

Assessment of Leadership Behavior and Adversity Quotient Among Tertiary Academic Administrators

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to determine the relationship professional leadership style to the adversity quotient of the academic administrators of selected state universities and colleges in Region VIII. Using the descriptive - correlational research design the instruments consisted of four parts: the personal characteristics, leadership style survey developed by Don Clark and adversity quotient by Stoltz (2012). Majority of the academic administrators were female, married and belonged to 50-59 age group. The academic administrators were doctoral degree holders and worked in the academe for 21 years and above. Most of them had associate professor I-V position. The overall adversity quotient of the academic administrators was categorized as low. Delegative style of leadership was adopted by academic leaders. On the test of hypothesis on the significant relationship between the professional leadership characteristics and the four dimensions of adversity quotient of the academic administrators were not significantly related. Based from the results of the study, adversity quotient should be included as one of the job qualifications to people who work in the academe to improve organizational performance and adopt the LEAD sequence of Stoltz (2012) in improving a person's adversity quotient.

KEYWORDS: adversity quotient, leadership style, LEAD, academic administrators.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic administrators in higher education institutions often deal with the recurrent internal and external problems in school operation. According to Ferrer (2009), the colossal challenges in state universities and colleges are the establishment of greater uniformity in accrediting standards and procedures for Higher Education Institutions, rationalizing the higher education system which leads to decreasing trends in allocation of budget from the national government, and improving efficiency, strengthening teacher competencies through major faculty development programs and improving the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of the student financial aid.

With these myriad duties associated with the academic administrators, challenges in higher education and the demand of changes for global competitiveness not only within an institution itself but also changes in faculty, staff, and the student body, they are more prone to adversities, conflicts, stresses and challenges in leading the organization. Thus, academic administrators must be equipped to handle such changes and adversity. Ferrer (2009) stated that school administrators must be encouraged to meet and beat all adversities brought by these changes and take an active and sustained interest in the broad span of the future. With this, challenges can be an opportunity to strengthen the character and build one's achievements in overcoming the challenges in school operation.

The extent of the academic administrators' resilience in facing the adversities may affect the success of the students, teachers, parents and stakeholders and even the whole educational institution. Failure to deal with adversities can be barriers to the accomplishment of school administrators' personal and organizational goals and highly essential element of leadership. Thus, educational leaders must equip themselves with confidence and perseverance to continue working in attaining their educational objectives despite setbacks and conflicts

brought about by tough situations. Therefore, there is a need to gauge their adversity quotient for them to develop positive attitudes throughout their organization and create a culture that embraces organizational resiliency.

This research attempted to study the capacity of the academic administrators to rise from defeats, frequent frustrations, stress and setbacks as they perform their duties and responsibilities. The study tried to relate the adversity quotient® of academic administrators to their personal characteristics, and leadership styles. The extent of influence of these factors helps develop academic managers to become self-motivated, assertive, and decisive when it comes to challenging situations. It is believed that if adversity quotient is fully understood and utilized it could create personal and professional effectiveness and more resilient organizations.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study determined the relationship of the professional leadership characteristics to the adversity quotient® of the academic administrators of selected state universities and colleges in Region VIII.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. Find out the personal characteristics of the academic administrators in terms of:
 - 1.1. gender;
 - 1.2. civil status;
 - 1.3. age;
 - 1.4. educational qualification;
 - 1.5. length of service; and
 - 1.6. academic rank
2. Determine the Adversity Quotient® of academic administrators as measured in terms of the following dimensions:
 - 2.1. control;
 - 2.2. ownership;
 - 2.3. reach; and
 - 2.4. endurance
3. Determine the leadership styles employed by the academic administrators;
4. Determine the significant relationship between leadership styles of the academic administrators and their Adversity Quotient®;

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the Adversity Quotient ® theory of Dr. Paul G. Stoltz and Kurt Lewin's theory of leadership behavior styles.

The important concepts in influencing the AQ theory by Stoltz are hardiness, Resiliency, Optimism, Locus of Control, Self-Efficacy, Learned Helplessness, and Attribution theory (Stoltz, 2000). There are several theoretical linkages among CORE dimensions and other more well-known personality constructs, that is, the control dimension highly related to the constructs, learned helplessness, hardiness and self-efficacy. Both learned helplessness and hardiness have one thing in common that is the importance of perceiving a sense of control. In learned helplessness, if a person thinks he or she has no control over an aversive event the outcome will eventually be a feeling of helplessness and apathy.

For the hardiness theory, a person who is low in perceived control typically leaves things to destiny and thus less likely to confront a problem. These are elements that are also reflected in AQ's control dimension. With regard to self-efficacy, it stresses a person's confidence in executing actions and behaviors. The control dimension also points out a person's perceived ability in changing an aversive event. Furthermore, ownership was suggested to have a small relation with the locus of control in that both include a person's perception of responsibility for events in her or his life. However, it is worth noting that locus of control could also be suggested to reflect the control dimension because both constructs seem to include the degree to which individuals perceive they can control events in their lives. Locus of control thus seems to share elements with both control and ownership. Reach and endurance were suggested to reflect the reformulated version of learned helplessness, the explanatory style.

According to Stoltz, as he linked leadership to AQ®, the leader might be excellent at creating a compelling vision, strategizing and inspiring others but these skills would be useless if the person is incapable of preserving through adversity. For this reason leadership styles are being integrated into this study in determining whether AQ® of academic administrators has a relationship with the latter. The leadership style of the administrators is anchored on the theory of leadership by Kurt Lewin (1939) wherein he identified different styles of leadership. He had identified a very influential and established three major leadership styles. These are authoritarian, participative, and democratic style of leadership.

The independent variables included the personal characteristics, leadership style, of respondents. The personal characteristics variables were gender, civil status, age, educational attainment and years of service and academic position. Leadership styles were reflected on the respondents' assessment whether authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic) or delegative (free reign).

4. METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive -correlational research in order to attain the objectives. Standardized instruments to gather quantitative data were utilized in this study. The instruments were as follows and consisted of four parts: Part I delved with the personal characteristics of the respondents which include age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, length of service and academic rank; Part II dealt with leadership style. The leadership style survey, which was developed by Don Clark was used to assess the leadership style of the respondents. It

was a 30-question self-assessment questionnaire which determined whether one's leadership style is autocratic, democratic or participative, or delegative or free-reign; and Part IV pertained to Adversity Quotient Profile®. 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. 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. 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.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondents

Sex

Among the 108 respondents, 61 or 56.6 percent were female while 47 or 43.5 percent were male. The result implies that the 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 the 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.

Leadership Style

Table 1 presents the leadership style of the academic administrators is categorized as to authoritarian style, participative style, delegative and a mixed of the three styles of leadership.

Overall, 70 or 65 percent of the academic administrators in selected state universities and colleges adopted the delegative style of leadership, 22 or 21 percent fell on democratic style, 6 or 6 percent fell on authoritarian style and 1 or 1 percent adopted a combination of participative and delegative leadership style, and 1 or 6 percent adopted a combination of authoritarian style and delegative style, and a combination of authoritarian and participative style of leadership.

The result indicates that majority of the academic administrators of the selected state universities and colleges applied the delegative style of leadership which allows them to manage the organization given minimum direction and maximum freedom from faculty members in decision making and take full responsibility on the decision that has been made. The academic administrators recognize the faculty members' competence in areas of expertise and resort to delegating certain tasks out to knowledgeable and trustworthy individuals. In this type of leadership, respondents share leadership power with his subordinates.

The result of this finding is supported by Schust (2012) that in delegative leadership, staff brings a high degree of personal responsibility and self-monitoring to their works and the delegation principle promotes the development and qualification of the staff. It increases self-esteem and creates the conditions for people to be willing to raise their performance (output) standards continually.

Table 1 Leadership Style of the Academic Administrators of Selected State Universities and Colleges in Region VIII

Leadership Styles	SUC-01		SUC-02		SUC-03		SUC-04		SUC-05		SUC-06		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Authoritarian Style	2	8	1	6	0	0	0	0	2	15	1	4	6	6
Participative Style	8	33	4	22	0	0	3	17	0	0	7	27	22	21
Delegative Style	11	46	8	44	8	100	15	83	11	85	17	65	70	65
Participative & Delegative	3	13	3	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	7	6
Authoritarian & Delegative	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Authoritarian & Participative	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	24	100	18	100	18	100	18	100	13	100	26	100	107	100

Adversity Quotient

Table 2 reflects the overall adversity quotient of the academic administrators in selected state universities and colleges in Region VIII.

Table 2 Academic Administrators’ Over-all Adversity Quotient® with their CORE Dimensions

SUC	Mean Score in CORE Dimensions				
	Control (C)	Ownership (O)	Reach (R)	Endurance (E)	Adversity Quotient
SUC- 01	38	39	27	36	140
SUC - 02	32	32	26	34	124
SUC - 03	32	30	28	33	123
SUC – 04	31	30	30	27	118
SUC – 05	32	33	29	32	126
SUC – 06	36	38	30	35	139
Over-all	34 (below average)	34 (low)	28 (below average)	33 (average)	128 (low)

As revealed from the table, control dimension of 34, the academic administrators fell on “below average” rating. This indicates that typically the respondents react to adverse events at least partially within his control, depending on the magnitude and complexity of the adversities they might be facing. Within this range, the person is easily disheartened. But it may be more difficult to maintain a sense of control when faced with more serious setbacks or challenges. The mean score of academic administrators in terms ownership dimension is equal to 34 which belonged to a low level of ownership. This indicates that the academic administrators are less likely to hold themselves accountable for the situations they are experiencing and consequences that stem from the situations. Respondents tend to have lower motivation and self-esteem.

In terms of reach dimension, the computed mean score of 28 fell under “below average” level. This implies that academic administrators may occasionally let adversities reach into other areas of life and succumb to the temptation to turn setbacks into disasters and depend on others to do away from the emotional pit. This can have a detrimental effect on the person experiencing adversities and lowers the optimism in solving problems. The endurance dimension of the academic administrators had a computed mean score of 33 which fell within the “average range.” This indicates a normal but less-than-ideal capacity to see past difficult situations when they arise. Clearer, simpler and less emotional charged situations may seem easier to see and overcome and opposite to the former may seem to last forever. This result would indicate that when one is weakened then hope dwindles.

The over-all adversity quotient of academic administrators reveals that computed mean score 128 belonged to “low” level. This signifies that generally the respondents have “low” adversity quotient which indicates the low capacity of the respondents to be resilient on adversities and challenges.

Relationships between Leadership Style and AQ CORE Dimension

Table 3 shows the relationship between leadership style and the AQ CORE dimension of the academic administrators.

Results of the test of relationship between leadership style and control dimension showed an r value of 0.021 with a probability value of 0.826. The p-value is greater than the level of significance of 0.05.

Table 3 Leadership Style and AQ CORE Dimension

Variable	r	P-value	Decision
Control and Leadership Style	0.021	0.826	H ₀ Accepted

Ownership and Leadership Style	-0.091	0.350	H ₀ Accepted
Reach and Leadership Style	-0.021	0.827	H ₀ Accepted
Endurance and Leadership Style	0.115	0.237	H ₀ Accepted
Overall Adversity Quotient	0.008	0.934	H ₀ Accepted

Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the leadership style and the control dimension is accepted. This implies that the leadership style adopted by the respondents is not affected by the perceived capacity of control over adverse events. It means that if a leader has small control over adverse events, it could lead to radical and powerful effect on the actions and thoughts that follow.

The test of relationship between leadership style and ownership dimension reflects the r value of -0.091 with a probability value of 0.350. The p-value is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the leadership style and the ownership dimension is accepted. This implies that the leadership style adapted by the respondents is not related to the responsibility and accountability for the results over adverse events.

The test result for relationship between leadership style and reach dimension has an r value of -0.021 and a probability value of 0.827. The p-value is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the leadership style and reach dimension is accepted. This implies that the leadership style is not related to the reach dimension. It means that adapting any leadership style does not assure a leader that the extent of the effect of adversity will not affect or get to the other areas of one's life.

The r value between the relationship of leadership style and endurance dimension of the academic administrators is -0.021 with a probability value of 0.827. The p-value is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the leadership style and the endurance is accepted. This implies that leadership style is not related to reach dimension. The result of the finding shows that perception of being stable, not vulnerable and can withstand the test of adversity and challenges being in the position are not dictated by the leadership style of the respondents.

The r value for the significant relationship between the leadership style and the over-all adversity quotient of the academic administrators is 0.008 with a probability value of 0.934. The p-value is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the leadership style and the over-all adversity quotient is accepted. This indicates that the capacity of the respondents to be resilient and the ability hurdle difficulties and challenges while they are in their designated position is not determined by the leadership style they adapted as they manage the academe.

The result of this finding is contrary to the claim of Stoltz (1997). He demonstrates the importance of adversity quotient and leadership. He stated that leaders might be brilliant at creating a compelling vision, strategizing and inspiring others, but if he is incapable of preserving himself through adversity, then his leadership skills is insignificant. He emphasized that leaders must be capable of seeing challenges worthy of great effort, creativity and resources. Also according to Patterson (2001) as cited by the work of Ferrer (2010), that school superintendents are advised to stay upbeat and mindful of both challenges and opportunities; stay focused on

what they are about; remain flexible and tolerant of ambiguity; proactive, not reactive; apply resilience-conserving strategies during rough times

6. CONCLUSIONS

Majority of the academic administrators are female. Most of them are married and belonged to the 50-59 age group. The academic administrators attained the highest educational qualification of doctoral degree. Majority of the academic administrators have been in the academe for 21 years and above and have the highest academic rank of associate professor I- V.

The academic administrators in selected state universities and colleges have below average control dimension, low ownership dimension, below average reach dimension and below average endurance dimension. Majority of the academic heads got low adversity quotient. The overall adversity mean score of the academic administrators belonged to low adversity quotient.

Academic administrators of the selected state universities and colleges in Region VIII used the delegative style of leadership. The leadership style and the four dimensions of adversity quotient of the respondents are not significantly related.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made. First, there is a need to conduct seminars and training that will enhance the level of adversity quotient of the academic administrators since it is related to their job satisfaction. By improving the AQ® and the CORE skills, the optimism and resiliency of the academic administrators will increase which lead to increase capacity to accept challenges, overcome and thrive in adversity. It will also help develop their full potentials and encouraging them to put their best effort and to maximize their performances as academic administrators. Second, integrate Adversity Quotient Profile as one of the job qualifications in recruiting and promoting people working in the school institution to improve organizational performance. Third, the researcher is adopting the recommendation of Stoltz in improving the person's Adversity Quotient®. In order to raise the level of Adversity Quotient® it is recommended that a person must "*dispute*" the destructive responses to life's events. The technique is called LEAD, where, L stands for listen to your adversity response, E for explore all origins and ownership of the result and establish accountability, A stands for analyze the evidence as to why a low AQ has to be true, and D for do something by mapping out specific ways that help a person's control. The LEAD sequence is based on the notion that a person can alter success in life by changing his habits of thought. Fourth, human resource management personnel can adopt the theory and practice of adversity quotient in employees' training and development to instill individual adversity awareness. Fifth, the study recommends providing strategies on how management can improve the working conditions of the academic heads, especially the availability of technical facilities needed to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently. Sixth, further research study can explore adversity quotient as a global predictor of success to empower students, teachers and academic administrators. Replication of this study should be conducted in order to obtain more valid and highly reliable results and conclusion.

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