



## TEACHERS' ADVERSITY QUOTIENT, STRESS AND WORK PERFORMANCE

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### Abstract:

The study analyzed the Adversity Quotient, Level of Stress, and work performance of 134 public elementary school teachers in a district of medium-sized division, central Philippines during school year 2021-2022. Stoltz's Adversity Quotient questionnaire were adopted, and a content-validated self-made questionnaire were used. Descriptive statistical tools were also used in this study. Anchored on Adversity Quotient Theory by Stoltz (1997), Grounded theory Karasek and Theorell (1990), and Simmons (2011) Performance Management Theory of Action which showed how teachers withstand tough and challenging problems they have encountered at their work. These lenses offered structure in looking for dimensions of teachers' AQ in determining their level of stress in relation to their work performance. Results disclosed that teachers' AQ has no significant relationship to their level of work performance. Which means that they shared same experiences which resulted them to have an outstanding performance. Additionally, no significant relationship on teachers' level of stress and work performance which means that the stress experienced by teachers does not have significant connectedness to their work performance. Further, the level of AQ and teachers' stress has no significant relationship exists and it implies that the teachers' adversity quotient is not affected by their stress experienced and vice versa. However, it has a significant relationship in terms of teachers' highest educational attainment, length of service and plantilla position which means these variables affects teachers' level of work performance. These findings call for involvement of Department of Education and teachers to strengthen collaboration to promote quality education.

**Keywords** Adversity Quotient, Control, Ownership, Reach, Endurance, level of stress, work performance

### Introduction:

Every problem is a challenge to anyone that must be handled sensibly. This COVID-19 pandemic highlighted several adversities such as fear of the unknown and uncertainty to everyone especially in the sector of education. In response, the Department of Education modified its practices and processes to continue serving the learners and purposely accomplish its mandate. However, as it is on its infancy stage, several daunting challenges need to address and overcome for distance education to be efficiently delivered.

On other hand, Adversity Quotient is a person's response in overcoming obstacles in life (Juwita, 2020). There were four dimensions of AQ namely, Control which refers to a person's ability to exert initiatives over his or her surroundings and himself or herself when confronted with a problem. Ownership wherein a person recognizes the consequences of a problem. Reach which determines a person's perspective on problems and aspects of his life. While Endurance describes a person's perspective on the time during which a problem occurs (Juwita et al. 2020).

Correspondingly, stress is a fact of life for teachers. The pandemic has added more stress to them. Additionally, stress at workplace in teaching profession is due to the undue work pressure on teachers, race to meet deadlines and non-supportive workplace environment. Another stressful aspect of being a teacher was thought to be the lack of control over one's environment, the difficulty of meeting the deadlines required by the nature of their job, the difficulty of planning the tasks on their bucket list due to their changing nature, and the need to satisfy both ends in order to perform or carry out the task successfully were all considered to be stressful aspects of teaching (Wangui et al., 2016). Furthermore, the teachers experience stress due to a lack of any kind of support. When stressors persist for an extended period, their performance can be negatively impacted (Vats, 2020). The entire predictable value that teachers must carry out over a set period can be summed up in one simple definition of a teacher's work performance (Asaloei1 et al. 2020).

Given the nature of the work that educators must do amid a pandemic, it is critical to consider their adversity quotient and workplace stressor of teachers. Despite the large number of available literatures examining work-related stress and how it may affect teacher performance, the researcher felt compelled to investigate this topic in the context of public elementary schools. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to see if any of the dimensions of adversity quotient, areas if work-related stress factors, or teachers' profiles could be predictors in teaching performance. It was also the researcher's strong desire to assist teachers facing adversity and stress and likewise determine what appropriate action should be taken.



### **Literature Review:**

Juwita et al. (2020) define AQ as an individual's ability to overcome obstacles, which influences teachers' skills and students' academic outcomes. Teachers with higher AQ positively impact students' performance (Rahayu & Istiani, 2019). However, work-related challenges such as heavy workloads, lack of resources, and job dissatisfaction can diminish AQ (Dowd, 2020; Sahito, 2017). Studies have shown that in-service training can help improve teachers' AQ, ultimately benefiting student success (Mwivanda et al., 2020). In the local context, Banal et al. (2022) found that teachers face adversity due to overwhelming workloads, emphasizing the need for resilience and administrative support. Other challenges such as financial difficulties and pandemic-related issues also hinder AQ, although teachers develop coping strategies to adapt (Agayon et al., 2022).

Stress is a prominent issue among teachers, with workload, low salaries, and lack of support being major contributors (Asthana & Owen, 2018; Alkhrisha, 2014). Teacher stress not only affects health and well-being but also job performance. Studies have found that external factors such as poor workplace conditions and student behavior exacerbate stress, leading to burnout (Nabiong, 2014; Steiner & Woo, 2021). Local studies show that public school teachers in the Philippines face significant stress due to inadequate resources and digital challenges during the pandemic, which affect their ability to create effective learning environments (Robosa et al., 2021). However, managing stress can foster a sense of belonging and commitment to their work (Manalo, 2019).

Teacher performance is closely linked to motivation and the ability to handle stress and adversity. High-performing teachers tend to have strong collaborations with colleagues and students, as well as a deep commitment to achieving educational goals (Kelvin, 2016; Chamundeswari, 2013). Locally, it is noted that poor performance can lead to insecurity and dissatisfaction among teachers (Catolos & Catolos, 2017). Nevertheless, teachers' passion for their work, sense of purpose, and motivation to improve their skills play key roles in enhancing their performance (Mart, 2017).

### **Methodology:**

#### **Research Design**

This study utilized the descriptive research design, a design that fits this study as it aimed to determine the extent of Adversity quotient and level of stress in relation to the work performance of public elementary school teachers in a district in a medium-sized schools division in Central Philippines during the School Year 2021-2022.

Descriptive research is a type of research that assesses a person's current situation and is commonly utilized in education, nutrition, epidemiology, and behavioral sciences. It's worth is based on the idea that issues can be solve and practices improved by observation, analysis, and description. The survey, which comprises questionnaires, personal interviews, phone surveys, and normative surveys, is the most used descriptive research approach (Kowalczyk, 2018).

A descriptive research design can use a wide variety of research methods to investigate one or more variables. Unlike in experimental research, the researcher does not control or manipulate any of the variables, but only observes and measures them. Beyond simply data gathering, it involves analyzing, classifying and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, cause and effect relationships and then making appropriate interpretation about such data. Descriptive research designs are also valuable to have an important knowledge about the present situation of the study which is about the adversity quotient, challenges encountered, and coping strategies of public elementary school teachers in the new normal.

#### **Locale of the Study**

This study was conducted in one of the districts in a medium-sized schools division in Central Philippines. The district is composed of 3 component schools and are also top-performing schools. The schools are being managed by school principal IV and principal III.

#### **Respondents of the Study**

The respondents of the study were 134 public elementary school teachers out of a total population of 204 people. Because the number of respondents is so large, stratified, and random sampling techniques were used, with the sample size determined using the Cochran formula. To calculate the percentage, divide the number of respondents from each school by the total number of respondents, then multiply by the sample size. The respondents were chosen at random from each school by the researcher using the lottery technique.

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to their respective schools.



**Table 1**  
*Distribution of Respondents*

Schools	POPULATION (N)	Sample (n)	PERCENTAGE (%)
A	97	46	47.55
B	53	44	25.98
C	54	44	26.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Data Gathering Instrument**

This study used a standardized questionnaire developed by Dr. Paul Stoltz (1997) and a researcher made questionnaire. The research instrument was divided into three (3) parts: Part I was the profile of the respondents which contain: age, sex, highest educational attainment, length of service and plantilla position. Part II is the survey questionnaire describing the adversity quotient of the public elementary school teachers with 20 items. The control, ownership, reach and endurance (CORE) are the dimensions that measured the level of AQ, 5-line items per area. Part III is the level of stress of public elementary school teachers with 30 items focused in the areas of: demand, control, and support, 10-line items per area.

**Validity**

Validity is defined as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study. Research validity in surveys relates to the extent at which the survey measures right elements that need to be measured. In simple terms, validity refers to how well an instrument as measures what it is intended to measure ( Heale, 2018).

The research instrument was validated by five experts in the field of Education and Research for further evaluation, comments, and suggestions. The first three validator is a Doctor of Philosophy in Education, currently serves as Public Schools District Supervisor in the division of Bacolod City. The other one is also a graduate of Doctor of Philosophy and currently serves an elementary school principal in Bacolod City. And lastly, is a Doctor in Education and currently serves as School Education Program Specialist in the Division office of Bacolod City. Each of them was requested to determine if each segment are suitable questions to gather related data, supporting the area of the studies.

The researcher ensured that the items reflect the desired construct hence suggestions and recommendations of the jurors was noted and thoroughly incorporated. As to the appropriateness of the items in the questionnaire, each validator is requested to rate the instrument using the criteria created presented by Carter V. Good and Douglas E. Scates. The interpretations are as follows: Excellent (4.21 – 5.00); Very Good (3.41 - 4.20); Good (2.61 – 3.40); Fair (1.81 – 2.60); Poor (1.00 – 1.80).

The mean rating obtained from the five validators was 4.76, interpreted as excellent. This obtained mean showed that the research instrument was valid.

**Reliability**

Reliability is a measure of the stability or consistency of test scores. You can also think of it as the ability for a test or research findings to be repeatable (Kuder, 2014).

To test the reliability of the questionnaire on the stress and work performance of the teachers, the researcher will use Cronbach’s Alpha. Cronbach’s Alpha provides an indication of the average correlation among all the items that make up the scale. (Abad, et al., 2015). Cronbach’s alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is a measure of scale reliability (Glen, 2014). A "high" value for alpha does not imply that the measure is unidimensional.



Reliability was established through a dry run from 30 teachers, in one of the districts in a medium-sized division, in central Philippines. These teachers that are not the actual respondents of the study. To be reliable, the obtained value of the tests between 0.70 to 1.00.

For the reliability of the AQP standard test according to Dr. Paul Stoltz (1997) was very good (.92) which indicates the scores are suitable for drawing reliable inferences about individual test takers. The reliability of the AQP subscales were also very good (.85-.93).

### Data Gathering Procedure

There was a formal letter addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent for the approval to conduct the study in one of the districts in a medium-sized division in Central Philippines. Upon approval, a letter request was distributed to the school heads of the 3 component schools. After securing the approval for the second request, questionnaires were administered to target respondents face-to-face observing the safety health protocols such as wearing mask, face shields and social distancing while some are also provided with hard copies thru their respective principals' office.

The data gathered from the responses of the respondents were tallied and tabulated using the appropriate statistical tools. The raw data was transformed into numerical code guided by a coding manual. This allowed computer processing, statistical derivations, and tabular presentation. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the computer processing of the encoded data.

### Research Ethics and Protocol

The researcher ensured that the general ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice to ensure the ethical soundness of the study was observed. The researcher secured the informed consent signed by the participants before the conduct of the study. This means that the participants were free to decide whether to participate in the study or not. The researcher also assures the participants of confidentiality by using aliases or pseudonyms for their names in adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2021. The researcher saw no vulnerability from the participants since they are literate, professional adults. These also included the social value wherein the researcher values the different experiences of public elementary school teachers in the new normal. Since this study relates to participants' personal experiences, they have the option not to answer questions that would make them feel distressed in any way. In this time of health crisis, the researcher and participants strictly followed health and safety protocols during the face-to-face interview.

### Results and Discussion:

This study assessed the extent of the Adversity Quotient (AQ) and the level of stress among public elementary school teachers across various dimensions, including control, ownership, reach, and endurance, as well as stress levels in the areas of demand, control, and support. The results provide insights into the challenges faced by educators and their resilience in addressing these challenges.

Table 5: Extent of Adversity Quotient in the Dimension of Reach

Item	Mean	Interpretation
1. You are criticized for a big project that you just completed.	3.00	Moderate Extent
2. The high-priority project you are working on gets canceled.	2.90	Moderate Extent
3. You hit every red light on your way to an important appointment.	3.25	Moderate Extent
4. You miss an important appointment.	3.32	Moderate Extent
5. Your boss adamantly disagrees with your decision.	2.81	Moderate Extent
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>

The overall mean of 3.06 suggests that public elementary school teachers experience adversity at a moderate extent in the reach dimension. Missing important appointments (3.32) was rated the highest, while having their decisions disagreed upon by a superior (2.81) had the lowest score. This indicates that rejection of their decisions may affect their motivation. These findings are supported by O'Brien's study (2014), which highlighted the relationship between job satisfaction and teachers' perceptions of their opinions being considered.



Table 6: Extent of Adversity Quotient in the Dimension of Endurance

Item	Mean	Interpretation
1. You accidentally delete an important email.	3.04	Moderate Extent
2. You are unable to take a much-needed vacation.	3.46	Moderate Extent
3. After extensive searching, you cannot find an important document.	2.93	Moderate Extent
4. You never seem to have enough money.	2.87	Moderate Extent
5. You lost something important to you.	3.02	Moderate Extent
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>

The overall mean of 3.06 also suggests a moderate extent of adversity in the endurance dimension. Teachers ranked being unable to take vacations (3.46) as the highest adversity, while financial struggles (2.87) were the lowest. These findings align with the work of Plaza and Jamito (2021), which pointed out financial challenges faced by teachers, including classroom expenses and personal debts.

Table 7: Level of Stress in the Area of Demand

Item	Mean	Interpretation
1. Following through on the demands of work or school.	3.76	High Level
2. Immediate evaluation by a superior.	3.68	High Level
3. Recording and filling out school forms.	3.62	High Level
4. Mandatory participation in school extension works.	3.32	Moderate Level
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>High Level</b>

Teachers reported a high level of stress in fulfilling work demands (3.52 overall mean). The highest stressor was completing school-related tasks and outputs (3.76), which supports the finding that teachers feel overwhelmed by multiple responsibilities, leading to exhaustion and burnout. This is consistent with the study by Ji and Yue (2020), which found that teachers face emotional exhaustion due to work-family conflicts.

Table 8: Level of Stress in the Area of Control

Item	Mean	Interpretation
1. Focusing on hardships rather than complaining.	3.55	High Level
2. Beating deadlines.	3.72	High Level
3. Taking initiative to improve situations.	3.57	High Level
4. Fulfilling both job requirements and personal needs.	3.55	High Level
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>Moderate Level</b>

The overall mean of 3.40 suggests a moderate level of stress in the control dimension, with "beating deadlines" (3.72) as the highest stressor. Teachers struggle to meet deadlines due to the multiple responsibilities, which is supported by Galang (2011), who reported that deadline pressures are exacerbated by changes in teaching trends and frequent classroom observations.

Table 9: Level of Stress in the Area of Support

Item	Mean	Interpretation
1. Lack of strong administrative support.	3.59	High Level
2. Lack of parent support in school activities.	3.38	Moderate Level
3. Coordination with school heads.	3.37	Moderate Level
4. Competitive institutional culture.	3.23	Moderate Level
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>Moderate Level</b>



The mean score of 3.15 indicates moderate stress in the area of support, with a lack of administrative support (3.59) as the most significant stressor. This result echoes the findings of Ingersoll and May (2011), who emphasized that a lack of administrative support can lead to dissatisfaction among teachers.

Table 12: **Reach Dimension Based on Educational Attainment**

Item	Lower Mean	Lower Interpretation	Higher Mean
Criticism for a completed project	2.97	Moderate Extent	3.03
High-priority project canceled	2.80	Moderate Extent	2.99
Hitting red lights on way to appointment	3.18	Moderate Extent	3.30
Missing an important appointment	3.05	Moderate Extent	3.55
Disagreement with boss	2.92	Moderate Extent	2.73
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>	<b>3.12</b>

Table 12 reveals that teachers with higher educational attainment experience a slightly greater impact in the **Reach** dimension (mean = 3.12), compared to those with lower attainment (mean = 2.98). Item 4, "You miss an important appointment," stands out for higher-attainment teachers (mean = 3.55, great extent), while lower-attainment teachers rate Item 3, "You hit every red light on your way to an important appointment," the highest (mean = 3.18). The results suggest that teachers with higher educational attainment feel a stronger emotional effect when faced with missed appointments, while lower-attainment teachers are more affected by delayed progress in their work.

Table 13. Extent of Adversity Quotient of Public Elementary School Teachers in the Dimension of **Endurance** When Grouped According to Highest Educational Attainment

Items	Lower Educational Attainment	Higher Educational Attainment
1. You accidentally delete an important email. The consequences of this situation will:	3.03 (Moderate Extent)	3.04 (Moderate Extent)
2. You are unable to take a much-needed vacation. The consequences of this situation will:	3.49 (Great Extent)	3.42 (Moderate Extent)
3. After extensive searching, you cannot find an important document. The consequences of this situation will:	3.00 (Moderate Extent)	2.88 (Moderate Extent)
4. You never seem to have enough money. The consequences of this situation will:	2.89 (Moderate Extent)	2.85 (Moderate Extent)
5. You lost something important to you. The consequences of this situation will:	3.02 (Moderate Extent)	3.03 (Moderate Extent)
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.09 (Moderate Extent)</b>	<b>3.04 (Moderate Extent)</b>

As shown in Table 13, teachers with lower educational attainment rate the adversity from lacking vacations higher (mean = 3.49) compared to those with higher educational attainment (mean = 3.42). This suggests that teachers with lower educational attainment might experience more stress when they are unable to take time off to rest. Both groups rate financial adversity similarly, indicating that teachers across all educational levels perceive financial challenges as a moderate but persistent source of adversity in their careers.

Table 14. Extent of Adversity Quotient of Public Elementary School Teachers in the Dimension of **Control** When Grouped According to Length of Service

Items	Shorter Length of Service	Longer Length of Service
1. You suffer a financial setback. To what extent can you influence this situation?	3.50 (Great Extent)	3.35 (Moderate Extent)
2. People respond unfavorably to your latest ideas. To what extent can you influence this situation?	3.49 (Moderate Extent)	3.23 (Moderate Extent)



3. Your personal and work obligations are out of balance. To what extent can you influence this situation?	3.40 (Moderate Extent)	3.17 (Moderate Extent)
4. You are not exercising regularly though you know you should. To what extent can you influence this situation?	3.06 (Moderate Extent)	2.86 (Moderate Extent)
5. Your computer crashed for the third time this week. To what extent can you influence this situation?	3.43 (Moderate Extent)	3.06 (Moderate Extent)
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.37</b> (Moderate Extent)	<b>3.13</b> (Moderate Extent)

Teachers with a shorter length of service (mean = 3.37) generally feel a greater sense of control over adversities than those with longer service (mean = 3.13). The highest-rated item for both groups relates to financial setbacks, suggesting that newer teachers may feel more empowered to handle financial challenges. However, teachers with longer service experience a diminished sense of control when their personal and work lives become unbalanced, potentially due to accumulated job responsibilities.

Table 15. Extent of Adversity Quotient of Public Elementary School Teachers in the Dimension of **Ownership** When Grouped According to Length of Service

<b>Items</b>	<b>Shorter Length of Service</b>	<b>Longer Length of Service</b>
1. You are overlooked for a promotion. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving the situation?	3.49 (Moderate Extent)	3.45 (Moderate Extent)
2. Someone you respect ignores your attempt to discuss an important issue. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving the situation?	3.32 (Moderate Extent)	3.11 (Moderate Extent)
3. Your workplace is understaffed. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving the situation?	3.88 (Great Extent)	3.35 (Moderate Extent)
4. Your organization is not meeting its goals. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving the situation?	3.47 (Moderate Extent)	3.32 (Moderate Extent)
5. The meeting you are in is a total waste of time. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving the situation?	3.71 (Great Extent)	3.36 (Moderate Extent)
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.57</b> (Great Extent)	<b>3.32</b> (Moderate Extent)

Teachers with shorter service feel a stronger sense of ownership (mean = 3.57) compared to their more experienced colleagues (mean = 3.32). The highest-rated item for both groups relates to understaffing issues, showing that newer teachers take on more responsibility in addressing staffing problems. However, both groups feel less responsible when ignored by someone they respect, possibly reflecting a sense of frustration or powerlessness in such situations.

**Conclusion:**

The findings of this study highlight the adversity quotient (AQ) and stress levels among public elementary school teachers, providing insights into how they cope with challenges in the workplace. The results indicate that teachers generally experience adversity and stress to a moderate extent across various dimensions, with specific stressors such as workload demands, meeting deadlines, and lack of administrative support emerging as significant challenges. Teachers' ability to control, endure, and manage the adversities they face is influenced by factors such as educational attainment and length of service, with newer teachers feeling a greater sense of control and ownership over their situations compared to their more experienced colleagues.

Moreover, the study reveals that the extent of stress experienced by teachers is notably high in the areas of work demands and meeting expectations, often leading to emotional exhaustion and burnout. The moderate level of



administrative support and the recurring issues of understaffing further exacerbate these challenges. Financial constraints and the inability to take vacations were additional concerns, impacting teachers' well-being and sense of balance between work and personal life.

This study emphasizes the need for enhanced support systems, both administrative and financial, to alleviate the challenges faced by public elementary school teachers. Providing targeted interventions such as stress management programs, improved work-life balance initiatives, and better institutional support can help foster resilience and increase teachers' capacity to manage adversity, ultimately benefiting both educators and their students.

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