group without a word, and in the end, as Laozi wrote when task accomplished, all members claim: *"We have done it by ourselves"*.

As one of the latest emerging management scholars, the fact that Talgam's cognitive codes having more affinity with Laozi harmony and harmonization approach, is insightful in terms of its contemporary meaning: among the four figures, his studies were the most recent ones for today and most adapted ones in use of media in this digitalized era.

4.5. Non-Western wisdom converging with Laozi harmony and harmonization

Besides prominent Western scholars, there are insights from other traditions that converge with Laozi harmony to some extent as well.

A caricature drawn by Kevin Nicoll with written illustration on Dead Horse Theory has gone viral in linkedin platform in terms of management wits (Nicoll, 2012). It tells

that in Indian tradition, *"When you discover that you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount"*. It is integrated into management realm as a metaphor to explain, when there is adversity, unfavorable situation, it's better to accept as it is, and it is a waste of energy, time, efforts to do all bureaucratic cliches that management studies teach people to do. It is similar to Laozi water-like metaphor, which tells to be willing to stay at any position including undesirable places. It is also in accord with Laozi harmony approach to follow natural laws of things and people, to allow the natural course of developments. It is conscious ignorance awareness to accept limits of human power, knowledge, and competency. It is not being passive, but being actively adapting to reality, and wisely to follow the deep flow of things, and fit in accordingly, conscious *wu wei* (non-interference) is wiser than conscious overconfidence, unconscious arrogance, unconscious ignorance. Accepting the horse is dead and act accordingly, is conscious *wu wei*. Indian tradition is also an old and rooted civilization, which deserves deeper exploration.

Aboriginal tradition is another evidence to imply how much indigenous traditions converge with one another and insightful for promising concepts to be discovered and described for sake of management.

Aboriginal philosophy, is by nature holistic and with wellbeing and spirituality in its central place. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe human beings "have spiritual connection to the land, sea, landforms, watercourses, the species and plant life" ever since time of creation and Law formed, and human beings and "species/landform/plant life are the same matters with different forms" with the latter as human beings' totem: s People therefore should learn to take responsibility for relationship with them (Grieves, 2009). It reminds the Holistic Oneness in Laozi harmony. The wellbeing dimension in Aboriginal philosophy might enrich our understanding on interaction between man and the nature.

Needless to say that there are many more indigenous traditions to explore, for more insights beyond harmony but obviously, harmony concept is potentially a promising theme to be adopted as an approach.

4.6. Harmonization, creativity and future preparation

The leaders of the future will be distinguished by their ability to collaborate and to be creative, whatever their context (Martin, 2007). It means that collaboration, unity and agreeable minds and acts are the supportive basis for desired goal and desirable results in future and in creativity.

Creativity can vary from a slight change to total change, creativity has been perceived in different ways as a mental ability, a process and a human behavior (Harris, 2009).

4.6.1. Harmonization and creativity

To enhance creativity is to make talents and imaginations released (Harris, 2009). It involves, personality traits (Amabile, 1993), relevant knowledge and developed skills (Simonton, 2000), expertise (Harris, 2009), cognitive ability to merge existing ideas to produce novel amalgamations (Kirton, 1989), imagination and flexibility in facing problems (Munoz-Doyague et al., 2008) in individual level. However, creativity is far more complex than just individual talents but a social issue, because the social environment can have impact on the intrinsic motivation of individuals at any time. Whereas the key indicators of intrinsic motivation are composed by satisfaction of curiosity, pleasure, personal challenges, self-expression and interest (Amabile, 1997).

The proper atmosphere for free thinking and creative applications is like how the soil be prosperous for seeds to grow. But we need to define creativity on a daily base since imaginary ideals shall also be connected with daily efforts, otherwise it wouldn't be meaningful for practices with each passing day accounted. It's important to redefine creativity within reality. When creativity sometimes means huge leap forward, some

might be daily norms refining existing practices (Harris, 2009). It is to come up with innovative ideas or novel procedures, and by reconfiguring existing ways into new alternative ways (Perry- Smith & Shalley, 2003).

The creative stance is actually mindset of both individuals and organizations. On a daily basis it contributes to the creative flow and energy of the individual, the team and the organization (Rickards & Moger, 2000). Enhancing awareness of individuals and organizations to make them meaningful to the creative flow and energy of the individual, the team, the organization, the community, is thus of significance for creativity. On the other hand, such a wide involvement of creativity initiation, formulates its need for commonality. Creativity is a by-product of professional collaboration, dialogue and disagreement (Harris, 2009).

The ability to visualize the entire organization and work with ideas and the relationships between abstract concepts (Katz, 1955), is of significance for a creative atmosphere for all levels. It takes conceptual competence to see through matters and capture the subtle 'invisible', see through the relations between parts and the whole picture. Besides such deep minds, there shall also be a mentally, spiritually, emotionally and more importantly, physically relaxing atmosphere to encourage differences, diversities and even tolerate ambiguity and complexity to avail new possibilities.

In the creative process, idea harmonization, the efforts taken for avoidance of disruptive ideas, increase in inclusiveness are also complementary approach for creativity. Enhancing social and task interdependence among people contribute to greater perspective-taking, and are positively related to both idea exploration and harmonization (Thomas, 2021).

Harmonization, in this sense, has the potential to avail collaboration and creativity in one common stand. It may contribute to creativity and future oriented mindset in terms of:

- Harmonious atmosphere for releasing individual talents

- Harmonious process to encourage involvement and engagement
- Transforming from ideas to pratice by a harmonious system

4.6.2. Harmonization and future preparation

In post covid-19 era, the major themes for all stakeholders include to repair and reconstruct the disrupted supply chain, closed borders, split cooperations and confused minds that tend to blame more than to self-reflect. Instability arise due to increasing political frictions, hyper inflation, poverty and more serious problems such as regional war, terrorism, climate change, cybersecurity and biosecurity. It is not only virus that recognizes no borders, there are many more serious challenges that are common to human being as a whole. Man is combined in common fate because in facing global issues, no benefit or harm is isolated.

Deeper understanding on the present adversities and timely recipe for possible reversing are undoubtedly in need. In a general sense, from pandemic covid-19 adversity cognitive awareness for management has been reinforced that (Xing, 2022):

- "Biology, climate, nature, other peoples beyond borders, those existent elements that were not taken seriously in political and commercial interests before, now plays an overwhelmingly negative role
- There is no such a thing that a single nation, sector, corporate, entity or any 'player' alone can keep its solely success while others are suffering failures
- Absence of connectivity and collaboration, could be disfavorable for all social activities and lives"

As a recent study on covid-19 related business failure reaches, there is a lack of systematical understanding of failures to 'manage' those challenges, and experiential knowledge resources might both be advantage and burden (Amankwah-Amoah, et al, 2022).

In 2020 World Economic Forum Insight Report, scholars submitted their observations and remedies for stepping out of the present adversities. Cooperation and

harmonization, stand in the central place. History repeats. But it should be allowed to repeat as failures.

The world has managed extreme conditions before. Leaders of the 1940s reflected on their failure to cooperate after the First World War, how it drove the world into economic catastrophe (the Great Depression) and conflict (the Second World War) and resolved to do better. They started planning during the war. They knew that cooperation would be essential to rebuild afterwards and to redevelop a global economy within which each country could grow. So, too, global leaders must begin to plan post-pandemic cooperation (Ngaire,2020). Regional cooperation to achieve collectively (Alter, 2020), win-win alternatives, multilateral action (Lamy & Pedrosa, 2020) are all pointing to necessity and urgency of harmonious minds and acts.

But stakeholders insist on separate stands, as always (Xing, 2022). Mental, emotional and social harmony has a long way to go. It is not enough to succeed. Others must fail (Vidal, 1925). Prevailing minds, are both biased and manipulated.

Just as Rowan Gibson observes, dominant management paradigm reflects larger architecture of thought (Gibson, 1997). In his book *Propaganda* written by Edward L. Bernays in 1928, there is a penetrating description on how dominant insights might shape and instruct the society.

> *"The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country"* (Edward, 1928).

On one hand, with the transformation and expansion of Industrialization Revolution, ideas of West context spread far reaching spheres, and remain influential till today; on the other hand, developments of information society today require alternatives due to challenges prevailing ideas failed to tackle.

In times of adversities, benefits might be shared, harms are definitely shared by human beings as a whole. Just as 17th Century poet John Donne said, "*any man's death*

diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Manipulation is in the best interest of the dominated groups (Dijk, 2006). Although they are minority in numbers, they are powerful.

> *"The minority has discovered a powerful help in influencing majorities. It has been found possible so to mold the mind of the masses that they will throw their newly gained strength in the desired direction"* (Edward, 1928).

Therefore, a truly holistic mindset on behalf of all, is of critical importance for conceptual thinking. Not to mention that the trend in management is the inclusiveness in both structure transformation and engagement involvement in an era of information and digitalized society. As stated previously, Chinese harmony is the concept that has potential to answer such an inclusiveness, with its rooted and well-developed diversified and dynamic harmony approaches.

Among Chinese harmony and harmonization approaches, *Laozi* harmony is of more holistic meaning and of the more distinctive meanings in conceptual insights, as stated in previous chapter.

Laozi harmonization, is a process to go from harmony to harmonization, which is is to apply harmony awareness and adapt to individual cognitive activity, to organizational planning, management and to facilitate state, process and outcome of harmony. Harmonization, involves the effort, devotion to spread the ideas and to formulate roadmap in each level. Since creativity can be seen as a mental process which produces novel and useful concepts or ideas, or it could be innovative relationships between existing ideas or concepts (Houran & Ference, 2006), to integrate *Laozi* harmony with present management context in which prevailing ideas mostly are from the West context, is also of creative and innovative meaning.

In one word, for future preparation, mindsets of harmony and harmonization are crucial and an creative alternative for uprising disturbance and turbulance at present by:

- presenting conceptual insights for solving existing problems
- connecting existing ideas and concepts

Laozi harmony, is not only an coherently cohesive system that can accommodate major concerns of conceptual skills in management, but also have either convergency or contract with influential selected representative thoughts illustrated above. It meanwhile either reinforces conceptual insights in familiar management literature unde West context, or enriches implications for deeper understanding on conceptual skills in management. From skills to competency, Laozi harmony approach is of the potential to be recognized as an approach to imply insights for challenges in conceptual skills in management.

More importantly, as an initial effort to draw attention to harmony as an alternative and/or complementary approach for conceptual skills in management, this study gives implications for further conceptual explorations on harmony from other approaches from Chinese harmony and from other harmony traditions in the world.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1. Findings

Effective management has been an old and significant issue throughout history and across civilizations. Yet there has not been agreed ideas on what effective managers should be despite numerous studies over the centuries.

Prominent management scholar Robert L. Katz proposed a basic skills framework composed by conceptual skills, human skills, and technical skills, which was published in renowned management voice *Harvard Business Review* (Katz, 1955/1974). It was the first scientific and structured discussion on managerial skills. Katz's work was widely recognized and became foundation for numerous studies under the same theme of managerial skills for sake of effective management. Yet studies following him have not gone beyond the major achievements of Kazts, and have just either added something to his categorizations for the fundamental core managerial skills or elaborated further on each of the core skills (Peterson & Fleet, 2004).

Conceptual skills are the ability to see the enterprise as a whole, recognizing dependency and mutual effects between various functions, extending such wholeness view into industry, community, all forces of the nation as a whole (Katz, 1974). Conceptual skills inherently bear abstractness and elusive nature. Conceptual skills are regarded as crucial above all skills and correlated with top management (Katz, 1955/1974). Conceptual skills are specialized knowledge based cognitive process that enable individuals to be in managerial positions (Bowen and Siehl, 1997; Cross, 2000; Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Tosi and Tosi, 1986). Conceptual skills are agreeably recognized as core mental power of the whole ecosystem of management, being integrated with managerial functions including goal setting, strategic planning,

mapping, decision making, operating and policy making. Major dimensions can be extracted as:

- Wholeness view (Katz, 1955; Bernad,1968; Daft, 2012)
- Long-term view (Mumford & Campion, 2007)
- Complex problems (Mumford & Campion, 2007)
- Achieving organizational goal (Katz, 1955)

Intuitional, emotional and aesthetic dimensions were also included into conceptual skills including 'feeling', 'judgement', 'sense', 'proportion', 'balance', 'appropriateness' (Barnard, 1968). But all those studies bear inadequacy and undergo challenges due to the facts that those studies are sporadic, with limited elaboration, lack of systematic approach and rooted accumulation, short time span covered, and West context orientation. Meanwhile new challenges today require conceptual skills in management to update. Inclusiveness trend in management, flatter structure in organizations, empowerment of individuals, emerging self-management models, as well as era of information, communication and digitalization are among those challenging awaiting available studies on conceptual skills in management to respond. Alternative and/or complementary approach might be insightful for conceptual implication.

Harmony is of the oldest tradition at all times. It has been an influential concept and value in various social contexts. Harmony is not only a concept being embedded in old traditions but also being developed, applied, enriched across cultures, surpassing time and space. Harmony plays decisive role in Asia in particular (Yau & P.M.Chow, 2007), and is the core value of Chinese culture. Harmony has been studied, pursued and applied by proficient administrators, and is commonly adapted among Chinese as psychological character and value judging criteria (Chang, 2007).

Though individually diversified according to context, harmony can still be described as an agreeable totality of agreeable parts, whereas

- each part of the totality is related to other;

- all parts contribute to the formation of the totality in sense of wholeness;
- it is a dynamic process of time and space. (Cheng, 1989)

At different historical stage, harmony concept developed and was applied to almost all social aspects in Chinese tradition. Harmony is alive in at least 10 aspects of Chinese tradition from ancient time to modern time including philosophies, virtues, politics, ethic relations, religions, aesthetics, medical sciences, harmonious unity of human and universe, academic thoughts and folk cultures (Cheng, 2010).

Harmony is both theory and practice not only in history but also in contemporary administration context in China. In 2004, to construct a "harmonious society" was set as strategic goal of Chinese public administration to tackle various social challenges, integrate all force.

To understand how Chinese harmony can be a promising instrument to accommodate conceptual skills in management as a complementary and alternative concept, a descriptive study on Chinese harmony is necessary.

Chinese harmony 和 hé（harmony）, initially means musical performance or accordance of singing sounds. It was connotated with music, flavors (Lu, 2004) cooking (Fung, 1962), and poetry (Holzman, 1978). Meanwhile Chinese harmony is inherently holistic: The Five-Elements-Theory, which is as old as from 1600 BC (Legge, 2000), discusses the harmonious relations and interactions of heaven 天 (Tian), earth 地 (Di) and human beings 人 (Ren), who are interconnected by universal powers that generate creative and destructive impact (Lee, 2012). Standing on a holistic view in a broad sense, harmony has been enriched, adopted, and integrated in social context as an influential framework, guideline, core value and approach from ancient China to contemporary era.

It is philosopher and prominent administrator Shi Bo 史伯 in Western Zhou (1046–771 BC) period that raised harmony as a concept in social context and correlated it with administration. He defined harmony and sameness, stated that the essence of productivity was correlated with diversity with harmony, namely both harmony and

variety would necessary if positiveness is wanted; sameness would just bring destruction, uniformity would ruin growth. when he was a known for the Dynasty responsible composing official documents and compiling history bookThe leading Confucian classic book Zhong Yong (The Doctrine of the Mean) entailed harmony, in the connotative sense of advocating the middle path between the extremes.

Dong Zhongshu (179–104 BC), Chinese philosopher and politician of the Han Dynasty, explicitly integrated the universal harmony and human behavior (Lee, 2014). Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692), Chinese historian and philosopher of the late Ming, early Qing dynasties, illustrated with adequate reasonings that the two opposite sides of Things during conflicts, are both apart and united, opposite and integrated; harmony is a wise choice (Cheng, 2010).

Harmony has been studied, practiced and constantly expanded as an inherent concept and system in Chinese culture and society for millennia. Their meanings and connotations have been transformed into detailed insights by the joint efforts and been transformed into thousands of years of management practices. Harmony's function as the key for all Things to flourish have been well awared of in all aspect of Chinese society throughout of the time. Being an established and well developed core value, Chinese harmony has rich accumulations. Among numerous approaches of Chinese harmony, Confucian harmony is of comprehensive, established and applicable features and for these reasons has been widely applied and referred to in history and today.

Confucianism regards harmony as the existence of different things and certain favorable relationship among them (Wei & Li, 2013). Confucian school includes many philosophers with three prominent representative figures better known: Confucius 孔子 (551–479 BC), Mencius 孟子 (372–289 BC), and Xunzi 荀子（313—238BC). They disagreed on nature of human beings as for the answer of man are born being good or bad, and their perception on harmony vary accordingly. As a more recognized figure among them, Confucius harmony based on the book of his sayings *Analects*(论语, Lun Yu) has a representative meaning as a system.

- Knowledge learning
- Ethical codes
- State of equilibrium
- Embracing differences
- Hierarchy order

There are also other views enriching Chinese harmony, including Mozi (470BC – 391BC) harmony, Laozi （571BC- unknown）harmony, Zhangzi (approximately 369BC-286BC) harmony, Wang Fuzi (1619-1692) harmony, each develops, deepens and broadens connotation and denotation of harmony in human, social and holistic dimensions.

In 2004 to 'construct a harmonial society （构建和谐社会）' became strategic aim of Chinese administration. This recent macro and overwhelming management practice of harmony reflects its inherent nature in China and deep socio-cultural basement.

Chinese harmony originated from and evolved under its unique natural, social and historical conditions. But it does is an approach rich in accumulation both in theories and in practices in terms of insights for conceptual skills in management.

- Chinese harmony is composed by intents to address problems and challenges of the time each philosopher and administrators lived.
- Harmony is an accomodating, well-knitted system in Chinese tradition. It means coexistence of varities with equilium and balance. It's a dynamic process rather than static; it's self-transformational, evolving and changing.
- Although varying on definition and approach, it's agreed in Chinese harmony that: harmony is productive, positive while disharmony is harmful in individual, social and cosmotical levels.
- Harmony is not uniformity nor sameness. Variety, diversity and difference are inherently embodied in harmony. Harmony has eternity as reality rather than being ideal or imagination. Harmony is a dynamic process with constant change.

- Combination of different approaches presents comprehensive suggestive solutions for understanding and tacking almost all major issues of mankind including: human nature, social order, ethical codes, knowledge building, meaning of life, attitude and lifestyle, relations between human, nature and universe, human behaviors, cognitive and intrinsic journey, sustainability.

It shall be clarified that Chinese harmony in this study is used solely in conceptual sense. It by no means has geographical implications.

Other harmony thoughts from various traditions such as 'αρμονία' in Greek, 'ahenk' in Turkish tradition, 'ajumorin' or 'ijeyepo' in Yoruba, 'kwanciyar hankali' in Hausa language of West African traditions, and a lot more alike are also implicable for conceptual skills in management.

In reality, gaps in management continue to sweat managers in their professional journey. Expectations over them inflate constantly while practical cognitive route for effective and efficient management keep being elusive. Roadmap for conceptual skills are not readily available. Wholeness awareness and harmonious mindsets are needed in management to a great extent but cognitive codes under West context have not yet closed the gaps. Chinese harmony in this sense is a promising and applicable choice to be integrated and developed into an alternative and complementary approach for conceptual skills in management literature.

The three major schools of thoughts in China are Daoism/Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. It's believed that the main stream of Chinese philosophy is Daoism, since most of the principal concepts in traditional Chinese philosophy originate from it (Chen, 1999). Founder of Daoism Laozi, left only one written record: the book Dao De Jing (DDJ, The Way), which is the second most translated text in the world only after the Holy Bible and had over 50 translations available (Co, 2009). Laozi was recognized as one of the fifty key figures in management both for East and West (Witzel, 2003). Laozi's script DDJ, has been the source of related studies over

thousands of years, and its interpretations keep varying, evolving and being adaptive with time and theme.

Laozi harmony has a more holistic meaning than other approaches while Laozi's thoughts are characterized as 'order and harmony at all levels' (Chan, 2018). Harmony was explained by Laozi in musical, individual, social, cognitive and universal levels, knitting scattered ideas on different aspects into one single cohesive and depictive framework. Such elaborations make Laozi harmony a comprehensive, cohesive and coherent system capable of being an approach alone. This study focuses on representative brief description on harmony of *Laozi* prioritizing three themes:

- Laozi's perception on harmony
- How Laozi views harmony as a dynamic process
- Laozi approach to facilitate harmony

Harmony is constancy, dynamic circle and process, with duality features in Laozi harmony system. The opposite two sides of Things, are interdependent, complementary with each other, and keep reversing to the other side constantly. During constant changes within its circle, state of things in totality is reflected in harmony under due balance and disharmony under imbalance. Each part of the totality plays a role in the process and owns a due say for formulating the ultimate outcome of the total harmony or disharmony.

In Chinese harmony, it's believed that harmony brings about productivity, positiveness, prosperity, while disharmony interrupts things natural flow, terminates their ongoing development and possible sustainability, becomes the barrier for things to be themselves or grow. When the state turns into disharmony, the things, people, society, and universe itself, adjusts it spontaneously for sake of balance and harmony, with its own will and pace. But human beings might not be inherently gifted with harmony awareness nor ability. They are likely to be induced, hunted, distorted, infected by extravagant desires, secular/societal norms, values and are tending to be ignorant, void of *Dao*, or to be deviated from harmony consciousness and competency.

Therefore, Laozi presents an approach to enhance harmony awareness and facilitate harmonization.

First of all, harmony is perceived as a state with eternity and as a reality in Laozi's teachings. Harmony, is a dynamic process with constant change. It is composed of *yin* and *yang*, pair of opposites of Things, while the pair is interdependent, complementary and continuously reversing to the other end. The harmony eternity has its own play in universe and when harmony turns into disharmony, it readjusts it spontaneously. The harmony awareness for human beings, however, is not gifted inherently, since man is likely to be deviated from harmony awareness due to tendency to be affected, distorted, and redefined by society/secular norms surrounded. So, efforts are necessary to obtain and maintain harmony awareness, and for its enhancement.

Laozi harmony, can be described as an approach, which is useful to facilitate harmony awareness and harmony competency. Along with the harmony perception stated above, ways to obtain and improve harmony awareness and competency, include self-cultivation, self-localization and self-integration. Self-cultivation is composed of tranquil mind, with connotations as calmness, humbleness and pureness in mind and heart; of embracing attitude and lifestyle with simplicity, austerity, virtue and sincerity; of life-long pursuit of self-perfection. Self-localization is composed of ignorance awareness, with humbleness, being void of desires like infancy and with equipment of analytical mind on 'prevailing' knowledge, constant self-reflective, self-criticizing mind-set; of proper self-identification avoiding overconfidence; of conscious *wu wei* (non-action/non-interference), allowing other forces to play to the greatest extent, minimalistic governance, exampling and proper management. Self-integration is composed of water-like approach with tolerance, modesty, avoiding sharpness, bearing softness, endurance and perseverance, yieldingness; of Holistic Oneness with spiritual, aesthetic, social, and environment dimensions and mindfulness to adopt self-integration.

Laozi harmony approach, is a comprehensive, cohesive, and coherent system itself. It has rich implications for conceptual skills in management. So far as available studies on conceptual skills in management are concerned, Laozi harmony approach can response the four major themes: 'wholeness view', 'long-term view', 'complex problems', as well as 'achieving the organization goal' to a great extent.

Laozi harmony approach presents wholeness view in a system of holistic oneness with conceptual subtleness.

Laozi harmony explains process of evolving and developing by its nature of endless circle with duality. While inherently being of long-term perspective, it defines uncertainty with certainty, clarifies elusiveness with routes.

Laozi harmony, answers complex problems in a realistic and holistic standing point. On conflicts, it invites people to see nvited to see through the deeper interdependency, and mutual transformative power of the opposites. On balancing private interests and the common good, it implies that giving is obtaining and winning, even promisingly rewarding. On differences and diversities, it suggests a conceptual perspective transferring from self-serving to fostering others to serve all so as the self-benefit as well. On competition, it proposes an avoid-competition mentality, water-like non-competition tactic to be accommodating, adaptive, beneficial to others, low-profile and flexible competence, and discloses generative strategies for various situations.

For achieving the organizational goal, individual goal is integrated with organization goal in Laozi harmony. Desires, ambitions, ego, power and organization goal are gathered in one conceptual framework. Harmonious mind, harmonious team, harmonious organization, harmonious society are based on self-cultivation at all levels: Laozi harmony, encourages and persuades internal forces to foster growth, initiates a strong desire to learn, to explore, to self-reflect and to self-criticize. It implies convincing reasons for being a learning self and a learning organization. Far beyond ethic codes or ideal imagination, Laozi harmony is an established framework for conceptual skills in management.

Conceptual skills in management work on abstract concepts and ideas, inviting for intuitive experience generating productivity, adaptivity and creativity. Laozi harmony, in both individual level and community level, helps to obtain spiritual pureness and is a kind of conceptual meditation, transformation and for some maybe adventure. By presenting a comprehensive approach on harmony, Laozi harmony enriches intuitive observation, and broadens conceptual experiences.

Yet Laozi harmony competency is not something to be obtained with ease. It takes great efforts to understand, to explore, to embrace, to adopt. It is when one starts to learn spontaneously from everything that is the stage to be emerged with its insights, and which calls for three '**Re**':

(1) Redefining self: the initial step is to abandon existent fullness, to be all-around self-critical with self-reflection at the front line.

(2) Reshaping: it is to discard edges, shapes, borders, and return to pure state like infancy, so as to accept, transform self into shape desired for at will, just like how dust and light be.

(3) Refreshing: it is the constant change of conceptual location, efforts to enlarge and refresh conceptual space.

Comparison increases visibility. It's striking to observe that Laozi harmony has convergence with prominent management scholars in West context, to a great extent beyond familiar literature. Fundamentally influential four figures in modern and contemporary management studies are deliberately selected and compared with Laozi harmony in their most relevant perspectives. Rather than the other numerous alternatives, the selection of the four figures is based on an order of timeline they lived/ live and the principle of:

- Representativeness in mainstream management mindsets and degree of recognition
- Relevance with Laozi harmony in terms of managerial thoughts for conceptual implications

- Visibility in illustrating similarity or difference between recognized Western context and Laozi harmony context in terms of conceptual implications

The four figures are:

(1) Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527): "universally famous" "father of modern political philosophy and political science" (Whelan, 2004; Smith, 2008) Italian diplomat, author and philosopher;

(2) Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-1970): "the 10th most cited psychologist of the 20th century" (Haggbloom et al., 2002), renowned American psychologist;

(3) Michael Eugene Porter (1947-): "the most cited scholar today in economics and business", widely recognized researcher across disciplines, and around the globe, remarkable American academic scholar, teacher, and prominent business and management consultant;

(4) Itay Talgam (1958-), Israel conductor, leadership scholar, and business consultant.

Although the four figures vary in nationality, cultural background, and scope and degree of recognition, they all share the similar characteristics of being popular in management mindsets under Western context, and have close affinity with Laozi harmony and harmonization, either in a convergent or contradictory way but both so distinguishingly apparent and sharp that they are of significant conceptual implications for management.

Laozi and Machiavelli illustrated their ideas on orders of effective administrators with t**he same parameters** while Laozi is about one thousand years earlier than Machiavelli.

The distinctive difference between Machiavelli and Laozi, lies in to be 'hard' or to be 'soft' and to govern or to harmonize.

A determined, firm-handed image of a 'leader' vividly depicted in those lines in Machiavelli's detailed illustrations, still very much alive in adored images of 'leaders' today. Irrevocable of the 'ruler/leader's decision, confirms his/her power, strength, authority and, prestige.

The focus of Laozi harmony, is to allow and release infinite power of others, rather than maximizing self-strength, self-power, self-influence, nor being symbol of worship. A leaders/ruler/manager in Laozi's approach, does not even have to be known: what is more important is **things done, naturally and properly**, while people involved are able to claim: *"We have done it by ourselves"*.

The recessive and dominant pair, are totally oppositely shown between Machiavelli and Laozi: the former, reinforces the mainstream recognized image of charismatic 'leader'; the latter prioritizes vast majority of people and depicts an invisible, indefinite but flexible and adaptive, image of harmonizer without certain form.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs model has implications for management in many aspects including organizational performance (Kaur, 2013), organizational culture, human resources and employee's performance (Jerome, 2013), thoughts on management and current practices (Maslow, 1998), cultural dimension (Jelavic & Ogilvie, 2010) and the alike.

It's noticeable that Maslow's being values and perception/cognition are based on Daoism (Maslow, 1971; Lee, et al., 2008). Connections between Maslow's thoughts and *Laozi* harmony approach can be observed in comparative analyses.

The achieved "desirable management result without a word" model from Laozi, *wu wei* (non-interference) harmonization, was given supportive evidence in Maslow's example illustration. He explained that in basketball team, those members not being selfish and having team spirit, form the team in which the leader's power is not deliberately but voluntarily given by the particular people in the particular situation. The leadership is accomplished without influence or order (Maslow, 1965; Lee, et al., 2008): this echoes *Laozi* harmonization outcome when tasks accomplished and people involved would claim:*"We have done it by ourselves"*. As an influential managerial study, Maslow's direct reference to *Laozi* and his efforts to strengthen Laozi's insights in *wu wei* (non-interference) harmonization via case study in management, provide inspiring route for further elaboration on harmony as an accommodating approach. It

meanwhile exhibits a critical direct connection between Maslow and Laozi in terms of ideal competent model of management: spontaneous achieved *wu wei* harmony and management.

The convergence between Maslow and Laozi harmony can be found in the following aspects, conceptually:

- Interaction between human beings and wholeness of man as one community
- Components of one wholeness when being agreeable, they emit desirable outcome
- Spontaneously formed teamwork and realized success achieved by *wu wei* (non-interference)
- Serving and benefitting others selfishlessly, across borders, it is water-like integration and harmonization in a holistic perspective
- Spontaneous motivation as internal force of human beings
- Spiritual dimension of human health is related to internal and external integration

The differences between Maslow and Laozi include purpose, focus, self-refrain and self-perfection. Harmony is the one defining those differences since Laozi harmony stresses self-refrain and self-perfection to facilitate harmonious mindsets, processes, and outcomes.

As "the most cited scholar today in economics and business", Porter's thoughts, formulate influentially what and how the economics and business are being managed, and scholarly cognitive codes developed today. Porter thinks "Competition is at the core of the success of failure of firms[83]" (Porter, 1985), and his Five Force framework has impacted management and conceptual skills fundamentally. When competition

[83] Porter, M. E., (1985), Competitive Advantage, The Free Press, A Division of Maxwell Macmillan, Inc.: New York, 1.

taken as pervasive and inevitable in business arena, Porter's studies have become pervasive in business literature, his competitive strategies and logic building cognitive codes beneath are recognized as self-generative.

There are slightly converging points but apparent different points between Porter's thoughts and Laozi harmonization.

When Porter includes forces in various aspects of an industry, the focus is on self-localizing position of and enhancing competitiveness of a firm by standing on behalf of the firm: it is converging with Laozi harmony in terms of self-localizing and self-identification in a complex web of different forces. The purpose of Porter wholeness awareness is for advantage of business goal while Laozi harmony is for harmonious outcome of individual, human community both respectively and as a whole.

The ignorance awareness is attached importance both in Porter's and Laozi's thoughts, but the degree and scope vary largely: obviously in Porter's thoughts, it's clearly defined as five forces, while in *Laozi* harmony approach, ignorance awareness is something should be carried with consciously comprehensive in every aspect, process, and situation.

On competition is the two vary significantly. According to Porter, under a competition context, it is an inevitable choice to choose being a strategy equipped one so as to be a winner who occupies a favorable position. However, according to Laozi, is competition inevitable, is competition existent every corner and is competition a must for all, should be re-asked and people should rethink the relation between Things and human beings.

On consumption, the two disagree greatly too. Porter's studies undoubtedly have supported consumption-oriented marketing to a tremendous degree. Added value for consumers has become classical slogan of brandings: although what value for whose well beings remains to be arguable. In sharp contrast with this, Laozi harmony is firmly against consumption. It advocates plain, simple and austere lifestyle, criticizes enthusiastic attitude on consumption, on extravagant lifestyle in particular, and takes

them as roots of ruining of social order and harmony, since such behaviors from governing/dominant powers will cause great resentment destructive for social structure.

On mindsets building society, 'competition', is a term easily invoking 'rivalry' alertness in minds, either in a team, an organization, a community. Laozi harmony, suggests an alternative approach of not to look for competition, nor to be dominated with competitive advantage addiction, not to fight with force to forces, but to avoid being involved into competition; by being water-like, accommodating, adaptive, beneficial to others, low-profile and flexible competence, one will naturally disclose generative strategies for various situations.

Conceptual implication arises here is a matter of preference. Competition vs. harmony: which one to prefer for a better self, team, society? By comparing Porter's five forces framework and Laozi harmony, we here encounter a standing point to rethink and dive into.

Talgam is the one who explicitly integrate 'harmony' into management/leadership and develops cognitive codes for a kind of harmony leadership composed of ignorance, gap and keynote listening (Talgam, 2015). Talgam depicted a provoking leadership model extracted from orchestra conductor: a leadership with its ultimate challenge as creating perfect harmony without saying a word (Talgam, 2009). Ignorance has a striking positive meaning in Talgam leadership thoughts. He believes that "ignorant someone can teach other ignorant on something they are ignorant about". To avail productivity is to "set free", to "bring out sound in others" (Talgam, 2010). "Harmony is far from a state of Nirvana, a final, eternal, unchanging state of bliss. Harmony, in music and in life itself (including business life), is rather a continuous flow of well-coordinated movements and evolving relations between all who take part – sometimes dissonant relations, resolving in a higher state of agreement – creating a sense of achievement and joy" (Talgam, 2015). It is quite close to what Chinese harmony and *Laozi* harmony are defined by taking harmony as eternal, constant, changing process, and recognizing its ultimate positive outcomes of harmony.

As one of the latest emerging management scholars, the fact that Talgam's cognitive codes having more affinity with Laozi harmony and harmonization approach, is insightful in terms of its contemporary meaning: among the four figures, his studies were the most recent ones for today and most adapted ones in use of media in this digitalized era.

There are also non-Western wisdom converging with Laozi harmony and harmonization, such as Dead Horse Theory, a metaphor from Indian tradition. It tells when there is adversity, unfavorable situation, it's better to accept as it is, and it is a waste of energy, time, efforts to do all bureaucratic cliches that management studies teach people to do. It has convergence with Laozi water-like metaphor in a sense, which contains the meaning to follow the flow, be willing to stay at any position including undesirable places.

Aboriginal tradition is another evidence to imply how much indigenous traditions converge with one another and insightful for promising concepts to be discovered and described for sake of management.

Aboriginal philosophy, is by nature holistic and with wellbeing and spirituality in its central place. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe human beings "have spiritual connection to the land, sea, landforms, watercourses, the species and plant life" ever since time of creation and Law formed, and human beings and "species/landform/plant life are the same matters with different forms" with the latter as human beings' totem: s People therefore should learn to take responsibility for relationship with them (Grieves, 2009). It reminds the Holistic Oneness in Laozi harmony. The wellbeing dimension in Aboriginal philosophy might enrich our understanding on interaction between man and the nature.

Among Chinese harmony and harmonization approaches, Laozi harmony is of more holistic meaning and of the more distinctive meanings in conceptual insights.

Laozi harmonization, is a process to go from harmony to harmonization, which is is to apply harmony awareness and adapt to individual cognitive activity, to

organizational planning, management and to facilitate state, process and outcome of harmony. Harmonization, involves the effort, devotion to spread the ideas and to formulate roadmap in each level. Since creativity can be seen as a mental process which produces novel and useful concepts or ideas, or it could be innovative relationships between existing ideas or concepts (Houran & Ference, 2006), to integrate *Laozi* harmony with present management context in which prevailing ideas mostly are from the West context, is also of creative and innovative meaning.

Pandemic Covid-19 has changed the business world and the entire world profoundly, and its consequences is hardly to be foreseen. But some trends have shown their future directions in an explicit way.

(1) Collaboration is not alternative but necessity.

"Cognitive awareness for management has been reinforced that (Xing, 2022):

- Biology, climate, nature, other peoples beyond borders, those existent elements that were not taken seriously in political and commercial interests before, now plays an overwhelmingly negative role
- There is no such a thing that a single nation, sector, corporate, entity or any 'player' alone can keep its solely success while others are suffering failures
- Absence of connectivity and collaboration, could be disfavorable for all social activities and lives".

The adversities and challenges human beings face as a community require man to unite and act as a Oneness with agreeable mind-set. It's beyond ethical codes or corporate value, but objective reason for sustainable survival of all stakeholders, if put under harmony framework to think conceptually.

Harmony hereby presents a rich territory for enhancing conceptual skills to respond to gaps and inclusiveness.

(2) Transformations take place in various aspects that require updated conceptual cognitive codes to adapt to new challenges.

In this era of digitalized and information society, genuine communication to enhance cooperation and collaboration, are needed as well, while true and genuine communicative exchange, is to "extend the degree of mutual understanding, explode the force of mutual respect, expand the space of mutual acceptance, then it should refer to a harmonious state of equilibrium and co-production originated from the mutual exchange" (Chen, 2015).

As aftermaths of pandemic covid-19, in labor markets, new challenges require a more comprehensive perspective from employers to take into more factors into account, to redefine employee-employer correlation and readjust their mindsets. Shortage of labor, remote working models, more access to labor markets and increased confidence, are among the reasons why more employees leave workforce. There are also others factors impacting workforce challenges such as social economic pressure, work life balance, and emotional reasons. Companies have to renew their offers and "build a value proposition that takes employees' whole lives into account" (Smet et al., 2022). Holistic connectivity and its theoretical framework are in need for deeper understanding and reinforcement of sporadic awareness. A systematic approach of 'connectivity' will be helpful to illuminate frustrated minds.

All of those are in need of cognitive codes to support. Harmony and harmonious mindsets might be a timely approach to facilitate "genuine collaboration", "value proposition" that covers connectivity in a more holistic and accommodating framework.

Information society, is based on information, insights. Constant remodifying, adaptive, information sharing, informative, efforts accordingly in awareness, application, system construction and reconstruction. As being in the process of information society, it is a following the natural flow to connect past and go forward toward future, by building its steps above accumulation of past wisdom. Avoiding doings to formulate disharmony, and embracing, facilitating harmony awareness,

harmony approach might help to improve ability to survive and thrive, to improve healthy, sustainable insights for the whole community.

5.2. Limits of the study

Limits of the study include:

(1) Only few studies of Chinese harmony are introduced, and each approach is illustrated with limited lines.

(2) Only Laozi harmony approach is elaborated and extracted, while the others remain undisclosed.

(3) Only four figures of prominent management scholars under West context are compared with Laozi harmony to certain extent, while more comprehensive selection of figures and ideas are likely possible

(4) Only decriptive literature review is adopted as the methodology of the study, other methodologies may also be referred to for deeper understanding and exploration

5.3. Further studies

Following this initial study to draw attention to harmony concept's potential to respond to new challenges conceptual skills in management undergo, further researches on other approaches in Chinese harmony, other approaches in other harmony traditions in the world will enrich findings on harmony concept and further discover its contributions to conceptual skills and competency in management. On the other hand, studies on harmony approach for conceptual skills in management will of conceptual implications for interpreting and exploring harmony concept.

Further elaborations on harmony approach and integrations with management observations and applications will be contributive to management studies, mindset as well as practices to the extent which cannot be foreseen at present.

Figure 1.1. Three basic skills necessary in different management levels

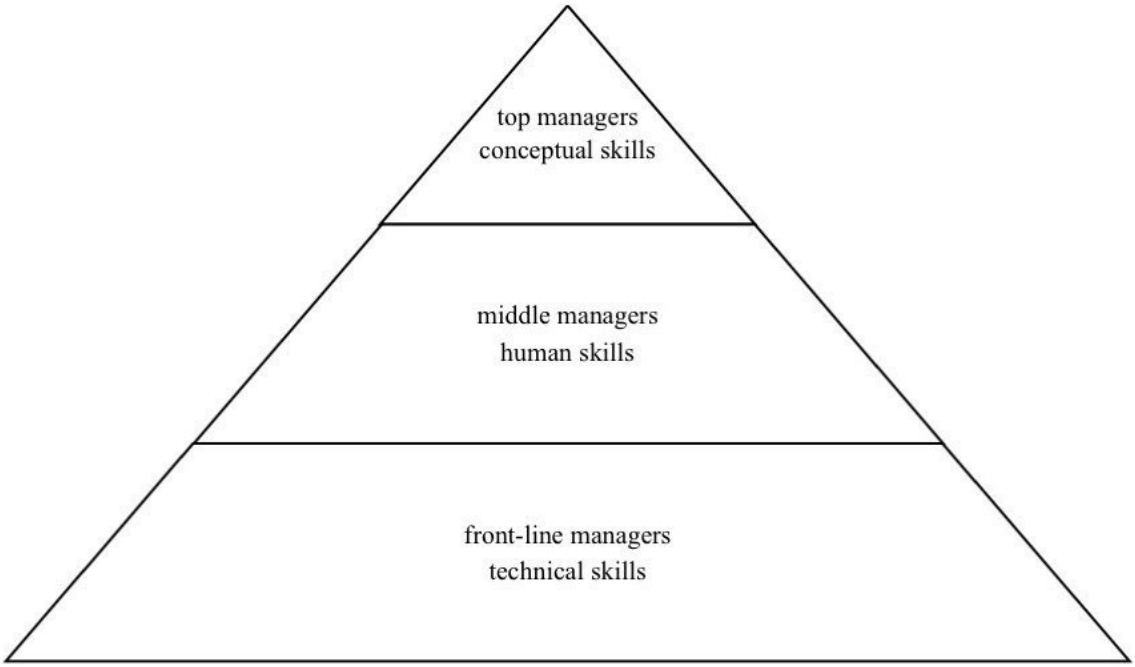


Figure 1.1. Three basic skills necessary in different management levels**,** adapted from "Skills of an Effective Administrator," by R. L. Katz, 1955, Harvard Business Review, 33(1),33–42.

Figure 2.1. Confucius harmony hierarchy diagram

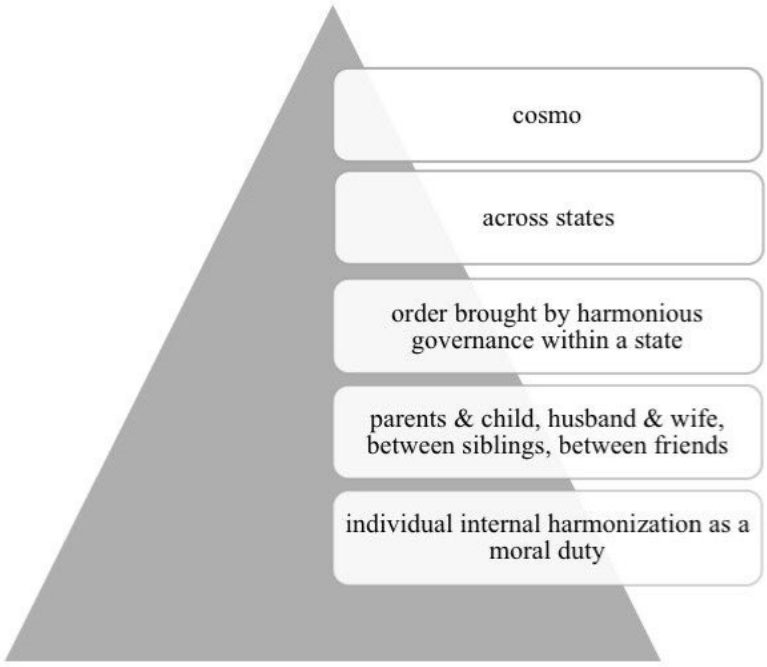


Figure 2.1. Confucius harmony hierarchy diagram, adapted from Li, C. (2008), The philosophy of harmony in classical Confucianism, Philosophy Compass, 3(3), 429

Figure 2.2. theoretical harmony diagram extracted from Chinese harmony

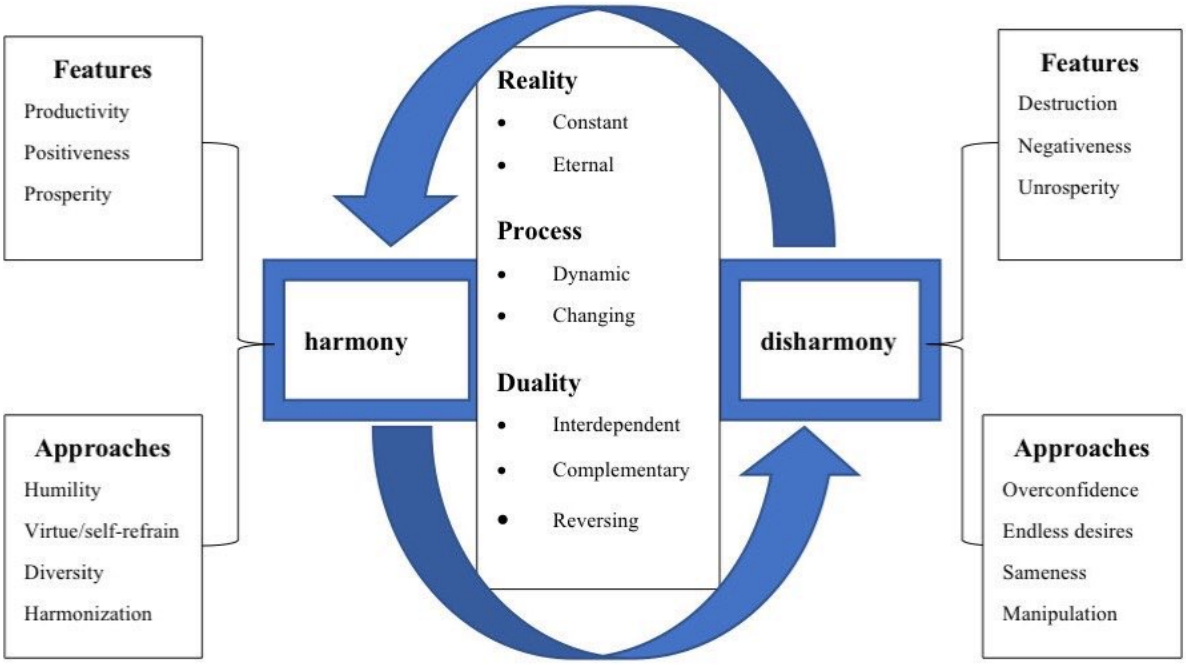


Figure 2.2. theoretical harmony diagram extracted from Chinese harmony, developed by the author

Figure 3.1. Laozi's illustrations on harmony

Original quotation[84]	**Chapter No. in *Dao De Jing (The Way)***	**English translation**	**Explanation and implication**[85]
音声相**和**，前后相随。	2	*"sound and voice harmonize with each other, front and back follow each other".*	Existence of harmony is regarded as reality. Musical harmony is metaphorical example of natural, social and universal harmony.
六亲不**和**有孝慈。	18	*"When the six relations are not in accord,* *There are filial piety and paternal affection".*	Social harmony is implied through family harmony; appearance of emphases on virtues is due to lack of virtue in dominant positions; disharmony comes together with lack of virtues from the top.
万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为**和**。	42	*"All things carry the female and embrace the male.* *And by breathing together, they live in harmony".*	Universal harmony is holistic approach for everything; harmony is everywhere by form of duality *yin* and *yang.*
终日呼而不嗄，**和**之至也。	55	*"Howling and screaming all day without getting hoarse;* *This is the zenith of harmony".*	Being void of ambitions and desires, an infant does not lose any energy even after screaming a whole day. Being free of unnecessary desires, and with pureness, there is humanistic and spiritual harmony, which enables everlasting energy; individual, natural, social perspectives in harmony, where heart and soul management play a role.
知**和**曰常，知常曰明。	55	*"To know harmony means to be constant;* *To know constancy means enlightenment."*	Harmony awareness is constant wisdom, the access to such wisdom is to follow the natural eternal rules rather than to overestimate human ability, self-ability.
和其光，同其尘。	56	*"Blend with light.* *Become one with the dust".*	The sage is concerned with all lives, integrated plainly with light and dust, void of egoism, superiority, disputes, trouble, thus only left with harmony. It tells cognitive harmony; self-

[84] The Chinese resource is from the book Lazozi-Zhuangzi 老子·庄子, Huawen Publishing House, 2009 edition

[85] This part is illuminated by the author

			management, integration with surroundings and things, and is a holistic approach for disputes, competitions, conflicts, differences and changes.
和大怨，必有余怨。	79	*"The settlement of great grudge always leaves some residue grudge"!*	It analyzed social harmony between governing and governed; if being governed are obliged to feel too much resentment, even if it's settled somewhat, the conflicts remain and will be far away from harmony, thus correspondent disasters come close. The governing side shall be humanistic and virtuous. Once disharmony cultivated, undesirable consequences are inevitable. Consequently speaking, harmony seeds shall be planted at root, disharmony shall be avoided from the origin.

Figure 3.1. *Laozi*'s illustrations on harmony, designed and developed by the author

Figure 3.2. Laozi harmony approach

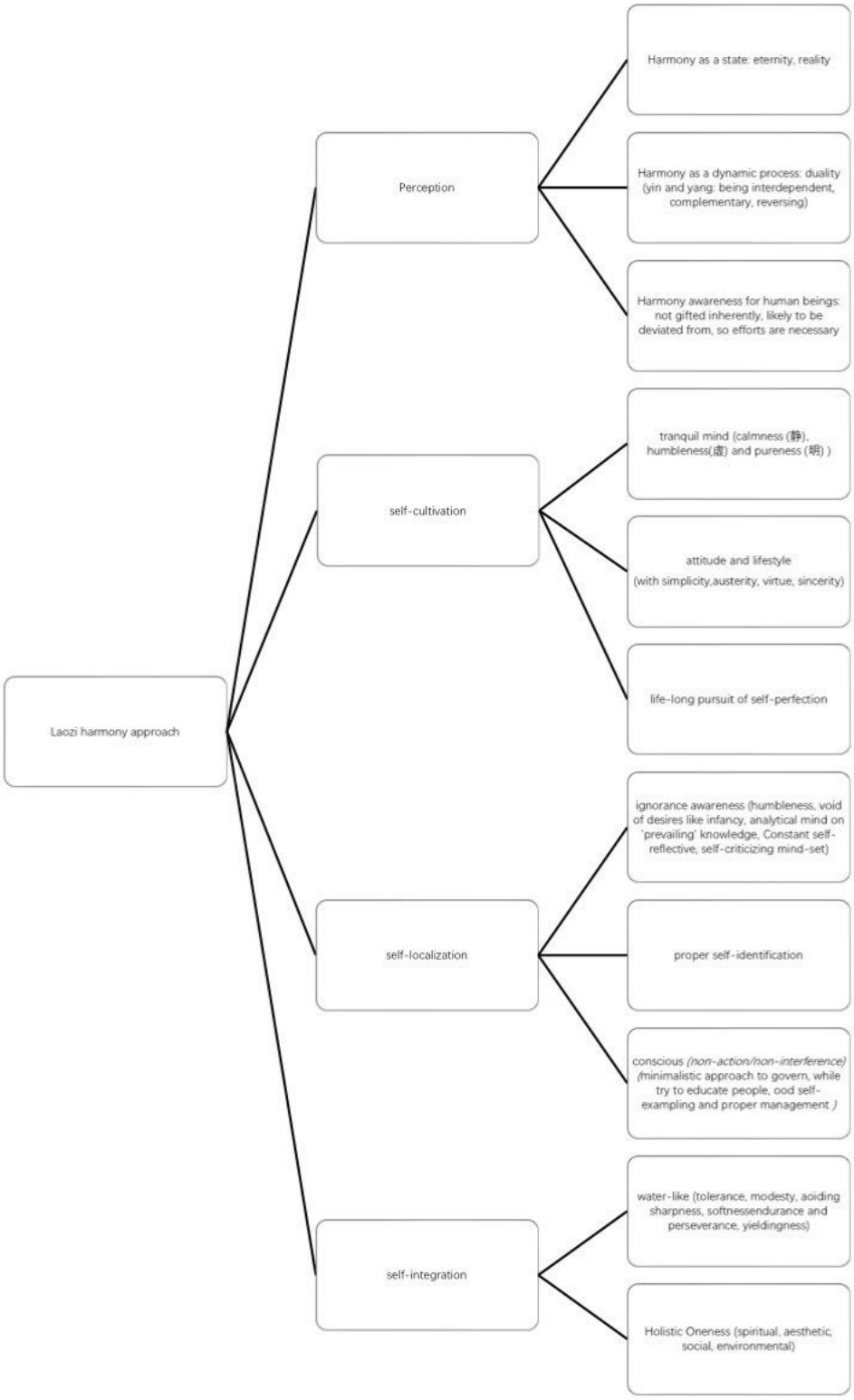


Figure 4.1. Hierarchy of leaders' category: Machiavelli and Laozi

Hierachy of leaders' category: assessment on governance/management competency	**Machiavelli**	**Laozi**
Best ruler/administrator	Both being loved and feared The power of rulers lie in authority	No need in emphases on whose existence while all jobs accomplished naturally The power of universe is to harmonize
Second best ruler/administrator	Being feared but not hated	Being praised
Third best ruler/administrator	Being loved	Being feared
The worst rule/administrator	Being hated	Being cursed

Figure 4.1. Hierachy of leaders' category: Machiavelli and Laozi, developed by the author

Figure 4.2. Maslow's eight stage hierarchical pyramid

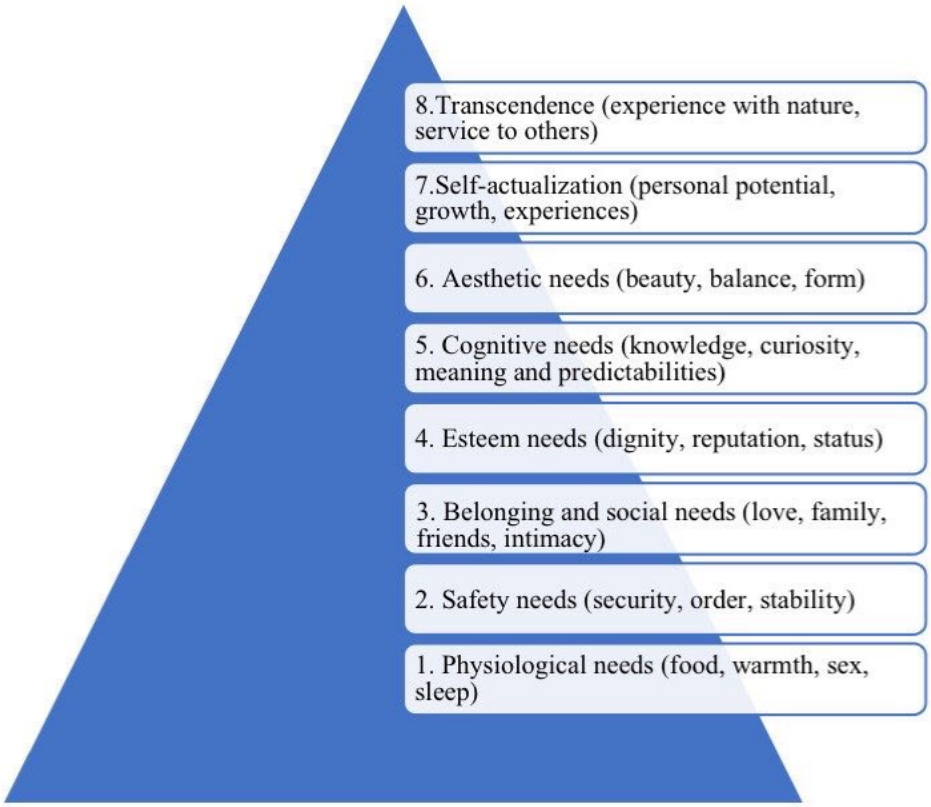


Figure 4.2. Maslow's eight stage hierarchical pyramid, adapted from Maslow's Motivation Model by McLeod 2020

Figure 4.3. Porter's five competitive forces

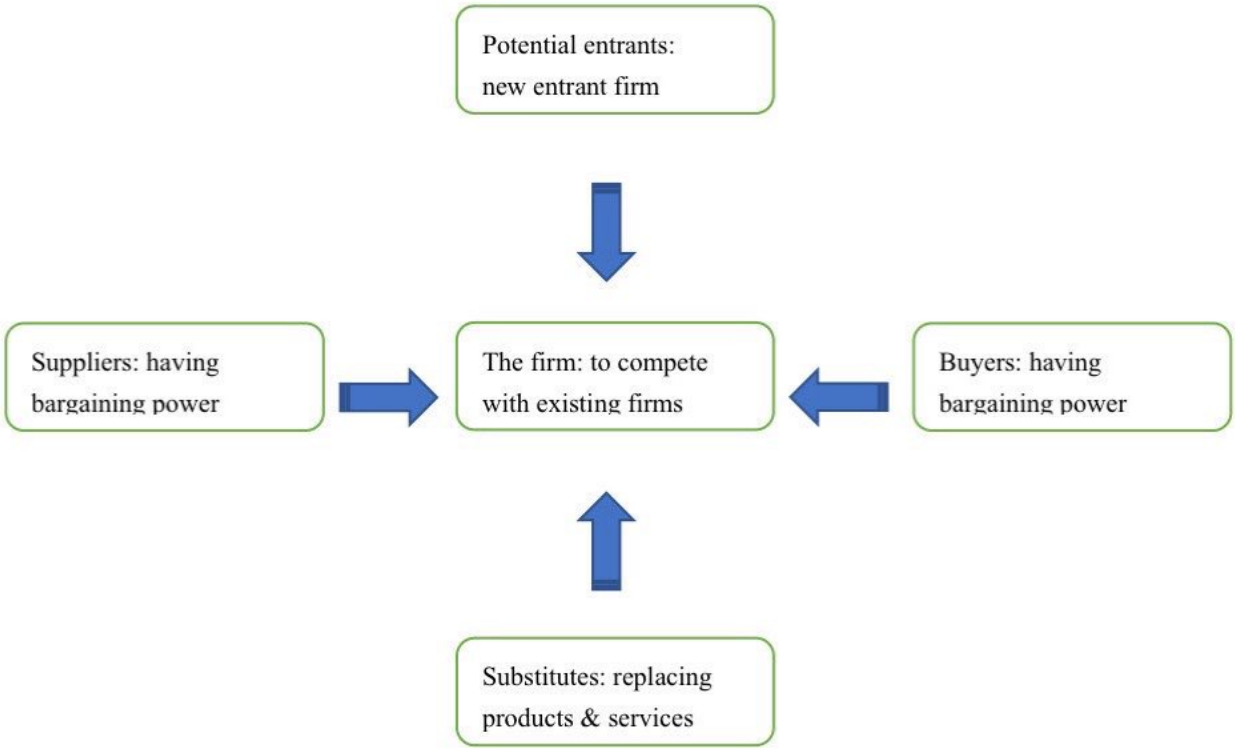


Figure 4.3. Porter's five competitive forces: adapted from "The five competitive forces that determine industry profitability" (Porter, 1985)

References

Abarca, D. L., (2015), *An Exploration into the Mysticism of the Dao De Jing*, Faculty of Arts and Letters University of Santo Toma, Available: https://www.academia.edu/18055124/An_Exploration_into_the_Mysticisms_of_the_Dao_De_Jing

Addiss, S., Lombardo, S., (1993), *Lao-Tzu Tao Te Ching (Trans.) (Introduction by Burton Watson)*, Indiannapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co.

Akçin, M.E., Zengin, O., (2020), *Düzensizliğin düzeni: kaos kuramı ve sosyal hizmet*, Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet, 31(3), 1307-1323.

Alter, R., (2020), *Regional Governance: An Opportunity for Regional Organizations?* World Economic Forum Insight Report, 12, Available: www.weforum.org.

Amabile, T.M., (1993), *What does a theory of creativity require?* Psychological Inquiry, 4(3), 179- 181.

Amabile, T.M., (1997), *Motivating creativity in organization: On doing what you love and loving what you do*, California Management Review, 40(1), 39-58.

Amini, A., (2016), *Prioritization of General Skills of Managers in Impact on Fulfilment of Corporate Social Responsibility from Experts' Point of View*, Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, Issue 230, 396-404.

Amankwah-Amoah, J., Khan, Z., Wood, G. (2021), *COVID-19 and business failures: The paradoxes of experience, scale, and scope for theory and practice*, European Management Journal, Volume 39, Issue 2, 179-184.

Anwar, G., Abdullah, N.N., (2021), *Inspiring future entrepreneurs: The effect of experiential learning on the entrepreneurial intention at higher education*, International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, 6.

Arp, R., (2013), *1001 Ideas That Changed the Way we Think*, New York: ATRIA Books, 136.

Autry, J.A., Mitchell, S., (1998), *Real Power:Business Lessons from the Tao Te Ching*, Penguin Publishing Group, xviii.

Barnard, C. I., (1968), *The Functions of the Executive*, Harvard Business Press

Baskin, K., (2011), *How Chinese thought can lead the transformation in management practice*, Chinese Management Studies, Vol. 5 Iss 4, 354 – 367 Available: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17506141111183136

Bernays, E.L., (1928), *Progaganda,* Horace Liveright, New York, Available: https://www.voltairenet.org/IMG/pdf/Bernays_Propaganda_in_english_.pdf

Berthel, K. (2017), *'Creating Harmony from Diversity: What Confucianism Reveals about the True Value of Liberal Education for the 21st Century'*, 24(2), 6–26, ASIANetwork Exchange, DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/ane.177

Blakney, R. B., (1955), *The way of life: Lao Tzu* (a new translation of the *Tao Te Ching*), New York: New American Library.

Boroditsky, L.(2011), *How Language Shapes Thought, Scientific American*,Vol. 304, No. 2 (February 2011), 62-65, Available: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26002395

Boz, E., (2021), *Yunus Emre: His Life, Works and Philosophy*, Commemorations on the 700th anniversary of Yunus Emre's death, Yunus Emre Institute & University of Illinois, Available: https://www.yee.org.tr/en/news/yunus-emre-his-life-works-and-philosophy

Bridgeman, T., Cummings, S., Ballard, J., (2019), *Who Built Maslow's Pyramid? A History of the Creation of Management Studies' Most Famous Symbol and Its Implication*, Academy of Management Learning & Education 2019, Vol. 18, No. 1, 81–98. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2017.0351

Britannica, (2017), The Editors of Encyclopaedia, *"Xunzi"*, Encyclopedia Britannica, Available: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Xunzi

Britannica, (2020), The Editors of Encyclopaedia, *"Liji"*, Encyclopedia Britannica, Available: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Liji

Britannica, (2022) The Editors of Encyclopaedia, *"Abraham Maslow"*, Encyclopedia Britannica, Available: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-H-Maslow.

Büyüközkara, E., (2021), *Yunus Emre Düşüncesinde Ahlâk İlkeleri,* AHLÂK ÇALIŞMALARI VE AHLÂK FELSEFESİ DERGİSİ, Vol.1 No.2, Available: https://www.academia.edu/51773621/Yunus_Emre_Düşüncesinde_Ahlâk_İlkeleri

Callahan W.A., Barabantseva, E., (eds.). 2012. *China Orders the World: Normative Soft Power and Foreign Policy*, Johns Hopkins University Press; Callahan, W.A., (2012), *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future.* Oxford University Press.

Chan, A., (2018), "Laozi", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), [Online]. Available: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/laozi/>.

Chan, W.T., (1963), *The way of Lao Tzu*. Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill, 3.

Chan, W., (1963), transl. Zhongyong [The Doctrine of the Mean] *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University.

Chen, G., (2015), *Harmony,* Key Concepts in Intercultural Dialogue, No.52,2015, Center for Intercultural Dialogue, Available: http://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org

Chang, F., (2007), *The Formation of Core Value of Chinese Culture 中国文化核心价值观的形成*, Yinshan Academic Journa 阴山学刊,Vol.20 No.6. 55-61.

Chang, Y.M., (1977), *The thoughts of Lao Tzu*, Taipei: Li Ming, 27.

Chen, G., Holt, G. R., (2002), *Persuasion through the Water Metaphor in Dao De Jing*, Intercultural Communication Studies XI-1.

Chen, G. Y. (1999), *A new perspective to Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu*. Taipei: WuNan.

Cheng, C., (1989), *On Harmony as Transformation: Paradigms from the I Ching*, Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 16(2),125-158.

Cheng, J., (程静宇), (2010), *Traditional Chinese Middleness and Harmony Thoughts 中国传统中和思想*, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 4/16-23/358-363, in Chinese.

Chienchih, C., (2005), *A cognitive analysis of confucian self-knowledge: According to Tu Weiming's explanation Dao,* 4, 267–282, Available: https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02856729

Christopher, C.D., (2020), *A Theory of Human Motivation by A. H. Maslow, An internet resource developed by Christopher D. Green,* Classics in the History of Psychology, York University, Toronto, Available: http://www.yorku.ca/dept/psych/classics/author.htm

Co, A., (2009) *The Blooming of a Hundred Flowers:Philosophy of Ancient China,* Manila: UST Publishing House, 133.

Cross, R., (2000), *"Looking before you leap: assessing the jump to teams in knowledge-based work"*, Business Horizons, Vol. 43 No. 5, 29-36.

Daft, R.L., (2012), *New Era of Management*, 10th Edition, South-Western, Cengage Learning, iv.

D'Aveni, R.A., (1994), *Hypercompetition: Managing the Dynamics of Strategic Manoeuvring*, New York: The Free Press.

De Bary, W.T. (ed.), (1960), *Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol. 1*. New York: Columbia University Press, 176.

Di, F., (2018), *Promoting Dignity and Well-Being through Healthy Organizations and Work Environments,* Proceedings of the 126th Annual American Psychological Association (APA) Convention, San Francisco, CA, USA, 9–12 August 2018.

Dijk, V., (2006), *Discourse and manipulation,* Discourse and Society, Sage Publication, 359-383, Available: http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Discourse%20and%20manipulation.pdf

Dr. Rishipa (2014), *Analytical Comparison of Flat and Vertical Organizational Structures,* European Journal of Business and Management, Vol.6, No.36, 2014 [Online] Available: https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/EJBM/article/viewFile/17351/17948

Drucker, P., (1985), *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, New York: Harper & Row.

Foo, C. T. (2015) Integrating Fan Li and Napoléon: Chinese and French. Chinese Management Studies, 9(2),0

Dychtwald, K. (1992), *Bodymind*, Alpha/Zmora-Bitan Publishers, Tel-Aviv.

Eno, R. trans., (2016), *"The Doctrine of the Mean."* In *The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean: Translation, Notes, and Commentary*, vi./33-55, Available: https://hdl.handle.net/2022/23424

Erçetin, Ş. Ş., Bağçı, H., (2016), *Handbook of Research on Chaos and Complexity Theory in the Social Sciences*, IGI Global, Available: https://www.igi-global.com/book/handbook-research-chaos-complexity-theory/142191, DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0148-0

Fang, T. H., (1987), *Excerpts From: The Chinese View of Life: The Philosophy of Comprehensive Harmony,* Vol. 65(4), Wash. U. L. Q. 680, Available at: https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_lawreview/vol65/iss4/6

Foo, C. T., (2015), *Integrating Fan Li and Napoléon: Chinese and French*, Chinese Management Studies, 9(2), 0.

Fei, X., (费孝通), (1999), *中华民族多元一体格局*，中央民族大学出版社, in Chinese

Fraser, C., *"Mohism"*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Available: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2022/entries/mohism

Fung, F. C.V., (2006), *China's Harmony Renaissance: What the World Must Know*, San Francisco, CA: World Harmony Organization.

Fung, Y.L., (1948), *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, New York: Free Press.

Fung, Yu-lan, (E. R. Hughes, trans.), (1962), *The spirit of Chinese philosophy*, Boston: Beacon.

Gabrenya, W. K., Hwang, K. K., (1996), *Chinese social interaction: Harmony and hierarchy on the Good Earth,* In M. H. Bond (Ed.), The handbook of ChinesePsychology,309–321, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Garrett, M., (1993), *Pathos reconsidered from the perspective of classical Chinese rhetorical theories*, Quarterly Journal of Speech, 79,19-39.

Gibson, R., (1997), *Rethinking the Future: Rethinking business, principles, competition, control & comlexity, leadership, markets and the world*, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Georgios, L., Christina, P., Aspasia, D., Maria, K., Evgenia, N., (2017), *The Presence of Dance in Female Deities of the Greek Antiquity,* Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, Vol 8 No 2, MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy.

Gino, F., Staats, B.R., Hall, B.J., Chang, T.Y., (2013), *"The Morning Star Company: Self-Management at Work"* ,Harvard Business School Case 914-013, September 2013. https://hbr.org/2014/09/most-people-dont-want-to-be-managers

Goldin, P.R., (2018), *"Xunzi"*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Available: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/xunzi

Graham, M.W., Messner, P.E., (1998), *"Principals and job satisfaction"* , International Journal of Education Management, Vol. 12, No. 5, 196-204.

Greenberg, J., Baron A.R (2003) *"Behaviour in Organisations"*, Prentice Hall, Vol. 8, 188-215.

Grieves, V., (2009), *Aboriginal Spirituality: Aboriginal Philosophy, The Basis of Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing*, Discussion Paper No. 9, Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health (CRCAH), Darwin.

Gu, Z., (1995), *trans. Lao Tzu: The Book of Tao and The*, Pekin University Press, Beijing.

Gu, Z., (1995), *An Introduction: Lao Tzu: The Book of Tao and Teh*, Pekin University Press, Beijing, 23.

Haggbloom, S.J., Warnick, R., Warnick, J. E., Jones, V. K., Yarbrough, G.L., Russell, T.M., Borecky, C.M., McGahhey, R. et al., (2002), *"The 100 most eminent psychologists of the 20th century,* Review of General Psychology, 6 (2), 139–152.

Haimes, P., (2020), *On Japanese Minimalism,* Contemporary Aesthetics, Sep.2020, Available: https://contempaesthetics.org/2020/09/24/on-japanese-minimalism/

Handerson, B. D., (1989), *The origin of strategy*, Harvard Business Review, [Online]. Available: https://hbr.org/1989/11/the-origin-of-strategy

Hamel, G. (2011). *"First, Let's Fire All The Managers."*, Harvard Business Review, [Online]. Available: https://hbr.org/2011/12/first-lets-fire-all-the-managers.

Harris, A., (2009), *Management in Education,* British Educational Leadership, Management & Administration Society (BELMAS), Vol 23(1): 9–11. DOI:10.1177/0892020608099076

He, J., (2008), *Seeking the Meaning of Life: A Comparison of Lao Tzu's "Tao" and Emerson's "Oversoul"*, Intercultural Communication Studies XVII: 1, 218-227.

Hansen, Ch. (2021), *"Zhuangzi"*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Available: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/zhuangzi/

Holzman, D., (1978), *Confucian and ancient Chinese literary criticism, In A. A. Rickett. (Ed.)*, Chinese approaches to literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, 21-41, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Houran, J., Ference, G.A., (2006), *Nurturing Employee Creativity*, New York: HVS International.

Huang, L. L., (1999), *Interpersonal harmony and conflict: Indigenous theories and research*. Taipei, Taiwan: Gui Guan (in Chinese).

Hudders, L., Pandelaere, M., (2012), *The silver lining of Materialism: The impact of luxury consumption on subjective well-being*, Journal of Happiness Studies, 13, 411-437.

Ivanhoe, P., (1998), *Mohist philosophy*, In The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Taylor and Francis, Available: https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/mohist-philosophy/v-1, doi:10.4324/9780415249126-G008-1

Jelavic, M., Ogilvie, K., (2010), *Maslow and management: Universally applicable or idiosyncratic?* Canadian Manager, Canadian Institute of Management, Winter 2010, 16-17, Available: https://www.academia.edu/7742366/Maslow_and_management_Universally_applicable_or_idiosyncratic

Jerome, N., (2013), *Application of the Maslow' s hierarchy of need theory; impacts and implications on organizational culture, human resource and employee' s performance,* International Journal of Business and Management Invention, Volume 2 Issue 3, March,2013, 39-45, Available: www.ijbmi.org.

Johnson, C.E., (1997), *A leadership journey to the east,* Journal of Leadership Studies, 4, 82-88.

Johnson, C.E., (2000), "*Taoist Leadership Ethics*", Faculty Publications - College of Business. 32. [Online]. Available: https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gfsb/32

Johnson, F., (1985), *"The Western Concept of Self."*, In A. J. Marsella, G. DeVos and F. L. K. Hsu (eds.) Culture and Self: Asian and Western Perspectives. New York: Tavistock Publications, 91-138.

Jullien, F., (2004), in Lloyd, J. (Ed.), *A Treatise on Efficacy: Between Western and Chinese Thinking*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, HI.

Kang, T. H., (1997), *Confucius and Confucianism,* Questions and Answers, Confucian Publications, Washington, D.C., 109-111.

Katz, R. L., (1955), *Skills of an effective administrator*, Harvard Business Review, 33(1), 33–42.

Katz, R.L., (1974), *Skills of an Effective Administrator,* Leadership Development, Harvard Business Review, September 1974 issue.

Kaur, A. (2013), *Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory Applications and Criticisms*, Global Journal of Management and Business Studies, 3, 1061-1064.

Khurana, R., Nohria, N., (2008), *"It's time to make management a true profession"*, Harvard Business Review, [Online]. Available: http://www.csun.edu/~to18470/articles/Management_tru_profession.pdf

Kirkendall, J. A., (2017), *The Well-Ordered Heart: Confucius on Harmony, Music, and Ritual*, Available: https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/998/2018/11/JensenKirkendall-TheWellOrderedHeart.pdf

Kirton, M.J, (1989), *Adaptors and innovators at work in Kirton, M.J. (ed.)*, Adaptors and innovators: Styles of creativity and problem solving, Rev. ed. London, New York: Routledge, 1994, Chapter 1, 1-36.

Koltko-Rivera, M.E., (2006), *Rediscovering the later version of Maslow's hierarchy ofneeds: Selftranscendence and opportunities for theory, research, and unification,* Review of General Psychology, 10(4), 302-317.

Kotler, P., (1994), *Marketing Management, Analysis, Planning,* Implementation and Control, 8th ed., Prentice Hall, 6.

Lamy, P., Pedrosa, E., (2020), *Economics: Trade and Connectivity in the Post-COVID-19 World,* World Economic Forum Insight Report, 28-31, Available: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Challenges_and_Opportunities_Post_COVID_19.pdf

Lao, Z., Zhuang, Z., (2009), *Laozi-Zhuangzi 老子・庄子*, Beijing: Huawen Publishing House, 1-12.

Lee, T.R., (2012), *Heaven, Earth and Humans: Color Harmony in Chinese Culture*, Óbuda University e-Bulletin Vol. 3, No. 1, 2012.

Lee, Y., (2003), *Daoistic Humanism in Ancient China: Broadening Personality and Counseling Theories in the 21st Century*, Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 43(1), 64-85.

Machiavelli, N., (1925), *The Prince*, Cambridge University Press.

Martin, A.H., (2007), *What's next: the 2007 changing nature of leadership survey*, Center for Creative Leadership, See: http://www.ccl.org.

Maslow, A.H., (1943), *A theory of human motivation*, Psychological Review, 50(4), 370-96.

Maslow, A.H., (1954), *Motivation and personality*, New York: Harper and Row.

Maslow, A.H., (1964), *Religions, values, and peak-experiences*, Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books.

Maslow, A.H., (1965), *Eupsychian management: a journal,* Homewood, IL: Richard Irwin.

Maslow, A.H., (1968), *Toward a psychology of being (2nd ed.),* New York: Van Norstrand Reinhold.

Maslow, A.H., (1971), *The farther reaches of human nature*, New York: Viking Press.

Maslow, A. H., Stephens, D.C., Heil, G., (1998), *Maslow on management*, New York: John Wiley.

Lee, Y., Han, A., Byron, T., Fan, H., (2008), *Daoist leadership: Theory and application. In C. Chen & Y. Lee (Eds.)*, Leadership and Management in China: Philosophies, Theories, and Practices, 83-107. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511753763.005

Lee, Y., Holt, L., Jamnik, M. R., (2019), *What is Dao or Daoism? Why is it Important to us?* DAOISM AND ITS IMPORTANCE, Dao and Daoist Ideas for Scientists, Humanists, and Practitioners, Nova Science Publishers, Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335243707_What_is_Dao_or_Daoism_Why_is_it_important_to_us

Lee, Y., Yang, H., Wang, M., (2009), *"Daoist Harmony as a Chinese Philosophy and Psychology,"* Peace and Conflict Studies: Vol. 16: No. 1, Article 5. DOI: 10.46743/1082-7307/2009.1103, Available at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol16/iss1/5

Lee, Y., Han, A., Byron, T., Fan, H., (2008), *"Daoist Leadership: Theory and Application."*, In C. C. Chen and Y. T. Lee (eds.) Leadership and Management in China: Philosophies, Theories and Practices. New York: Cambridge University Press, 83-107.

Lee, Y., Yang, H., Wang, Min., (2009) *"Daoist Harmony as a Chinese Philosophy and Psychology,"* Peace and Conflict Studies: Vol. 16: No. 1 , Article 5. DOI: 10.46743/1082-7307/2009.1103 Available: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol16/iss1/5

Legge, J. (1995), *The Book of Changes (Zhou yi) (trans. James Legge)*, Changsha: Hunan Press, 5.

Legge, J, (2000), *The Chinese Classics,* Vol. III: The Shoo King, Taipei.

Li, C., (2013), *The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony*, Routledge Studies in Asian Religion and Philosophy, Oct. 2013.

Li, C., (2006), *"The Confucian Ideal of Harmony,"* Philosophy East & West, 56(4): 596. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2006.0055

Li, C., (2014), *"天人合一" 还是 "天、地、人" 三才*, 《周易研究》2014, Vol.5, in Chinese.

Li, C., (2016), *Confucian Harmony in Dialogue with African Harmony: A Response,* African and Asian Studies, 15(1):23-32, DOI: 10.1163/15692108-12341353

Li, D., (2008), *Harmonious Society and Harmonious World - New Thoughts of Chinese Domestic and International Governance*, Journal of Changsha University of Science & Technology (Social Science), Vol.23, No.2, June 2008.

Li, Z., (2010), T*he Chinese Aesthetic Tradition,* Trans. Maijia Bell Samei, Honolulu, HI; University of Hawai'i Press, (Source for Confucius' The Book of Rites)

Lim, T., (2009), *Face in the holistic and relativistic society,* In F. Bargiela-Chiappini and M. Haugh (Eds.). Face, communication and social interaction,250-268), London, England: Equinox.

Lim, T., Giles, H., (2007), *Differences in U.S. and Korean college students' evaluations of one-year age differences,* Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development, 28, 349-364.

Liu, Z.刘柱彬, (2001), *Conflicts and Integrations between Benevolent Politics and Parallel Application of Ethical Norms and Legistlation: Comparative study on Mencius*

and Xunzi in terms of their thoughts on criminal law, Legal Review *仁政理想与礼法并施的冲突与融合——孟子与荀子刑法思想之比较*, 法学评论,03:124-131, in Chinese.

Lok Sang Ho, (2002), The Living Dao: *The Art and Way of Living A Rich & Truthful Life, trans., Available:* https://www.ln.edu.hk/econ/staff/daodejing%2822%20August%202002%29.pdf

Lu, R. R. (2004). *Zhung-guo gu-dai xiang-dui guan-xi si-wei tan-tao* (Investigations of the idea of relativity in ancient China), Taipei: Shang ding wen hua.

Ma, F., (2009), *Primary Investigation into Management Ethical Thoughts by Lao Tzu*, Asian Social Science, Vol.5, No.11, 67-71.

Maliavin, V. V., (2008), *Zhuangzi's concept of harmony and its cultural implications,* ACTA ORIENTALIA VILNENSIA 9.1 (2008): 105–120.

Maurer, H., (1982), *The way of ways,* New York: Bantam Books.

McLeod, S. A., (2020). *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*, Simply Psychology, Available: www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

Messing, B., (1992), *The Tao of Management*, New York: Bantam Books.

Miller, J., (1986), *The Measures of Wisdom,* The Cosmic Dance in Classical and Christian Antiquity, University of Toronto, Toronto.

Moore, C.A., (1967), *The Chinese mind, Essentials of Chinese Philosophy and Culture,* Honolulu: East-West Center Press, University of Hawaii, 1-10

Mouratidis, I., (1998), *History of Physical Education*, Thessaloniki.

Mumford, T.V, Campion, M.A., (2007), *'The Leadership Skills Strataplex: Leadership Skills Requirements across Organizational Levels',* The Leadership Quarterly 18: 154-166.

Munoz-Doyague, M.F., Gonzalez-Alvarez, N. & Nieto, M. (2008), *An examination of individual factors and employees' creativity: The case of Spain*, Creativity Research Journal, 20(1), 21- 33.

Ngaire, W., (2020), *Global Governance: Planning for the World After COVID-19,* Challenges and Opportunities in the Post-COVID-19 World, World Economic Forum Insight Report, 8-11, Available: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Challenges_and_Opportunities_Post_COVID_19.pdf

Nicoll, K., (2012), *The Dead Horse Theory*, Available: https://dwighttowers.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/deadhorsetheory.jpg

Northouse, P. G., (2018), *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Sage Publication, [Online]. Available: https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/45968_Chapter_3.pdf

O'Gorman, K., Farrington, T., Gregor, C., (2015), "*Chapter 1 Introducing Management Art or science*", In: MacIntosh, R. & O'Gorman, K.D. (ed) . Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers http://dx.doi.org/10.23912/978-1-910158-47-0-2810

Parks, T., (2014) *The Prince, Niccolò Machiavelli*, Translated and Introduced by Tim

Parks, Penguin Classics, Penguin Random House: UK, ix-xxxviii.

Pau, J. L, (1977), *A Translation of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies No.30, 6-120.

Peterson, T.O., Van Fleet, D.D., (2004), "*The ongoing legacy of R.L. Katz: An updated typology of management skills*", Management Decision, Vol. 42 No. 10, 1297-1308. https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740410568980

Peterson, C., Park, N., (2010), *What happened to self-actualization? Commentary on Kenrick et al. (2010)*, Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5(3), 320.

Perry-Smith, J.E., Shalley, C.E., (2003), *The social side of creativity: A static and dynamic social network perspective,* Academy of Management Review, 28(1), 89-106.

Porter, M.E., (2008), On Competition, Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, xi-xii.

Porter, M.E., (1979), *Competitive Strategy, How Competitive Forces Shape Strategy,* Harvard Business Review, March-April 1979, Available: https://hbr.org/1979/03/how-competitive-forces-shape-strategy

Porter, M.E., (1985), *Competitive Advantage,* The Free Press, A Division of Maxwell Macmillan, Inc.: New York, 3.

Porter, M.E., (2008), *On Competition*, Harvard Business School Press, xi-xii.

Robinson, H., (2020), "*Dualism*", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Available: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/dualism

Pringle, J., Huisman, J., (2011), *An Industry Analysis Using Porter's Five Forces Framework,* Ontario Universities Analysis, Vol.41, No.3, 36.

Rickards, T., Moger, S., (2000), *'Creativeleadershipin project team development'*, British Journal of Management, 11, 273–83.

Ritika Tanwar, R., (2013), *Porter's Generic Competitive Strategies,* IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM), Volume 15, Issue 1 (Nov. – Dec. 2013), 11-17.

Rozi, F., (2020), *Confucian Concept of Self-Cultivation and Social Harmony,* International Journal of Language and Linguistics, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 2020 doi:10.30845/ijll.v7n2p15

Schell, Erwin H., (1960), "*EVERYBODY IS A MANAGER*", The Manager's Job: Including Papers from Utility Management Workshops Columbia University, 1956 to 1959, edited by Robert Teviot Livingston and William W. Waite, New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 50-56, doi: https://doi.org/10.7312/livi93776-007

Si, L., Wen, R., (2015), Ed., *彩图全解论语.中庸.大学l（春秋）孔子等著；思履，文若愚主编*, 北京:中国华侨出版社, in Chinese

Sima, Q. (1980), Recordings of History, China Bookshop, Beijing, 2139-2143.

Simonton, D.K., (2000), *Creativity: Cognitive, personal, developmental and social aspects*, American Psychologist, *55*(1), 151-158.

Smet, A.D., Hewes,C., Luo, M., Maxwell, J.R., (2022), *If we're all so busy, why isn't anything getting done?* People & Organizational Performance Practice, McKinsey Insights, Jan.2022, Available:https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/if-were-all-so-busy-why-isnt-anything-getting-done

Smith, G.B., (2008), *Between Eternities: On the Tradition of Political Philosophy, Past, Present, and Future,* Lexington Books, 65.

Spender, J., (2015), *Modern Management: Origins and Development,* International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2nd edition, Vol 15. Oxford: Elsevier, 675–681.

Tan, M., (2010), *Crisis and Hermeneutics: Wang Fuzhi's Interpretation of Confucian Classics in a Time of Radical Change from Ming to Qing Dynasty*, Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, East Asian Studies University of Toronto

Tang, H., Li, C., (2019), *Correlation between Taoism of Tao Te Ching and Traditional Chinese Medicine*, Chinese Traditional Culture 国学, 7(2),11-16. Doi: 10.12677/cnc.2019.72002

Talgam, I. (2009), L*ead like the great conductors,* TEDGLOBAL 2009, Available: https://www.ted.com/talks/itay_talgam_lead_like_the_great_conductors

Talgam, I., (2010), *Creating Culture: The Art of the Rehearsal*, TEDxTelAviv - Itay Talgam, Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDw3z6rSlZA

Talgam, I., (2011), *On rehearsal,* TEDxHelsinki - Itay Talgam, Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKZriN5_LpU

Talgam, I., (2013), *Leadership lessons from a symphony conductor: Itay Talgam at TEDxGateway,* Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mm8cASg_CQo

Talgam, I., (2015), *The Ignorant Maestro*, Portflio Penguin.

Taptiklis, T., (2008), *Unmanaging: Opening up the Organization to Its Own Unspoken Knowledge,* Palgrave Macmillan: New York.

Thomas, W. H. Ng., Koopmann, J., Parker, S.K., (2021), *Promoting idea exploration and harmonization in the creative process: cultivating interdependence and employees' perspective-Taking are key,* European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, doi:10.1080/1359432X.2021.2014454

Torres, N., (2014), *"Most People Don't Want to Be Managers"*, Harvard Business Review, [Online]. Available: https://hbr.org/2014/09/most-people-dont-want-to-be-managers

Tosi, H., Tosi, L., (1986), *"What managers need to know about knowledge-based pay"*, Organizational Dynamics, Vol. 14 No. 3, 52-64.

Van Dijk, V., (2006): *Discourse and manipulation,* Discourse and Society, Sage Publication, 359-383.

Van Norden, B., (2019), "*Mencius*", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Available: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/mencius

Vidal, G., (1925), "*Gore Vidal Quotes*.", BrainyQuote.com, BrainyMedia Inc, 2022. Accessed on 22 April 2022, Available: https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/gore_vidal_128264

Ventor, H.J., (2016), *Self-Transcendence: Maslow's Answer to Cultural Closeness,* Journal of Innovation Management, JIM 4, 4 (2016), 3-7, Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331886859_Self-Transcendence_Maslow%27s_Answer_to_Cultural_Closeness

Wang, C, 王充闾, (2019), *Xiao Yao You: Zhuangzi Quan Zhuan*, Pekin: Pekin University Press, 逍遥游：庄子全传, 北京：北京大学出版社，2019：459-469.

Wang, G., Qiu, P., Guo, H., (2009), *Taijiquan: A Typical Note of Feeling and Recognizing Harmon,* Journal of Shanghai Physical Education Institute. No.33(1), 64-67.

Wang, K., (1998), *Toward the Dao of Human Existence,* The Classic of the Dao A New Investigation, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 290-297.

Wang, K., (2018), *Harmonism as an Alternative,* Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing, Beijing, xi-xii.

Wang, Y., (1999), *Tao Te Ching,* Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 5.

Wang, ZD., Wang, YM., Li, K. et al., (2021), *The comparison of the wisdom view in Chinese and Western cultures,* Current Psychology. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-01226-w

Watts, J., (2020), *Could covid lock down have helped save the planet?* The Gudian, 29 Dec. 2020, Available: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/29/could-covid-lockdown-have-helped-save-the-planet

Wei, X., Li, Q., (2013), *The Confucian Value of Harmony and its Influence on Chinese Social Interaction,* Cross-Cultural Communication, Vol. 9, No. 1, 60-66. doi:10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020130901.12018

Whelan, F. G., (2004), *Hume and Machiavelli: Political Realism and Liberal Thought*, Lexiton Books, 29.

Wing, R.L., (1986), *The Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu,*Terebess Asia Online (TAO), Available: https://terebess.hu/english/tao/Wing.html

Witzel, M., (2003), *Fifty Key Figures in Management*. New York: Routledge, 184-187.

Xiang, S., (2020), *A Harmony Account of Chinese Identity*, Journal of East-West Thought. 2(10), 83-101.

Xing, M., (2022), *Implications for management from harmony of Laozi*, 4th International Conference on Advanced Research in Management, Business & Finance, Berlin Germany, 11-13 March, 2022.

Xu, C., (2005), *The Principle of Harmony, the Market Economy in Harmony and Order, the Way out of China's 'three-farm' (rural, farming and farmers) Problems,* Nanjing Normal University Academic Papers: Social Sciences Edition 南京师大学报:社科版. vol.05,

Yau, O. H., P.M. Chow, R., (2007), *Harmony Versus Conflict in Asian Business: Managing in a Turbulent Era*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1.

Yue, A., 乐爱国（2012）, *朱熹《中庸章句》对"致中和"的注释 及其蕴含的生态思想—兼与《礼记正义·中庸》比较* ,鄱阳湖学刊, 2012 Vol.1, in Chinese, Available: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41452949.pdf

Zhang, D.(张东宝), (2013), *老子的"和谐思想" (Harmony thoughts of Laozi)*,《"一國兩制"研究》(Journal of One Country Two Systems Studies), Vol.2/16, 195-200, in Chinese.

Zhang, D. 张岱年, (1998), *Zhong Guo Wen Shi Bai Ke (II),* Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Press, 中国文史百科(下), 杭州：浙江人民出版社，754-755, in Chinese

Zhang, D., (2022), *道德经 Dao De Jing Laozi*, trans., DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.30991.25764 Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358280309_Dao_De_Jing

Żukowski, P., Gudowski, J., (2014), *Competence dimensions of manager – contemporary challenges*, Journal of Modern Science, 2014;21(2):119–130.

Zhang, Q., (2021), *Study on Wu Chang's English Translation Reconstruction*, Education Research《论语》五常英译重构研究, 教育研究 Vol.4 (4), DOI:10.12238/er.v4i4.3790

Yan, S., (2011), *Analysis of the "Harmony" Education Ideas in Chinese Taijiquan*, International Education Studies, Vol. 4, No. 3; August 2011, Canadian Center of Science and Education.

WEB_1, (2018), *Key Chinese Concepts, China Today,* Selected from Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/cs/201804/t20180412_800126814.html, 11/05/2022.

WEB_2, (2017), Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2017, June 9), *Xunzi*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Xunzi, 11/05/2022.

WEB_3, (1988), ÂHENK, TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, 1.cilt, 523-524, Available: https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ahenk, 14/05/2022, in Turkish.

WEB_4, (2015), Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development, Available: https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda, 20/01/2022.

WEB_5, (2022), Biography, Michael Porter, Institute for Strategy & Competitiveness, Harvard Business School, Available: https://www.isc.hbs.edu/about-michael-porter/biography/Pages/default.aspx, 11/05/2022.

WEB_6, (2022), Michael E. Porter, Faculty & Research, Harvard Business School, Available: https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/profile.aspx?facId=6532, 11/05/2022.

WEB_7, (2022), Marketing Definition, American Marketing Association, Available: https://www.ama.org/topics/marketing-definition/, 11/05/2022.