Personal Characteristics and Adversity Quotient of Academic Administrators among Selected State Universities and Colleges in Eastern Visayas, Philippines

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Abstract
Given the high degree of accountability and responsibility of academic administrators in leading and managing the school organization, their ability to withstand adversity and unprecedented difficulties called adversity quotient (AQ) is vital. This study aimed to determine the relationship between academic administrators’ personal characteristics and their AQ. Respondents consisted of 108 administrators from selected state universities and colleges in Eastern Visayas Region. Data were gathered using a questionnaire that elicited personal characteristics and AQ. The control, ownership, reach and endurance (CORE) are the dimensions that measured the level of AQ. Most of the academic administrators were female, married and in middle adult age group. The highest educational qualifications attained by the respondents were doctorate degrees and they have been in the academe for more than 21 years with academic rank of Associate Professors I-V. Results revealed that in general, respondents have low AQ which indicate their low capacity to be resilient on adversities and challenges. Age, civil status and highest educational attainment are the best predictors of reach. Only the academic rank was a significant predictor for endurance. The level of control and reach of the respondents had significant relationship to adversity quotient.

Keywords: adversity quotient profile, adversity quotient dimensions, control, ownership, reach, endurance, resilience

Introduction
Academic administrators of higher education institutions (HEIs) often deal with the recurrent internal and external problems, complex tasks and challenges in school operation. Most of them are more prone to adversities, conflicts, stresses and challenges in leading the organization. Ferrer (2009) stated that school administrators must be encouraged to meet and beat all adversities brought by the dynamic changes in the educational system and take an active and sustained interest in the broad span of the future. According to Patterson (2001), school administrators are advised to stay upbeat and mindful of both challenges and opportunities; stay focused on what they do to attain the organizational objectives; remain flexible and tolerant of ambiguity; proactive, not reactive; and apply resilience-conserving strategies during rough times. Academic administrators have complex tasks. Aside from the main focus which is curriculum development, they also perform crisis intervention, resource management, accountability (e.g. reports and other paperwork) and provide extension services to the community.

With the nature of work of academic administrators mentioned above, it is significant to take account their adversity quotient (AQ). Failure to deal with adversities can be a barrier to the accomplishment of school administrators’ personal and organizational goals.

Adversity quotient designed by Stoltz (2000) is a measure of how an individual respond to adversity. The study is drawn from the AQ
framework of Stoltz (1997) which is based on the several theories of psychological resiliency and vulnerability, including learned helplessness of Peterson et al. (1993), hardiness by Lefcourt (1991) locus of control by Rotter (1966) and cognitive models of depression by Abramson et al. (2002).

The AQ is mainly composed of CORE model which represents the four major facets involved which include control, ownership, reach and endurance (CORE). Control measures the degree of control a person perceives over adverse events. It is a gauge of resilience, health, and the ability to turn adversity into opportunity. Ownership measures the extent to which a person holds himself or herself accountable for improving a situation. It is a measure of accountability and responsibility to take actions and learn from the outcomes of the event. Reach refers to the extent one perceives good/bad events influencing other areas of life. It is a strong gauge on how likely the individual feel empowered and prepared to deal with adversity. Endurance is the perception of time over which good or bad events and their consequences will last or endure and a strong gauge of hope and optimism (Stoltz, 2000).

Academic administrators’ adversity response plays a crucial role in the development of successful school climate and student achievement (Stoltz, 2000), thus, AQ should be measured. Failure of school administrators to face the challenges of life may result in more serious problems that can have detrimental effects on the success of students, teachers, parents, other stakeholders and even the whole educational institution.

Since there has been no study conducted about adversity quotient in Eastern Visayas, the researcher opted to assess the adversity quotient of the academic administrators from state universities and colleges in the region. This study aimed to determine the significant relationship of the personal characteristics, AQ dimensions, and adversity quotient of the academic administrators by using the Adversity Quotient® Profile of Peak Learning. From this study, it may be necessary and useful to consider adversity profile as part of the qualification requirements for promoting educational administrators.

**Methodology**

The Adversity Quotient Profile (AQP) was used to measure the respondents’ adversity quotient. The AQP which was designed and developed by Paul Stoltz, is an oppositional, scale-based, forced-choice questionnaire designed to gauge an individual’s resilience – that is, their capability to respond constructively to difficulties – by eliciting their hardwired response pattern to a broad range of adverse events (Stoltz, 2000). There are four dimensions of adversity quotient – control, ownership, reach, and endurance.

One hundred eight (108) academic administrators such as vice presidents, directors, deans and chairpersons were randomly chosen as the respondents of the study from seven (7) state colleges and universities in Eastern Visayas Region for the SY 2012-2013. Before the conduct of the study, an approval from the author of Adversity Quotient Profile, Dr. Paul G. Stoltz of PEAK Learning, Inc. was sought to allow the researcher to use AQP instrument in the study. The researcher made constant communication with Dr. Paul Stoltz and his associates through the Internet and resulted in signing a memorandum of agreement. A direct link to the portal of AQP website was provided by his associates to the researcher to access the on-line questionnaire and printed it out and used as an instrument for gathering information from the respondents.

The researcher personally conducted and administered the instruments to all the respondents. After the distribution, collection, and retrieval of the survey questionnaires, corresponding answers of the respondents from their AQP questionnaires were encoded in Dr. Paul Stoltz’s website which provided the researcher detail scoring and
interpretations of the AQP results of the respondents solely by Peak Learning, Inc.

The AQP and its four dimensions have shown to have high reliability or consistency. The Cronbach alpha scores for the four dimensions ranged from 0.80 – 0.82 and AQP has an overall reliability of 0.91. The reliability of the scores is supported by the repeated, independent studies conducted by an independent psychometrician trained at Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the U.S. (Venkatesh et al., 2015).

The researcher utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 in presenting and analyzing the data gathered. Frequency counts, totals and percentages, means, and standard deviations were applied for the descriptive measures of the study. To determine the significant relationship of the personal characteristics and AQ, and AQ dimensions to AQ, simultaneous multiple regression analysis was utilized.

Results and Discussion

Personal Characteristics of the Academic Administrators

The personal characteristics of the academic administrators is presented in Table 1.

Sex

Among the 108 respondents, 61 or 56.6 percent were female while 47 or 43.5 percent were male. The result implies that majority of the educational management positions in state universities and colleges of Region VIII were dominated by female. According to Tancinco et al. (2014), educational management and education sector is a woman’s world. Traditionally, teaching is a woman dominated position in the Philippines.

Civil Status

Eighty five (85) out of 108 respondents or 78.7 percent were married, 16 or 14.8 percent were single and seven (7) or 6.5% were widow or widower. The data indicates that majority of the respondents are married.

Age

Out of 108 academic administrators, 36 (33.3%) belonged to the 50-59 age group, 33 (30.6%) belonged to the 30-39 age group, 24 (22.2%) belonged to 40-49 age group, 13 or 12 percent belonged to 60 years and above age group and only two or 1.9 percent were 29 years old and below. Majority of the academic administrators are in middle adult years which indicates the peak of their professional and career path as educational managers. This is attributed by the existing capacity of the academic administrators such as experiences, knowledge, talents and everything that they encountered in developing their leadership qualities (Stolz, 2004). The result of the study is supported by Hersey & Blanchard (1982) that the level of maturity has something to do with age.

Highest Educational Attainment

Forty-eight (48) or 44.4 percent were doctoral degree holders, 26 or 24.1 percent were master’s degree holders with doctoral units. There were 14 or 13 percent of the respondents who were bachelor’s degree holders with master units. Thirteen (13) or 12 percent were master degree holders, and only seven (7) or 6.6 percent were bachelor’s degree holders. The findings imply that majority of the academic administrators in Eastern Visayas Region are doctoral degree holders which is probably a criterion in the assignment of their designated positions.

Length of Service

As great proportion (48) or 44.4 percent of the respondents had been in academe for more 21 years, followed by 25 or 23.1 percent with 11-15 years in the service, 15 or 13.9 percent belonged to 6-10 years in service, 10 or 9.3 percent of respondents rendered 16-20 years in service and five years and below.
Majority of the academic heads spent more than 21 years in the academe and had been promoted through continuous education and training. Notably their classroom experiences as teachers led them to acquire managerial and leadership skills before they are designated as academic heads. This result is strongly supported in the classic study of Schein (1965) that past experiences are good motivation to consider in seeking meaning and accomplishment in one’s work.

**Academic Rank**

Out of 108 academic administrators, forty-nine (49) or 45.4 percent had an academic rank of Associate Professor I-V, twenty-seven (27) or 25 percent had an academic rank of Professor I-VI, twenty (20) or 18.5 percent were Instructor I-III, and twelve (12) or 11.1 percent were Assistant Professor I-VI. Majority of the respondents were Associate Professor I-V. This implies that most of the academic administrators have high academic ranks. The result of this finding indicates that professional growth through uplifting the academic ranks is a fulfillment in one’s career path.

**AQ Dimensions and Adversity Quotient Profile**

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the variable AQ dimensions, namely: control, ownership, reach, and endurance. Based on the findings, majority of the respondents were found to have low level of control and ownership. Almost two-fifths (37.0%) of the academic administrators got average scores in reach. More than one-fourth (26.8%) of them had below average scores in endurance. Regarding AQ, respondents got low level of adversity quotient ($\bar{x}$=134.70, $SD$=19.10). Heterogeneity of responses from the respondents was observed. Generally, respondents had low capacity to be resilient on adversities and challenges contrary to what we claim that Filipinos are resilient in times of difficulties. People with low AQ usually disown problems causing failure to act, give-up, point fingers, reduced performance and anger at others and many negative actions (Venkatesh et al., 2015).

Referring to the AQ dimensions, the respondents had low level of control ($\bar{x}$=34.16, $SD$=6.66) and ownership ($\bar{x}$=34.78, $SD$=7.83). The result implies that respondents have low control over adverse events and had little influence on whatever...
happens next after such events. The lower the degree of control one has, the less likely the respondents take positive actions to overcome the adversity. More so with low ownership, this means that respondents have low degree of owning the adversity and less accountable and responsible for the outcomes of the events that eventually lead to disown the problem.

For the reach dimension, respondents were found to have below average level of reach (\(\bar{x}=28.43\), \(SD=6.56\)) and endurance dimensions (\(\bar{x}=33.33\), \(SD=7.47\)). The findings show that respondents to some extent allow adversities to reach into and affect other areas of their lives. More so with endurance, respondents may attribute adversities to be enduring and permanent. This result is supported by Peterson et al. (1993) that people attribute adversity as permanent or temporary. People who see their ability as the cause of failure (stable cause) are less likely to continue than those who attribute failure to their effort (temporary cause).

Personal Characteristics and AQ Dimensions

A multiple regression was done to the personal characteristics variables as the predictor variables and AQ dimensions (control, ownership, reach and endurance) as the dependent variables. The beta coefficients are presented in Table 3.

Results of the regression analysis show that age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, length of service, and academic rank did not meet the necessary criteria to be predictors of control (\(R^2=0.023\), \(F(6,101)=0.392\), \(p >0.05\)) and ownership (\(R^2=0.066\), \(F(6,101)=1.194\), \(p >0.05\)) dimensions. The result indicates that the respondents’ personal characteristics have no influence on their perceived capacity to be in control over adverse events and manifest that they are unaccountable and irresponsible to take actions from the outcomes of the events.

Among the predictor variables, only civil status had a positive relationship to reach (\(R^2=0.167\), \(F(6,101)=1.194\)). This result shows that respondents who are married influence their perceived ability to limit the extent of adversity so that it will not affect other aspects of life. This is true to married people; in most cases they see to it that consequences of their problems that may originate from the workplace or due to financial difficulties limit the outcome of the problems so as not to affect the way they manage their families and decision making.

Age and highest educational attainment had negative relationship to reach. The result discloses that older respondents with highest educational attainment correspond to low level of reach. Academic administrators that tend to be vulnerable and let adversity affect other areas of their lives were middle adult individuals and took advanced degrees. Moreover, individuals who are mature and have higher learning from personal and
Table 3: Simultaneous multiple regression analysis summary for age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, length of service, and academic rank as predictors of the AQ dimensions (N= 108)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta Coefficients (β)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Status</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Educational Attainment</td>
<td>-0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Service</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Rank</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < 0.05

Professional experiences tend to be affected easily by adverse events. It is explained by the higher expectations set by the individuals that when failure sets in they tend to be extremely affected by the situation.

The results showed that academic rank is a significant predictor of the respondents’ endurance (R²=0.097, F=3.378, p >0.05) though it has a negative relationship between the two variables. The respondents having lower or higher academic ranks greatly influence the higher or lower level of endurance. This implies that even if an individual maximizes his/her full potential to enrich his/her professional growth in the academe though training, experiences, advance studies, and wisdom gained all throughout his/her life, it is not an assurance that he/she will not be affected by the outcome of adverse events over time.

**AQ Dimensions and Adversity Quotient**

Figure 1 shows the path diagram of personal characteristics variables, AQ dimensions and adversity quotient. The path coefficients for the full model were derived from two multiple regressions analyses. In the first multiple regressions analysis conducted, the predictor variables were sex, civil status, age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and academic rank while the dependent variables were the AQ dimensions, namely: control, ownership, reach, and endurance. For the second multiple regression analysis, AQ dimensions were the predictor variables and the criterion is adversity quotient. There were three paths produced from the full model.

The first path shows the influence of the control dimension to the adversity quotient of the respondents. Based on the results, though the predictor variables from the personal characteristics have no influence on the control dimension, it has a direct influence on the adversity quotient. Thus, control dimension has a positive relationship to adversity quotient. The findings indicate that individuals who have less control over adverse events are likely to be less resilient and vulnerable.

The second path is the influence of the civil status, age, and highest educational attainment to reach dimension. Civil status had a positive influence while age and highest educational attainment had negative influence to reach. Three predictor variables of reach mentioned above had direct effect to reach but had indirect influence to their adversity quotient. This indicates that for an individual to have high AQ, he/she must limit the effect of adversity into the other areas of his/her life and should not be affected by it. Taking positive actions to respond the outcome of the adverse events is a good way of increasing the level of reach.

The third path is the negative influence of
academic rank to endurance dimension. The result shows that individuals who have high academic ranks tend to have low level of endurance. It implies that respondents who were promoted through their significant work done in research, teaching, community tend to attribute adversity as permanent and see their ability as the cause of failure. The result is contrary to the study of Bautista (2015) that teachers who were classified according to their age and academic ranks had high adversity quotient.

It is worth mentioning based from the results that control ($\beta=0.248$, $p <0.05$) and reach ($\beta=0.198$, $p <0.05$) are the best predictors of adversity quotient ($R^2=0.132$, $F(4,103)=3.910$, $p >0.05$). The result implies that how the academic administrators respond to adversity is predicted from their ability to control themselves over adverse events and their perceived ability to consider situation as temporary and be optimistic that adversity happens for a reason and one can benefit from it. In achieving higher adversity quotient one has to increase the level of control and reach.

**Conclusion**

Based from the findings of the study, most of the academic administrators were female, married and in the middle adult age group. The highest educational qualifications attained by the respondents were doctorate degrees and have been in the academe for more than 21 years and hold the academic rank of Associate Professors. In terms of AQ dimensions, respondents have low control and ownership dimensions while below average level of reach and endurance. Generally, academic administrators in this study have low adversity quotient which indicate the low capacity of the respondents to be resilient on adversities and challenges. Age, civil status and highest educational attainment are the best predictors of reach. Only academic rank is a significant predictor for endurance.

The level of control and reach of the respondents have significant relationship to adversity quotient. It is concluded that to overcome adversities and be resilient, one has to control himself/herself over adverse events and view it positively to take necessary actions to counteract upon the situation and
assures himself/herself that it will not affect other areas of his/her life.

References


