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Managing Adversity Quotient from the Perspective of Resilience

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Abstract: Adversity is commonly viewed as unfavorable fortune or fate. Some individuals survive better than others when facing adverse situations. This is due to individuals having different abilities in changing difficulties into opportunities, and able to rebound and adapt on the adversities. Hence, the ability to withstand adversities has become popular today, which is referring to adversity quotient. Adversity quotient can help the individual to build resilience skills and shape their characters. It could reduce stress level and enhance organizational productivity and effectiveness. However, the measurement of adversity quotient is heavily relied upon scenarios questions, which captured the attitude and belief of respondents regarding adversity and respond in such scenario. The current instrument is not able to capture the different characteristics of the respondents in relation to the work performance. Hence this study proposed some instrument items to access adversity quotient by looking at the perspective of resilience.

Keywords: Adversities, Adversity Quotient, Resilience, Resilience Skills, Performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Today's world is facing with great challenges, partly driven by social and economic problems, e.g. global economic downturn, financial crisis, recession, downsizing, climate change, and diseases. These challenges induce a high level of stress to people and caused negative effects on health, well-being as well as quality of life of the individuals and communities. Parallel with these challenges, adversity quotient have attracted significant attention and interest because adversity quotient is the science of human resilience [1] and can tells how well an individual withstand adversities and challenges. In addition, adversity quotient could predict resilience and persistence of an individual's ability to cope with various adversities and challenges [2], consequently reduce mental distress of the individual.

Adversity is commonly viewed as difficulty, unfavourable fortune or fate and is frequently associated with negative feelings like fear and anxiety. Some individual survive better than others when facing the

same adverse situation. This is because they have different abilities to turn the difficulties into opportunities and draw positive emotions when facing adversities. Adversities, if managed properly, can lead to positive behavioral and cognitive changes which can result in developing psychological hardiness, maintaining mental health and promoting well-being. The ability to withstand adversities become so much important in life and learning to deal with or overcoming adversities can help individual to build resilience and shape their characters.

Resilience is the capacity to confront and cope with challenges. This coping may result in the ability of the individual to rebound from the challenges, or may not be affected negatively from the challenges. Resilience capacity is particularly important at the workplace because most people spend a substantial amount of time at work and most workplaces have at least moderate levels of challenges and changes, for example, layoffs, reorganizations, new technology development, and implementation of new work processes. These challenges and changes call on individuals to engage on their resilience and coping mechanisms on a regular basis in order to face with the potential impact from these changes [3]. High resilient people will be able to maintain their wellbeing in the face of adversity as the ability to respond effectively to these challenges is useful in the workplace because it will affect employee's well-being and subsequently impact on organizational productivity and effectiveness.

Organizations are often a good place to help employees nurture and strengthen their resilience capability as organizations need to periodically make significant changes to stay competitive in the marketplace. As such, it provides a rich environment for employees to develop resilience capability which can benefit all aspects of life. The extent that employee can recover quickly and effectively from any negative implications of organizational changes, the organization's performance and the well-being will be enhanced. In addition, employees who are affected by negative events outside the workplace often carry the stress and strain into their work environment. Thus increasing resilience capability are likely to reduce the impact of non-work issues on organizations [3].

Review from the literature, although Stoltz [1] have developed the instrument of Adversity Response Profile (ARP) to measure the level of adversity quotient in a person. It is a quantitative measurement which composed of 30 Likert scale scenarios assessing the respondent's attitudes and beliefs regarding adversity and their reaction to such scenario. The scenario questions may be general or specific, internal or external. It is primarily defined by the interpretation of the respondents. The numerical scores based upon reported answers were given a picture of the level of adversity quotient of the respondent. ARP is the only known standardized instrument that measures an individual's ability to respond to adverse conditions by using a list of situational questions, but it could not capture the characteristics of the individual who have the ability to face with adverse situation. As such, this study intends to propose a list of measurement items that could capture the characteristics of an individual in order to measure the capability of adversity quotient.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adversity quotient is the science of human resilience and it encompasses of four CORE dimensions. These major dimensions of adversity quotient, namely control, ownership, reach and endurance, a CORE model, was used to measure the level of adversity quotient [1].

Control (C)

Control is related to perceive control over adversity and perceive response ability. It's refer to the degree an individual has the ability to control over an adverse event and influence what happened next. It's examined the extent can someone influence the situation, and how much control the person perceived they have. People who have higher score for control are the one who perceive they have significantly more control and influence in adverse situations than do those with lower score. Even if the situation becomes overwhelming and out of control, those with higher score are still believed they have the ability to influence, but those with lower score often give up in that situation.

Ownership (O)

Ownership is related to perceive responsibility to the adverse events. It's refers to the willingness of the individual to assume responsibility and take the necessary actions to improve the situation. It's examined the extent someone hold responsibility for improving the situation and the extent someone accountable to play some role in making the situation better. Accountability is the backbone of action. People who have higher score tend to hold themselves accountable for dealing with situations regardless of their cause. However, people with lower score are tend to divert accountability and often feel helpless.

Reach (R)

Reach is related to perceive influence and effect on adversities i.e. how far the adversity will reach into and affect other aspects of the situation or life. It's refers to the degree which an adverse event affects individual's life, like work and home life. It's examined the extent the adversity affect beyond the situation and how does the fallout reach into the person's work or life. For the person who have higher score able to keep challenges in their place and not letting them infest the healthy areas of their work and lives. For those with lower score, they tend to negatively influenced by the challenges and become destructive in their work or lives. As such, keeping the fallout under control and limiting the reach of adversity is particular essential to solve the problem more effectively.

Endurance (E)

Endurance is related to perceive duration of the adversity. It's refers to the length of time the individual endure on the adverse situation. It's examined by how long an adverse event and its effects will last, which is the period of endurance. People who have higher score see adversity as something temporary and yet still maintain hope and optimism. People with lower score see adversity as something permanent will not be able to endure with difficulties. So, seeing beyond even enormous difficulties is an essential skill for maintaining hope.

While resilience is the process of managing and adapting to significant sources of trauma, while the resources within the individual facilitate the capacity of adaptation and bouncing back in the face of adversity [4]. Resilience has been defined as the ability to bounce back or recover from stress, to adapt on stressful circumstances, to preserve and adapt when things go awry, to thrive, keep going, struggle through when face with stressors which influenced by attitudinal, experiential and physiological differences [5, 6, 7]. Although the definition of resilience varies in different cultures and contexts, but it's generally refers as the ability to cope with adversity and successfully rebound and adapt when facing adversity.

As such, resilience is a dynamic process whereby individual exhibit behavioral adaptation when they encounter significant adversity. The attitudes that displayed by resilient people are including [5]:

- Purpose – life has structure, commitment and meaning
- Challenge – view adverse situations as challenge, solves problems and manages change.
- Emotional control – control emotions in adverse situations
- Balance – care and attention given to several aspects in life.
- Determination – able to remain motivated and bounce back after difficulty or adversity.
- Self-awareness - belief in themselves and their capabilities
- Awareness of others - aware of others and this awareness affects the way they behave, communicates, interacts and empathises with others

Some characteristics of resilient people are self-confidence, adaptability, willingness to take risks, hardiness, self-regulation, social competency, autonomy, sense of purpose, sense of coherence, optimistic, cooperative, inquisitive, faith, hope, reflection, initiative, creativity, and an incredible sense of humour which supports a realistic perspective of life [9]. These resilience characteristics mirror the characteristics of people with high adversity quotient. Adversity quotient was known as the science of human resilience which is the ability of individual to resolve challenges and strive to overcome it. Hence, adversity quotient is used to access how individual deal with the adversities and to triumph over it. People who have high adversity quotient are outperformed compared to those have low adversity quotient. In the other word, individual with high adversity quotient have higher resilience capability to persevere in the face of stress and adapt to the adverse situations. Hence, adversity quotient has been frequently used to motivate employees and make employees be more competent in the workplace [10].

III. PROPOSED MEASUREMENT ITEMS FOR ADVERSITY QUOTIENT

Adversity quotient is to evaluate the ability to deal with adversities and to triumph over it, while resilience is the ability to bounce back and deal with various adversities. As the father of adversity quotient, Dr. Paul G. Stoltz [1], has developed Adversity Response Profile® instrument to access the capacity of individual in

Table 1
Proposed Measurement Items for Adversity Quotient – Dimension 1: Control

<i>Adversity Quotient Dimension</i>	<i>Measurement Items</i>
Control	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I believe I can influence the direction of my life. 2. In stressful times I control my own strong feelings 3. When I experience anger and frustration, I manage my behavior so that 4. I don't damage myself and others 5. I don't dwell with things that I can't control 6. I am good at recognizing the things which I can influence and the things that I can't 7. I am aware of my personal weakness and vulnerabilities 8. I play to, and make the most of my strengths

responding constructively to adversity and challenges. The Adversity Response Profile® is a self-rating questionnaire which comprises of fourteen to-be-imagined scenarios questions to access four CORE dimensions of adversity quotient. The purpose of this test is to access the unconscious pattern of how people respond to adverse situations by using a five-point bipolar scale. This study used the four CORE dimensions of adversity quotient as backbone to review several resilience instruments and mapped it in order to reflect the CORE dimensions of adversity quotient.

Control is evaluated by (i) perceived ability to alter a situation which is refer to the extent an individual is able to positively influence a situation, and (ii) perceived response ability, which is the extent can an individual control his/her own response to a situation.

Table 2
Proposed Measurement Items for Adversity Quotient – Dimension 1: Ownership

<i>Adversity Quotient Dimension</i>	<i>Measurement Items</i>
Ownership	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When things are tough I focus on where I want to get to2. I believe I can solve the challenges I experience in my life3. I draw strength from having overcome previous challenges and tough experiences4. During particular tough times, I choose to preserve rather than give up5. If I have a problem, I take action to deal with rather than just thinking about it6. I follow tasks and projects through to completion7. I am good at finding solutions to problems and challenges

Ownership is evaluated by accountability which is refer to the extent an individual can take upon himself/herself to improve the situation at hand.

Table 3
Proposed Measurement Items for Adversity Quotient – Dimension 1: Reach

<i>Adversity Quotient Dimension</i>	<i>Measurement Items</i>
Reach	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I can deal with whatever comes in the future2. I say “no” to things that I don’t want to do.3. It’s OK if I don’t see things the way other people do.4. It’s OK if some people do not like me.5. I am comfortable making my own decisions6. I avoid situations where I could get into trouble.

Reach is evaluated by how far an individual let the adversity go into other areas of his/her work and life and how large the individual perceive the problem.

Table 4
Proposed Measurement Items for Adversity Quotient – Dimension 1: Endurance

<i>Adversity Quotient</i>	<i>Measurement Items</i>
Endurance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My sense of humor makes it easier to deal with tough situations. 2. I look for the “lighter side” of tough situations. 3. Laughter helps me deal with stress. 4. I am able to adapt to change 5. I can deal with whatever comes 6. Past success gives confidence for new challenge 7. I have close and secure relationships 8. I am tend to bounce back after illness or hardship

Endurance is described by how long an individual perceive the adversity he/she will endure.

The measurement items of resilience above was adapted from three different resilience instruments, which is The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale [11], Personal Resilience Questionnaire [12], and Resiliency Attitude and Skills Profile [13]. However, only the suitable item statements were adapted for the measurement of adversity quotient CORE model.

IV. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The measurement items in Adversity Quotient Profile® is much concerned on situational questions. However, this measurement couldn't tell how the capability to deal with adversity in related to work issues and problems. Individual work patterns is not being able to examine by using situational questions from adversity quotient profile. Thus, this study proposed to use some of the resilience items and mirroring a set of measurement for adversity quotient that reflect the CORE dimensions. It could be an alternative measurement for adversity quotient to understand individual differences especially characteristics, personality traits, thinking styles and behaviors.

There is a limitation of this research on the use of resilience items to measure adversity quotient. The measurement items that developed from resilience instruments that mirroring CORE dimensions has not been tested for reliability and validity. Future research could have validated the validity and reliability of the proposed set of measurement items in measuring adversity quotient. More research can be done to understand individual differences on adversity and resilience skills, also research on how organizations help the employees to develop and maintain resilience and adaptability in facing turbulences and numerous changes.

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