A STUDY ON STUDENTS’ ADVERSITY QUOTIENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH SUBJECT

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Abstract. The aim of this study is to observe students’ Adversity Quotient and their Academic Performance, in this case English subject. From many previous studies, there is a high indication that Adversity Quotient plays an important role in students’ academic performance. Therefore, this study was carried out to observe that hypothesis. Quantitative method was used wherefore the data was in form of numbers, namely from Adversity Quotient test and students’ final grade in English class. The findings showed that majority of the students who excelled in academic performance were the students whose test results showed that they were classified with high level of Adversity Quotient. Furthermore, as this study included 2 groups of students, the data depicted that the adult students performed a better result in AQ test than the fresh graduate students who were both in the same semester.

Keywords: Adversity Quotient, Academic Performance, Students

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INTRODUCTION

From century to century, studies had been carried out to identify the factors of success in learning. Findings identified that there are other factors beyond teacher-students related factor like school environment socio-psychological factors (Osokoya, 1998); cognitive factor (Rohde & Thompson, 2007); home and school circumstances (Odinko, 2002); class proportions and school facilities (Owoeye, 2011); teachers’s fairness and integrity (Falaye & Okwilagwe, 2008); students’ creativity and intelligence quotient (Aitken, 2004); anxiety test result (Osiki & Busari, 2002); educational standard (Adeyegbe, 2005); numeracy skills (Falaye, 2006); and also educational policies and institutional aspects (Obemeata, 1995; Obanya, 2003). However, the quality of educational achievement and students’ academic performance still remain low despite all the data obtained above (WAEC, 2012). Some researchers have conducted studies to find out what other key factors beyond the factors mentioned above to other related areas within the teaching-learning network including psychological or psychosomatic constructions and cognitive structures as well. Under the psychological domain are constructions such as self-achievement, self-esteem, self-concept, cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, and motivation. Those constructions are impulse that drives the learners to perform a high level academic performance and high academic achievement. The variable that appears in the field of psychological construction is what is known and popular as Adversity Quotient. It is strongly believed and has been stated that Adversity Quotient is able to bridge the gap for learners to achieve high academic achievement and perform better academic performance (Stoltz, 1997, 2010)

That new finding has torn down an old stigma about Intelligence Quotient. It has been ages that people had assumed that Intelligence Quotient is the biggest factor to determine the success in life. The higher the IQ, the brighter the future. This happens at school as well. Parents generally assume that children with higher IQ will obtain higher academic achievement. However, as a matter of fact, IQ is not the only main factor speaking here; recent researches have shown that Adversity Quotient is an undeniable important factor also. AQ is generally defined as the ability
of an individual to deal with problems and difficulties and how the individual resolves them and then converted into opportunities for greater achievement (Stoltz, 1997). In general, some researchers defined AQ with different viewpoint and interpretations. There are three definitions of adversity quotients, namely: www.ccsenet.org/ies International Education Studies Vol. 8, No. 6; 2015 70 (i) conceptual work design to increase success in all aspects; (ii) benchmark on how someone responds to difficulties and challenges; and (iii) proven scientific tools based on knowledge to improve one's response to adversity (Stoltz, 1997). In the perspective of the education realm, AQ is an important factor needed by students to continue to fight when students face difficulties in achieving a high academic achievement. Basically, AQ can predict a person's endurance and persistence through scientific tests where the results can be used to improve various aspects such as team effectiveness, relationships, family, community, culture, society and organization (Phoolka & Kaur, 2012). Thus, it can be said that students who come with great IQ score do not have a guarantee that they will be more successful academically if they have a low AQ. Students who are smart but cannot overcome the difficulties during the learning process will fail at the end of the day.

College students are the individuals who happen to most likely face the challenge their adversities. In college, the students are expected to be more independent about their achievement. In this research, two groups of students were participated. The first group is freshmen students who just graduated from high school, with age group 18-19 years old. Meanwhile the other group is adult students who are currently working as well, with age group 21-27 years old. As defined by Dr. Paul G. Stoltz, "AQ is about how someone responds to what life has to offer, especially difficult challenges and problems. It measures how a person responds and deals with what happens in life starting from daily hazzles to the great difficulties that can arise in their lives. It can also be said to be an established science, theory and approach that allows individuals to know the level of their persistence. Therefore, the objective of this study is to compare the results of both groups Adversity Quotients test and their English grade.

Adversity Quotient

According to the definition by the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition (2010), Adversity means "a state of hardship and affliction; misfortune; a calamitous event; distress or an unfortunate event or incident. In 1997, in his book titled Adversity Quotient: Turning Barriers into Opportunities, Dr. Paul. G. Stoltz developed that the concepts of Adversity Quotient were drawn from three main sciences: Cognitive Psychology, Psychoneuroimmunology, and Neurophysiology. Thus, it can be concluded that the concepts exemplify two important components of each practical concept - scientific theory and real-world application. In addition, this fact is also the result of 19 years of research and 10 years of application which is a major breakthrough in understanding what an individual needs to succeed in life "(Stoltz, 1997).

Furthermore, according to Stoltz (1997) difficulty is something significant that has a large capacity to change the performance expected of students regardless of the intelligence capabilities they have. As such, he defines Adversity Quotient as "an indicator of how a person can survive difficulties, as well as the ability to overcome those difficulties or the capacity of an individual to deal with difficulties in his life. According to Stoltz (2010) there are five main reasons why an individual needs to improve his ability to deal with difficulties: (1) AQ is a benchmark that can be measured validly and reliably and is tracked against performance or other important variables. (2) AQ is not permanent, can be changed and strengthened continuously. (3) AQ is not an addition to current learning, performance, assessment and change initiatives but is a natural enhancer. (4) AQ is not a program, but a technology that can adapt. (5) AQ has been studied for 37 years and 10 years of organizational / institutional and industrial application, although
few people are aware of it, but it cannot be denied that we all have it. AQ is special, it can be identified and most significantly it can be improved. Unlike IQ (Intelligent Quotient) or EQ (Emotional Intelligent Quotient), which can only be identified.

**Adversity Quotient and Students’ Academic Performance**

As stated before, Adversity Quotient is an individual’s ability to deal with adversities in life. It is also believed that it can bridge the learners with the expected high academic achievement (Stoltz, 1997, 2010). Due to many conducted studies to observe the correlation between students’ AQ and their academic achievement in many areas or subjects, the stated fact above is supported strongly by many positive findings.

A research conducted in 2009 by Huijuan, entitled The AQ and Academic Performance Among College Students at St. Joseph’s College, Quezon City resulted that The level of adversity quotient and academic performance of the respondents who took part in the study were found related to each other significantly. The Adversity Response Profile (ARP) were used as the major tool for this study to obtain the data necessary for the study to determine Adversity Quotient level.

Another study was conducted by Baroa (2015), she conducted a study to determine the relationship between the AQ and Leadership Skills in relation to the demographic profiles in the Division of Cadiz City such as age, gender, marital status, length of service and school level school administrators. Her study revealed that the level of AQ of school administrators according to the four factors were found below average, however if the demographic profiles were considered, then the Leadership skills in its three areas showed high marks. Thus, it can be concluded that AQ’s level of the School administrators did not totally affect their leadership skills.

Meanwhile, a very recent study entitled The Effect of Adversity Quotient and Gender to Learning Outcome of High School Students conducted by Sigit, Suryanda, Supriyanti and Ichsan (2019) showed that there was a significant difference between the average scores of student’s learning outcome based on their level of adversity quotients namely quitters, campers, and climbers. The students who categorized as climbers obtained higher learning outcomes than campers and quitters. The data depicted that the group of Quitter's type students gets an average learning outcome score of 58.87. The group of Campers type students got an average of 68.69 learning outcomes. The Climbers type group got 79.38 learning outcomes.

Students with high level of Adversity Quotient will most likely excel in their academic performance. In the perspective of the education realm, AQ is an important factor needed by students to continue to fight when students face difficulties in achieving a high academic achievement. Basically, AQ can predict a person's endurance and persistence through scientific tests where the results can be used to improve various aspects such as team effectiveness, relationships, family, community, culture, society and organization (Phoolka & Kaur, 2012).

**METHOD**

**Research Design**

This research used quantitative method, since all the data was taken and presented in form of numbers and tables.

According to Leedy 1993, Qualitative research is a method which deals with numbers and any data that can be measured systematically. This method is used to answer questions between relationships that has measurable variables in order to explain, control and predict a phenomena.

Meanwhile, in collecting the data of students’ adversity quotient test, the writer used closed-questions questionnaire given to the participants. Each of the options had its score between 0 to 3 as the highest score. With 20 total question the final scores then classified as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points/scores</th>
<th>Level of AQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41 - 60</td>
<td>Climber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 40</td>
<td>Camper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 20</td>
<td>Quitter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meanwhile, the other data of students’ academic performance was obtained from their final grade in English class.

**Participants**

The participants of this study were 1st year English students consisted of two groups; Group 1 was 27 fresh graduates students in regular class and Group 2 was 8 adult students in extension class.

**Data Analysis**

Since the first data was obtained from the closed-question questionnaire with marking points, thus the researcher needed to sort out which student classified as Climber, Camper and Quitter based on the points. By doing so, the researcher also matched their classification with their English final grade. The result of this analysis process was later on presented in the tables in the discussion.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Having carried out the AQ test and analyzed the final grade of English subject, the findings showed that in Group 1, there were 10 students classified as Climber, another 10 students as Camper and 7 students as Quitter.

Among 10 students who were classified as climber or the students with the highest AQ level based on the test, 8 students got A in English subject and 2 of them got B. Among 10 students who were classified as camper, 8 students B and 2 students got C. Meanwhile, among 7 students who were classified as Quitter, there were 5 students who got C and the rest got B.

Table 1. Group 1 (fresh graduate students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Climber</th>
<th>Camper</th>
<th>Quitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In percentage, there was 37% students were classified as Climber, 37% were classified as Camper and 25.92 % students were classified as Quitter. The gap between the level was not too significance, although it depicted clearly that the students with high level of AQ performed a better result that the students with lower AQ level.

A different result was shown from Group 2, based on their AQ test and English final grade. From this group, the data showed that 5 students were classified as Climber, and 3 students were classified as Camper. None of these students were classified as Quitter.

Among 5 students who were classified as Climber, 3 of them got A in English subject and 1 student got B. Meanwhile, the rest students who were classified as Camper, the was 1 student got A, 1 student got B and 1 student got C.

Table 2. Group 2 (Adult students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Climber</th>
<th>Camper</th>
<th>Quitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In percentage, 62.5 % students were classified as Climber and the rest 37.5% students were classified as Camper. This showed quite a significant gap between the Climber and Camper. Furthermore, in this group there was no student to be classified as Quitter.

According to Stoltz, quitter are people who have the lowest level of Adversity Quotient. They choose to give up and quit when a problem arises. The same case with the participants of this research, at the beginning, they see English subject as a problem, a mountain to climb. However, in the end, none of them chose to quit and give up the subject. Especially the students from group 2; the adult students. They were the students who stated that it was difficult for them to learn English as
they were not very young anymore. However, their endurance, perseverance and motivation helped them to finish the course well. They are familiar with pressure and deadline as they also work at the moment. It was what lacks from Group 1. Although both group showed a good academic performance, but it cannot be denied that the fresh graduate students were struggle more during course. They just happened to be graduated and became college students with more responsibilities and pressure from high school. The situation was not familiar for them. Therefore, Group 2 performed slightly better in this case.

However, it needed to be kept in mind that some factors need to be taken into account. Different student has different personality and different way to deal with problem. According to Stoltz, factors like enthusiasm, motivation, ambition, responsibility, health even circumstances may also affect the result.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that most of the students with high level of Adversity Quotient or Climber, showed a better academic performance than the students with lower Adversity Quotient level namely Camper and Climber. Furthermore, adult students (Group 2) who are currently working while attending English class, showed a better result in Adversity Quotient test although they were in the same semester with the fresh graduate students (Group 1). However, other factor beyond what was stated in this study might be needed a further research.

REFERENCES


Stoltz, Paul G. (1997) *Adversity Quotient: Turning obstacles into opportunities*. Canada: John Willey and Sons, Inc.
