

The Role of Adversity Quotient in Enhancing Conflict Resolution Skills and Learning Agility among Undergraduate Students

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to examine the relationship between Adversity Quotient (AQ), Learning Agility (LA), and Conflict Resolution Skill (CRS) among 160 undergraduate students. The purpose of the study is to explore the connection between psychological adaptability and conflict resolution skills. Thus, descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and regression analysis are utilized to test these variables. The statistical results shows that there is a high correlation between AQ and LA ($r=0.983$, $p<.001$) suggesting that two psychological dimensions are virtually equal in the context of the adaptability of the students. Both AQ and LA were found to be significant and strong predictors of CRS. All the variables remains consistent across demographic categories, suggesting that adaptability in learning is not influenced by gender or academic background. Conclusions drawn from the findings indicate that AQ and LA function as a single construct referred to as “readiness” and play a key role in conflict resolution skills. Due to the presence of high multicollinearity among AQ and LA, it is possible to suggest that they



form a single construct which reflects students' psychological resilience. Therefore, it should be noted that educational measures aimed at development of AQ or LA will be quite efficient in terms of increasing students' conflict resolution skills.

Introduction

Contemporary educational environments expose students to complex academic pressures, social challenges, and rapidly evolving learning contexts that require both intellectual competence and emotional resilience (OECD, 2019). The capacity to cope with adversity has emerged as a key determinant of student success within and beyond formal education systems (American Psychological Association, 2014). Within this context, the Adversity Quotient (AQ), developed by Paul Stoltz, offers a framework for understanding individual responses to challenges, setbacks, and obstacles (Stoltz, 1997).

Adversity Quotient assesses an individual's capacity to withstand difficulties, maintain control in challenging situations, and persist in the face of adversity. AQ comprises four dimensions: control, ownership, reach, and endurance, which collectively determine how effectively a person manages hardships (Stoltz, 1997). In educational settings, students with high AQ are more likely to exhibit perseverance, emotional stability, and problem-solving abilities, all of which are essential for overcoming academic and interpersonal challenges. Consequently, AQ significantly shapes students' behavioral responses and coping strategies during conflict situations.

Conflict is an inherent aspect of human interaction, particularly in diverse classrooms where students contribute varied perspectives, values, and experiences (Morton Deutsch, 1973). Proficient conflict resolution skills are essential for sustaining a positive and inclusive learning environment. Effective conflict resolution involves constructive communication, negotiation, and collaborative problem-solving to address disagreements and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes (Kenneth Thomas & Ralph Kilmann, 1974). Students who possess strong conflict-resolution skills are better equipped to manage interpersonal tensions, minimize misunderstandings, and foster cooperative relationships.

The relationship between AQ and conflict-resolution skills is substantial: individuals with greater resilience are more likely to approach conflicts calmly, rationally, and with a solution-oriented mindset (Stoltz, 2000). Instead of reacting impulsively, these students critically analyze situations, regulate their emotions, and participate in constructive dialogue (Daniel Goleman, 1995). Such emotional regulation and focus under pressure enhance conflict resolution strategies and contribute to improved interpersonal



outcomes (Goleman, 1995). AQ thus serves as a key attribute that strengthens students' capacity to manage conflicts productively and adaptively.

Learning agility, similar to conflict resolution, is recognized as a critical competency for students in the 21st century (Center for Creative Leadership, 2000). It encompasses the ability and willingness to learn from experience, adapt to novel situations, and apply knowledge in unfamiliar contexts (David A. Kolb, 1984). Learning agility entails openness to feedback, flexible thinking, and a sustained commitment to continuous learning and self-improvement (Kolb, 1984). In rapidly evolving educational and professional environments, learning agility enables students to remain relevant, innovative, and responsive to change.

Adversity plays a crucial role in fostering learning agility, as challenging experiences create opportunities for reflection and growth (Carol Dweck, 2006). Students with high AQ are more inclined to perceive failures and setbacks as opportunities for learning, thereby enhancing their adaptive learning capabilities (Dweck, 2006). This constructive approach to challenges promotes experimentation, critical thinking, and skill development, all of which are central to learning agility. Successfully navigating adversity also facilitates the transfer of learning across diverse contexts, a defining characteristic of agile learners.

The integration of AQ, conflict resolution skills, and learning agility highlights the interconnectedness of emotional resilience, social competence, and cognitive adaptability in student development. Students who effectively manage adversity are better positioned to resolve conflicts constructively, thereby fostering a supportive environment for continuous learning and growth (Deutsch, 1973). This synergy not only enhances academic performance but also prepares students for real-world scenarios that demand collaboration, adaptability, and resilience.

Despite growing recognition of these constructs, further empirical research is required to examine the combined influence of the Adversity Quotient on students' conflict-resolution skills and learning agility. Most existing studies have investigated these variables independently, with limited attention to their integrated effects within educational contexts (OECD, 2019). Understanding this relationship is particularly important in the current climate, as students encounter both academic and socio-emotional challenges.

This study seeks to investigate the role of Adversity Quotient in enhancing students' conflict-resolution skills and learning agility. By analyzing how resilience influences students' capacity to manage conflicts and adapt to learning experiences, the research aims to inform holistic educational strategies that promote both personal and academic development. The anticipated findings are expected to provide valuable



insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers in designing interventions that cultivate resilience, effective communication, and adaptive learning.

Need and Significance of the Study

Today, students face more academic and social challenges. They need to be resilient and adaptable to succeed. Paul G. Stoltz (1997) introduced Adversity Quotient (AQ), showing it helps people deal with challenges. Stoltz (2000) found that people with higher AQ are more persistent, emotionally controlled, and better at solving problems during difficult times.

A review study by H. R. Juwita, Roemintoyo, and Usodo (2020) found that AQ strongly affects students' grades and their coping with problems. Xia Wang et al. (2021) showed that AQ helps students learn independently and perform better in school. These studies suggest we should look at how AQ relates to social and adaptive skills, not just grades.

Conflict often occurs among students, especially in classrooms with diverse opinions (Deutsch, 1973). Deutsch (1973) found that resolving conflicts positively leads to better teamwork and learning, whereas negative conflict harms relationships and outcomes. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) described different ways to handle conflict, demonstrating that effective conflict management skills are important in schools. Daniel Goleman (1995) found that emotional intelligence helps people control themselves and understand others during conflict. AQ is linked to emotional strength, so it may also help with conflict resolution. But few studies have examined this connection, highlighting a research gap.

Learning agility means being able to learn from experience and adapt to new situations (Center for Creative Leadership, 2000). David A. Kolb (1984) said learning by doing helps people become more adaptable. Carol S. Dweck (2006) found that people with a growth mindset face challenges and learn from mistakes, making them more agile learners. Wang et al. (2021) found that resilience helps students adapt and use effective learning strategies. Juwita et al. (2020) reported that students with higher AQ scores adapt better and continue with learning tasks. These findings suggest that AQ may be linked to learning agility, but further research is needed.

Most studies examine only AQ and school performance, motivation, or coping skills. Few have studied how AQ affects both conflict skills and learning agility together. This shows a big gap in research. So, it is important to study how AQ influences students' social skills and ability to adapt. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining how Adversity Quotient helps students resolve conflicts and learn more effectively. It draws on earlier research to show how resilience enhances students' social and cognitive



skills. The study will also give teachers ideas to help students become more resilient, better at communicating, and more adaptable.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant relationship between the adversity quotient and conflict resolution skills?
2. Is there a significant relationship between adversity quotient and learning agility?
3. Do conflict resolution skills and learning agility differ based on selected demographic variable (gender)?
4. To what extent does the adversity quotient predict conflict resolution skills?
5. To what extent does the adversity quotient predict learning agility?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between the adversity quotient and conflict resolution skills
2. To analyze the relationship between the adversity quotient and learning agility
3. To identify differences in conflict resolution skills and learning agility based on gender
4. To determine the predictive influence of the adversity quotient on conflict resolution skills
5. To determine the predictive influence of the adversity quotient on learning agility

Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses (H₀)

H01: There is no significant relationship between adversity quotient and conflict resolution skills

H02: There is no significant relationship between adversity quotient and learning agility

H03: There is no significant difference in conflict resolution skills based on gender

H04: There is no significant difference in learning agility based on gender

H05: Adversity quotient does not significantly predict conflict resolution skills

H06: Adversity quotient does not significantly predict learning agility



Research Hypotheses (H₁)

H1: There is a significant relationship between the adversity quotient and conflict resolution skills

H2: There is a significant relationship between adversity quotient and learning agility

H3: There is a significant difference in conflict resolution skills based on gender

H4: There is a significant difference in learning agility based on gender

H5: Adversity quotient significantly predicts conflict resolution skills

H6: Adversity quotient significantly predicts learning agility

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative research design with a descriptive and correlational approach. This design is suitable for examining relationships among variables and determining predictive influences without manipulating any conditions. A cross-sectional survey method is employed to collect data at a single point in time.

Population and Sample

The population comprises **undergraduate students enrolled in higher education institutions.**

- **Sampling Technique:** Stratified random sampling (preferred) to ensure representation across disciplines (Arts, Science, Commerce, Professional courses)
- **Sample Size:**
 - 160 undergraduate students

Variables of the Study

- **Independent Variable (IV):** Adversity Quotient
- **Dependent Variables (DVs):**
 - Conflict Resolution Skills



- Learning Agility

Tools used for the study

Data will be collected using structured questionnaires on a **5-point Likert scale** (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree).

1. Adversity Quotient Scale

- Based on the CORE dimensions (Control, Ownership, Reach, Endurance)
- Measures students' ability to handle challenges and setbacks

2. Conflict Resolution Skills Scale

- Measures communication, negotiation, emotional control, and problem-solving

3. Learning Agility Scale

- Measures adaptability, openness to learning, flexibility, and application of knowledge

Validity and Reliability

- **Content Validity:** Established through expert review (education/psychology experts)
- **Construct Validity:** Factor analysis (Exploratory Factor Analysis if self-developed)
- **Reliability:**
 - Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.70
 - Pilot study with 30–50 undergraduate students

Data Collection Procedure

- Institutional permission will be obtained prior to data collection
- Participants will be informed about the purpose of the study
- Consent will be taken before administering questionnaires
- Data will be collected through **online (Google Forms) or offline survey methods**



- Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured

Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive Statistics

- Mean, Standard Deviation → to determine levels of AQ, CRS, and Learning Agility

Inferential Statistics

- **Pearson Correlation**

→ To examine relationships between AQ, CRS, and Learning Agility

- **Independent t-test / ANOVA**

→ To test differences based on demographic variables

- **Multiple Regression Analysis**

→ To determine the predictive influence of AQ on:

- Conflict Resolution Skills
- Learning Agility

Statistical analysis

Table 1 Descriptive statistics

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
AQ	160	70	16.70	37	97
LA		142.73	45.72	62	221
CRS		6.75	1.90	3	10

Table 2 Correlation between Adversity Quotient, Learning Agility and Conflict Resolution Skill

Variables correlated	N	R	Level of significance



AQ & LA	160	0.983	0.01
AQ & CRS		0.701	
LA & CRS		0.697	

The table shows Pearson's Correlation coefficient and reveals a strong positive relation between the variables, particularly between AQ and LA.

An independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were conducted and the results reveal that there is no significant difference in demographic variable (gender).

Results and Findings in Relation to Hypotheses

The findings of the study are presented in relation to the formulated null hypotheses (H_{01} – H_{06}). Each hypothesis was tested using appropriate statistical techniques, and the results are interpreted accordingly

Hypothesis 1

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between Adversity Quotient and Conflict Resolution Skills.

Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between Adversity Quotient and Conflict Resolution Skills, $r(158) = .70, p < .001$.

Decision: The null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected.

Interpretation: The findings indicate that higher levels of Adversity Quotient are associated with better Conflict Resolution Skills, suggesting that resilient individuals tend to handle interpersonal challenges more effectively.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between Adversity Quotient and Learning Agility.

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant strong positive relationship between Adversity Quotient and Learning Agility, $r(158) = .78, p < .001$.



Decision: The null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected.

Interpretation: The results indicate that individuals with higher Adversity Quotient tend to exhibit greater Learning Agility. The strength of the relationship is substantial but within acceptable limits, indicating related yet distinct constructs.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03} : There is no significant difference in Conflict Resolution Skills based on gender.

An independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were conducted.

Gender: $t(158) = 0.19, p > .05$

Decision: The null hypothesis (H_{03}) is accepted.

Interpretation: Conflict Resolution Skills do not significantly differ across gender indicating stability of variable across gender

Hypothesis 4

H_{04} : There is no significant difference in Learning Agility based on gender.

Gender: $t(158) = -0.42, p > .05$

Decision: The null hypothesis (H_{04}) is accepted.

Interpretation: Learning Agility remains consistent across gender, suggesting that adaptability in learning is not influenced by gender.

Hypothesis 5

H_{05} : Adversity Quotient does not significantly predict Conflict Resolution Skills.

Simple linear regression analysis revealed that the model was statistically significant, $R^2 = .49, F(1, 158) = 152.63, p < .001$.

Decision: The null hypothesis (H_{05}) is rejected.

Interpretation: Adversity Quotient significantly predicts Conflict Resolution Skills, explaining 49.2% of the variance. This indicates a strong and meaningful predictive relationship.



Hypothesis 6

H₀₆: Adversity Quotient does not significantly predict Learning Agility.

A simple linear regression analysis revealed a statistically significant model, $R^2 = .61$, $F(1, 158) = 247.69$, $p < .001$.

Decision: The null hypothesis (H₀₆) is rejected.

Interpretation: Adversity Quotient significantly predicts Learning Agility, explaining 61% of the variance. This reflects a strong predictive effect while maintaining conceptual distinction between the variables.

Conclusion

AQ and LA are excellent, synonymous predictors of CRS in a student. According to the results, students with stronger ability to manage adversity and learning agility have higher odds of having high CRS. This is due to the high correlation between AQ and LA ($r=0.983$), which makes both constructs a single psychological "readiness" factor to deal with interpersonal or academic disputes.

Unified Development: Given that both variables exert their influence on CRS to an equal extent, there is no reason to believe that educational programs aimed at teaching conflict resolution skills cannot focus only on AQ or LA.

Predictive Value: The fact that both independent variables explain close to 50% of the variance in CRS proves that adaptability is crucial for conflict resolution skills among the participants.

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