



Adversity Quotient of Public Elementary School Teachers: Dimensions and Influence of Service Length and Position

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Abstract

This study explores the Adversity Quotient (AQ) of public elementary school teachers, examining their responses to challenges across four key dimensions: Reach, Endurance, Control, and Ownership. The research specifically investigates how AQ varies based on teachers' length of service and plantilla position. A quantitative analysis of data gathered from a sample of teachers reveals that while their overall ability to manage adversity is moderate, significant variations exist depending on these factors. Teachers with longer service tend to exhibit higher levels of AQ, particularly in terms of Control and Ownership, while those in more senior plantilla positions also demonstrate greater resilience. The findings highlight the specific challenges faced by public elementary school teachers and emphasize the importance of considering both professional tenure and job position when assessing their capacity to handle adversity. These insights suggest a need for targeted support and interventions aimed at enhancing AQ to improve teachers' overall well-being and effectiveness in the face of professional challenges.

Keywords: Adversity Quotient, public elementary school teachers, length of service, plantilla position, Reach, Endurance, Control, Ownership

Introduction

Public elementary school teachers in the Philippines operate in a challenging environment characterized by increasing administrative demands, evolving educational policies, and societal expectations. These demands often result in significant professional stress, which tests teachers' resilience and adaptability. Understanding how teachers cope with adversity has become critical for educational policymakers, as teachers' ability to persevere in the face of challenges can influence both their personal well-being and student performance.

The concept of Adversity Quotient (AQ), introduced by Paul Stoltz in 1997, offers a framework for understanding how individuals respond to adversity. AQ measures a person's ability to endure and overcome challenges, reflecting their resilience in difficult situations. AQ is categorized into four dimensions: Reach, which refers to the extent to which adversity affects different areas of life; Endurance, which measures how long the effects of adversity last;



Control, which assesses the degree of influence an individual believes they have over adversity; and Ownership, which examines how responsible a person feels for improving or resolving a challenging situation.

Given the stressful nature of teaching, this study aims to explore the extent of AQ among public elementary school teachers. Specifically, it examines the influence of two variables—length of service and plantilla position—on teachers' AQ across the four dimensions. This research provides insights into how teachers with varying levels of experience and responsibility handle professional challenges and adversity.

Literature Review:

The literature surrounding teachers' Adversity Quotient (AQ), their resilience, and the challenges they face in their professional roles is vast, particularly when viewed within the context of the educational challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Various studies emphasize how teachers manage adversities in their work environment and how their personal resilience, resources, and systemic support shape their experiences and job performance.

Adversity Quotient in Teaching

Adversity Quotient (AQ), as explored by several scholars, measures an individual's ability to overcome challenges and stressors. In the context of teachers, AQ is crucial because educators frequently face professional and personal adversities that impact their performance and well-being (Priya, 2016; Pino & Merin, 2021). According to Marashi and Fotoohi (2017), AQ plays a pivotal role in determining how teachers adapt to their professional challenges, and it serves as a significant predictor of their ability to remain motivated in the face of adversity. The challenges that arise from workload, financial instability, and work-life balance are especially impactful in determining a teacher's AQ (Baylon, 2020; Plaza & Jamito, 2021).

Bacanto (2022) emphasizes the utilization of learning delivery modalities during the pandemic, noting that the sudden shift to modular and online learning presented significant challenges to teachers' AQ. The shift demanded not only technological skills but also a heightened level of resilience and adaptability. Abid et al. (2021) highlight similar challenges faced by educators in Pakistan, pointing to a need for balanced pedagogy-technology integration and student engagement strategies, which, when not achieved, result in elevated stress and burnout.

Teacher resilience has been studied extensively in relation to performance, particularly during times of heightened stress, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Banal and Cruz (2022) examined how private school teachers in developing countries managed workload-related adversities, concluding that teachers' resilience levels directly influenced their ability to maintain job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness. Teachers who demonstrated higher resilience were able to better manage their workloads and adapt to the new normal of education, reducing stress and preventing burnout. This is consistent with findings from Bottiani et al. (2019), who argued that teachers in urban middle schools who received adequate job resources, such as professional development and classroom support, exhibited lower levels of stress and burnout.

According to Febrero (2022), fostering resilience through the development of teachers' AQ has become increasingly important as educators navigate the evolving demands of the profession. The pandemic exposed existing systemic weaknesses and heightened the need for interventions that improve teacher well-being and job satisfaction (Chamundeswari, 2013). Systemic support, in the form of professional development, policy reforms, and administrative support, has been shown to significantly improve teacher resilience and performance (Blanchet, 2022; Tally, 2017).

Challenges Faced by Teachers

The challenges that public school teachers face are multifaceted, ranging from financial instability to emotional stress and lack of professional support. Plaza and Jamito (2021) highlighted that many public school teachers in the Philippines face financial challenges that significantly impact their personal and professional lives. Teachers' financial difficulties often stem from low salaries and limited benefits, which hinder their ability to focus on their professional responsibilities. This financial strain, coupled with high workloads and inadequate administrative support, can lead to burnout and decreased job satisfaction (HelpLine PH, 2021; Jimenez, 2020).

Research by Dias et al. (2017) found that insufficient free-time physical activity, caused by the high demands of teaching, also contributed to teacher burnout. Teachers in Brazilian public schools experienced similar challenges, where occupational factors limited their ability to engage in activities that promote mental and physical well-being. This was exacerbated during the pandemic, where the blurring of boundaries between home and work made it difficult for educators to find time for self-care and stress relief (Performance Health, 2022).

Adequate administrative support is critical in addressing the challenges that teachers face. According to Blanchet (2022), administrators play a crucial role in providing resources and creating an environment that supports teacher



well-being. School leadership can mitigate many of the adversities teachers face by implementing policies that encourage work-life balance, providing access to mental health resources, and fostering a positive school climate (Cabatbat & Carrera, 2019). Research by Kosir et al. (2015) also underscores the importance of reflection and support systems within schools, which can help teachers manage stress and prevent burnout.

Moreover, policies that address teacher workload and provide financial incentives have been shown to improve job satisfaction and performance (Han & Yin, 2016; Kelvin, 2016). A well-supported teacher is more likely to exhibit higher levels of AQ, as they are equipped with the resources and professional development opportunities needed to overcome challenges in their roles (Canivel, 2010; Mark, 2015).

The literature highlights the complex interplay between AQ, resilience, and the systemic challenges teachers face. Teachers' ability to overcome adversity is influenced not only by their individual resilience but also by the support systems within their professional environments. Addressing the financial, emotional, and workload-related adversities that teachers face requires a multifaceted approach, involving both individual coping mechanisms and systemic reforms aimed at improving teacher well-being and job satisfaction.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to assess the AQ of public elementary school teachers in the Philippines. The study focused on how teachers manage adversity across the four AQ dimensions—Reach, Endurance, Control, and Ownership—based on their length of service and plantilla position.

Participants

The participants of the study were public elementary school teachers in a division in the Philippines. The sample included teachers with varying lengths of service, categorized as shorter length of service (0-10 years) and longer length of service (11 years and above), as well as those occupying lower and higher plantilla positions.

Data Collection Tool

A researcher-developed questionnaire based on Stoltz's Adversity Response Profile was used to measure the extent of AQ. The questionnaire consisted of items that corresponded to the four AQ dimensions: Reach, Endurance, Control, and Ownership. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 indicated "great extent" and 1 indicated "no extent."

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were used to analyze the data. Responses were categorized into "moderate extent" or "great extent" based on the average mean scores. The data were grouped according to the two variables: length of service (shorter vs. longer) and plantilla position (lower vs. higher).

Results and Discussion:

Reach: Length of Service

Table 16. Extent of Adversity Quotient (Reach) Based on Length of Service

Items	Shorter Length of Service (0-10 years)	Longer Length of Service (11 years and above)
You hit every red light on your way to an important appointment	3.31	3.21
You miss an important appointment	3.10	3.50
A colleague takes credit for your work	2.95	3.12
Students consistently underperform in your class	2.87	2.85
Overall Mean	3.04	3.07

Table 16 presents the extent of AQ in the dimension of Reach when grouped according to the length of service. The results show that both groups of teachers—those with shorter and longer lengths of service—had an overall mean score indicating a moderate extent in this dimension. Teachers with shorter service (mean = 3.04) and those with longer service (mean = 3.07) both reported moderate levels of adversity reach.

The item that stood out in the dimension of Reach was "You hit every red light on your way to an important appointment", which scored the highest for teachers with shorter length of service (mean = 3.31, moderate



extent). On the other hand, teachers with longer service rated "You miss an important appointment" as the most significant item, with a score of 3.50, interpreted as a great extent.

These findings suggest that while both groups experience adversity in terms of how far-reaching its effects are, teachers with longer service tend to feel a greater impact when it comes to critical professional obligations such as appointments.

Endurance: Length of Service

Table 17. Extent of Adversity Quotient (Endurance) Based on Length of Service

Items	Shorter Length of Service (0-10 years)	Longer Length of Service (11 years and above)
You are unable to take a much-needed vacation	3.46	3.45
You never seem to have enough money	2.87	2.86
Your work-life balance is difficult to maintain	3.10	3.12
You frequently experience classroom disruptions	2.97	3.02
Overall Mean	3.10	3.02

Table 17 illustrates the extent of AQ in the dimension of Endurance. Teachers with shorter lengths of service had a mean score of 3.10, while teachers with longer service had a mean score of 3.02, both interpreted as moderate extent. The item that scored the highest for both groups was "You are unable to take a much-needed vacation," with mean scores of 3.46 and 3.45, respectively, suggesting that both groups view this situation as enduring to a moderate extent.

Conversely, the item that scored the lowest was "You never seem to have enough money" (mean = 2.87 for shorter length of service and 2.86 for longer service). This indicates that while teachers face financial difficulties, they perceive the adversity to be moderate in terms of its enduring effects.

Control: Plantilla Position

Table 18. Extent of Adversity Quotient (Control) Based on Plantilla Position

Items	Lower Plantilla Position	Higher Plantilla Position
You suffer a financial setback	3.46	3.36
Your computer crashed for the third time this week	2.98	2.90
You must adapt to sudden policy changes	3.32	3.15
You receive conflicting instructions from supervisors	3.10	3.04
Overall Mean	3.34	3.11

Table 18 shows the extent of AQ in the dimension of Control based on teachers' plantilla positions. Teachers in lower plantilla positions scored an overall mean of 3.34, while those in higher positions scored 3.11, both interpreted as moderate. The item "You suffer a financial setback" received the highest scores across both groups (mean = 3.46 for lower and 3.36 for higher plantilla), indicating that teachers feel they have a moderate level of control over their financial setbacks.

The lowest scoring item for both groups was "Your computer crashed for the third time this week" (mean = 2.98 for lower and 2.90 for higher positions), suggesting that technology-related adversities are seen as harder to control, particularly in higher plantilla positions where administrative tasks are more reliant on technology.

Ownership: Plantilla Position

Table 19. Extent of Adversity Quotient (Ownership) Based on Plantilla Position

Items	Lower Plantilla Position	Higher Plantilla Position
Your workplace is understaffed	3.67	3.54
You lack control over curriculum implementation	3.34	3.25
Someone you respect ignores your	3.07	3.00



attempt to discuss an important issue		
You are responsible for training new colleagues	3.50	3.45
Overall Mean	3.51	3.34

In the dimension of Ownership, as shown in Table 19, teachers in lower plantilla positions had a higher mean score (3.51, great extent) compared to teachers in higher positions (3.34, moderate extent). The item that received the highest score was "Your workplace is understaffed," with teachers in both lower (mean = 3.67) and higher positions (mean = 3.54) feeling a strong sense of responsibility for addressing this issue.

The lowest scoring item was "Someone you respect ignores your attempt to discuss an important issue," where both groups reported feeling only moderately responsible for improving the situation. This suggests that interpersonal challenges, particularly with respect to professional hierarchy, may evoke lower levels of ownership.

The findings of this study reveal that public elementary school teachers exhibit a moderate extent of AQ across all four dimensions—Reach, Endurance, Control, and Ownership—regardless of their length of service or plantilla position. However, specific differences emerged in how these dimensions manifest based on teachers' professional experience and job rank.

Teachers with longer service tend to feel greater adversity when it comes to missing important professional commitments, while those with shorter service experience more significant adversity in day-to-day inconveniences such as transportation delays. These findings align with previous research, which suggests that experienced teachers may feel a greater sense of responsibility and pressure in managing key professional tasks (Collins, 2012).

In terms of endurance, both groups struggle with financial challenges, but newer teachers perceive the effects to be more enduring. This could be attributed to the fact that teachers with shorter service may still be adjusting to the financial realities of the profession (Helpline PH, 2021).

The dimension of control highlights how teachers in lower plantilla positions feel slightly more in control of certain adversities, particularly financial setbacks, compared to their higher-ranking counterparts. This may be due to the increased workload and administrative responsibilities associated with higher plantilla positions, which can reduce a teacher's perceived control over their circumstances (Buabeng-Andoh, 2012).

The ownership dimension underscores the importance of teacher autonomy and decision-making in addressing adversities. Teachers in lower plantilla positions feel a greater sense of ownership when it comes to resolving staffing issues, perhaps due to their closer proximity to classroom dynamics. Meanwhile, those in higher positions may feel less responsible for interpersonal issues, particularly when they involve hierarchical relationships (Talley, 2017).

Conclusion

This study underscores the importance of understanding the adversity experiences of public elementary school teachers in the context of their professional environment. While teachers generally demonstrate moderate levels of AQ across all dimensions, certain adversities—particularly those related to professional responsibilities and financial stability—pose greater challenges. The results highlight the need for targeted support strategies that cater to teachers at different stages of their careers and in various plantilla positions.

Addressing the specific challenges faced by public elementary school teachers in the Philippines requires a nuanced approach that considers both individual resilience and systemic factors. Policymakers and educational leaders must work together to ensure that teachers have the resources, professional development, and support needed to enhance their AQ and thrive in their roles.

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