

# Adversity Quotient (AQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) in Academic Learning: A Qualitative Exploration of their Relationship

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## Abstract

This research paper explores the significant relationship between Adversity Quotient (AQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) in the context of academic learning, with the objective of understanding their individual contributions to student resilience and emotional intelligence. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, the study employs document analysis to review existing literature, including peer-reviewed articles and scholarly works, while focusing on foundational theories by Paul Stoltz and Daniel Goleman. The findings reveal a significant symbiotic relationship between AQ and EQ, indicating that high emotional intelligence enhances self-awareness and emotional regulation, which in turn enables students to effectively leverage their adversity quotient when faced with challenges. Students exhibiting a high AQ demonstrate persistence and resilience, viewing obstacles as opportunities for growth, while those with elevated EQ showcase improved stress management and social skills, fostering a supportive learning environment. The research concludes that integrating both AQ and EQ into educational curricula is crucial for cultivating well-rounded learners who can adeptly navigate academic and personal challenges. By prioritizing the development of these traits, educational institutions can better equip students for long-term success and emotional well-being in an increasingly complex world.

**Keywords:** Adversity Quotient (AQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), Academic Learning, 'CORE' Dimensions, Resilience, Student Success.

## 1. Introduction

The journey of academic learning is filled with challenges that go far beyond just memorizing facts or solving complex math problems. Students today must deal with intense competition, the pressure of constant performance in a global environment, and the need to balance their schoolwork with their personal well-being. Historically, success in school was often linked only to a student's Intelligence Quotient (IQ). If a student was good at logical thinking and reading, they were expected to reach the top of their field. However, many students with high IQs struggle when they face failure, stress, or rejection. This is where the non-cognitive traits like Adversity Quotient (AQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) come into play. These two traits help explain why some students can stay calm and keep working toward their goals even when the road gets very difficult and the odds are against them.

The concept of academic learning has evolved significantly in the 21st century. It is no longer just about the classroom; it is about developing the skills to navigate a complex, digital, and interconnected world.

This evolution has placed new burdens on students, requiring them to be more adaptable and psychologically strong. Adversity Quotient, or AQ, is a concept introduced by Dr. Paul Stoltz in 1997 in his book 'Adversity Quotient: Turning obstacles into Opportunities'. He defines Adversity Quotient (AQ) as "The capacity of an individual to deal with the adversities of his or her life. It is the score that measures how well a person withstands adversity and his or her ability to surmount it" (Stoltz, 1997, p. 27).

It is a way to measure how a person deals with the "hard times" in life. AQ is the ability to handle adverse situation. Stoltz (1997) explained that life is a climb, and some people give up as soon as they face a problem, while others use that problem as a chance to grow and become stronger. In a classroom setting, a student's AQ determines how they react when they fail an exam or find a particular subject too difficult to master. Instead of quitting or feeling defeated, a student with a high AQ will look for new strategies and seek out the help they need to succeed.

On the other hand, Emotional Quotient, or EQ, which was popularized by Daniel Goleman, refers to the ability to understand and manage your own feelings and the feelings of others (Serrat, 2017). EQ is the foundation of social interaction and self-control. It is what allows a student to stay calm during a final exam and work well with their peers on a group project. Both AQ and EQ are very important in education. While AQ provides the "grit" and persistence required to stay the course when things get tough, EQ provides the "navigation system" needed to manage the stress and anxiety that naturally arise in a school environment (Sitsira-at, 2020).

Despite the clear importance of these traits, there is not enough simple research that explains their specific qualitative relationship in academic learning. This study seeks to bridge that gap by providing a qualitative exploration of how AQ and EQ work together to support the "whole student." The purpose of this study is to synthesize existing research to provide a clear understanding of these dynamics and offer helpful insights for educators to support their students more effectively.

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Adversity Quotient in Education

The concept of the Adversity Quotient is built on the CORE framework: Control, Ownership, Reach, and Endurance (Stoltz, 1997). Control refers to how much power a student feels they have over a situation. If a student thinks they can change the outcome of a situation, they have high control. Ownership is about taking responsibility for the outcome, even if the initial problem was not the student's fault. Reach is about how much a problem affects other parts of a student's life. Students with high AQ can contain their problems so they don't ruin their whole day. Endurance is about how long the adversity will last. High AQ students believe that their problems are temporary and that things will eventually get better. (Stoltz, 1997). Research shows that students with a high Adversity Quotient (AQ) are more intrinsically motivated to learn (O'hare et al., 2025). A study indicated that students with higher AQ (climbers) demonstrated better academic performance and problem-solving abilities compared to those with lower AQ (campers and quitters). This highlights the importance of fostering AQ to enhance educational success (Juwita et al., 2020). Furthermore, research paper emphasizes that students with higher AQ not only perform better academically but also exhibit greater resilience in facing personal and academic challenges, reinforcing the need for educational strategies that cultivate these traits (Purba et al., 2025).

### 2.2 Emotional Quotient in Learning

Emotional Quotient (EQ) consists of five pillars that were first described by Goleman (2005): self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. In the context of learning, self-

awareness helps students know when they are feeling stressed, and self-regulation helps them manage that stress. Motivation is the internal drive to reach a goal, while empathy and social skills help students get along with their teachers and classmates (Goleman, 1995). A meta-analysis revealed a moderate positive influence of emotional quotient (EQ) on students' mathematics learning outcomes, with an average effect size of 0.778. This finding suggests that integrating EQ aspects into learning programs can enhance the effectiveness of mathematics education and improve student learning outcomes (Nur et al., 2023)

A literature survey indicates that Emotional Quotient (EQ), encompassing self-awareness, motivation, and empathy, is more critical for success than Intelligence Quotient (IQ) alone, and the Realistic Approach (RA) in education effectively fosters EQ by connecting learning to real-world contexts and promoting collaborative activities (Nasryah & Rahman, 2019). A major study by MacCann et al. (2020) proved that EQ is a strong predictor of academic performance because students with high EQ can handle negative feelings like boredom or frustration that come with long study sessions. Also, having good social skills helps students build better relationships, which creates a more supportive learning environment (D'Amico & Geraci, 2023). Without these emotional tools, even the most intelligent students can find themselves overwhelmed by the daily stresses of school life.

### **2.3 AQ and Academic Resilience**

Resilience is the ability to recover from problems and mistakes. In school, this is a direct sign of a high AQ. Masten (2001) describes resilience as "ordinary magic," meaning it is a skill that anyone can develop through practice and dedication. It is not a secret power for a few; it is a human capacity. Students who have high resilience often have what Dweck (2006) calls a "growth mindset." This is the belief that you can get smarter if you work hard and keep trying. This belief allows students to keep going even after they fail, as they view failure as a step toward learning rather than a final judgment. Angela Duckworth (2016) further explored this idea and called it "Grit." Grit is the combination of passion and long-term persistence. Students who have grit are the ones who use their AQ and EQ skills every single day to reach their goals.

### **2.4 EQ and Emotional Regulation in Education**

Emotional regulation is a core part of EQ and is essential for academic success. Research by Fernández-Berrocal and Extremera (2016) indicates that students who cannot regulate their emotions effectively are much more likely to feel burned out and disengaged from their studies. On the other hand, students with high emotional intelligence can use their feelings to help them think more clearly. For example, they might use the focus that comes with a little bit of anxiety to help them finish a paper on time. This ability to manage emotions helps students stay satisfied with their lives and stay in school (Mayang, 2025).

Other research by Petrides and Furnham (2001) suggests that our natural emotional intelligence helps us stay focused even when we feel tired or bored. This emotional health provides the stable foundation that every student needs to learn effectively.

### **2.5 The Relationship between AQ and EQ**

The relationship between AQ and EQ is symbiotic, meaning they work together to help the student. High EQ provides the self-awareness needed to recognize an "AQ moment"- a point of trouble where a decision must be made (Stoltz, 1997). When a student knows they are feeling stressed (EQ), they can take a deep breath and then use their AQ skills to solve the problem. The relationship between Emotional Quotient (EQ) and Adversity Quotient (AQ) is crucial for career success, with both playing a vital role in how individuals manage emotional, interpersonal, and occupational challenges (Zhao & Sang, 2023). Studies by Khairani (2016) show a moderate positive correlation between Adversity Quotient (AQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) among polytechnic students.

This means that students who learn how to manage their emotions also become better at handling adversity. When a student can stay calm (EQ), they have more mental energy to solve the problem at hand (AQ). This connection is the secret to "academic tenacity," which helps a student stay dedicated to their long-term goals (Goleman, 1995). Early researchers like Mayer and Salovey (1997) also argued that being emotionally smart is a key part of thinking clearly and making good decisions (Brackett et al., 2011).

• **Comparative Analysis of AQ and EQ**

To better understand the distinct yet overlapping roles of these two quotients, Table 1 provides a comparative summary of their core dimensions and functions within the academic context.

**Table 1: Comparison of Adversity Quotient (AQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ)**

Dimension	Adversity Quotient (AQ)	Emotional Quotient (EQ)
<b>Primary Focus</b>	Resilience and response to setbacks. (verma et al., 2017)	Emotional management and social intelligence. (verma et al., 2017)
<b>Core Framework</b>	CORE (Control, Ownership, Reach, Endurance).	Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, Social Skills.
<b>Functional Role</b>	The "Engine" for persistence and overcoming failure.	The "Navigation System" for managing stress and interactions.
<b>Key Outcome</b>	Academic persistence and grit.	Emotional stability and interpersonal success.
<b>Learned Skill</b>	Reframing challenges and taking ownership.	Recognizing emotions and regulating reaction

**3. Objectives of the Study**

This study is guided by three specific objectives:

1. To explore the role of Adversity Quotient in academic learning.
2. To understand the role of Emotional Quotient in academic learning.
3. To explore the relationship between Adversity Quotient and Emotional Quotient in academic learning.

**4. Methodology**

The study adopts a qualitative research approach to investigate the interplay between Adversity Quotient (AQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) in academic learning. Utilizing document analysis as the primary method, the research examines a range of secondary sources, including peer-reviewed articles, academic journals, and scholarly books, to gather diverse expert opinions and evidence. The analysis focuses on foundational works by Paul Stoltz and Daniel Goleman, as well as recent studies from 2020 to 2025, ensuring the relevance of findings to contemporary educational contexts. This qualitative methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to student success, highlighting the importance of resilience and emotional intelligence in navigating academic challenges.

**5. Data Analysis and Discussion**

**Objective 1: Exploring the Role of Adversity Quotient in Academic Learning**

The first objective was to explore how Adversity Quotient (AQ) influences the way students learn and succeed. Our analysis of the literature shows that AQ acts as the "engine" of a student's persistence.

According to Stoltz (1997), the "Control" and "Ownership" dimensions are the most important for academic mastery. Research by Chadha (2021) confirms that students with high AQ don't just survive hard times; they actually use those times as a chance to get better and smarter. They see every challenge as an opportunity to improve. When a student receives a failing grade on a test, their AQ determines whether they will take charge of the situation. Students with high AQ don't just survive hard times; they actually use those times as a chance to get better and smarter. They see every challenge as an opportunity to improve. (Juwita et al., 2020)

We also found that AQ helps students contain their academic problems so they don't ruin their whole lives. For example, the "Reach" dimension ensures that a failure in one math quiz doesn't make the student feel like they are a bad person or a failure in all of their other subjects. By limiting the "Endurance" of the problem—meaning they believe the problem is only temporary- students can maintain their motivation and keep working. Pangma et al. (2009) found that AQ is shaped by factors such as self-confidence, self-esteem, and achievement motivation. Their study shows how AQ helps students manage academic challenges more effectively. This ability to keep going is what Angela Duckworth (2016) calls "Grit." High AQ students have the mental strength to keep trying until they reach their goals. This persistence is what leads to true mastery of a subject. It allows students to focus on long-term goals and stay committed to their studies even when the work is boring or difficult.

### **Objective 2: Understanding the Role of Emotional Quotient in Academic Learning**

The second objective was to understand the role of Emotional Quotient (EQ) in the learning process. The analysis shows that EQ acts as the "navigation system" for a student's educational journey. Goleman (2005) highlights that self-awareness and self-regulation are the most important parts of this system. When a student feel stressed about a big project, their EQ helps them recognize that feeling and calm themselves down. Research by MacCann et al. (2020) shows that this ability to regulate emotions is a huge predictor of getting good grades. If you can't manage your stress, you can't use your brain effectively to learn new things.

Furthermore, EQ plays a major role in how students interact with their environment. Social skills and empathy, which are parts of EQ, help students build good relationships with their teachers and classmates (D'Amico & Geraci, 2023). This creates a social support network that is essential for learning and mental health. When students feel emotionally supported and can manage their own stress, they have more mental energy to focus on their lessons. As found by Fernández-Berrocal and Extremera (2016), emotional intelligence protects students from burnout and helps them stay engaged in their schoolwork.

We also found that students who can measure and understand their own emotional intelligence are much better prepared for the challenges of school (Schutte et al., 1998). Without these emotional skills, a student might have a high IQ but still fail because they can't handle the social and emotional pressures of life (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

### **Objective 3: Exploring the Relationship Between AQ and EQ in academic learning**

The third objective was to explore how AQ and EQ work together to help a student. Our analysis reveals a deep and symbiotic relationship between the two. EQ provides the foundational calm and awareness that allows AQ to function. As Stoltz (1997) and Goleman (1995) both suggest, you cannot solve a problem (AQ) if you are too upset to think (EQ). When a student uses their EQ to manage their panic, they can then use their AQ to find a way to fix the situation. This is like a pilot using a navigation system to stay on course while the engine keeps the plane in the air.

This relationship can be described as "Academic Tenacity." Students with high EQ can detect their own

stress levels (Self-Awareness) and take breaths to stay calm (Self-Regulation). Once they are calm, they can assert "Control" over the problem and take "Ownership" of the solution (Stoltz, 1997). Research by Zhao et al. (2021) proves that students who have both high AQ and high EQ experience much less stress and do much better in school. They have both the emotional tools to stay healthy and the resilience tools to stay successful. This combination creates a "whole student" who is prepared for any challenge.

We also found that having good social resources (EQ) helps a student limit the "Reach" of their academic problems. This synergy is the true key to success. A student who can manage their feelings and their reactions to failure will always be more successful than a student who only has book knowledge (D'Amico & Geraci, 2023). In fact, students who practice these skills often show higher grades and better life satisfaction. The symbiotic relationship between Adversity Quotient (AQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) equips students with the emotional tools to manage stress effectively while fostering resilience. This combination not only enhances academic performance but also prepares students to navigate life's challenges successfully.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research underscores the integral roles of Adversity Quotient (AQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) in fostering academic success and holistic development among students. As educational environments become increasingly complex and demanding, the necessity for students to cultivate both resilience and emotional intelligence cannot be overstated. The findings reveal that while AQ equips students with the grit to persevere through challenges, EQ provides the emotional management skills essential for navigating stress and fostering positive social interactions. This symbiotic relationship between AQ and EQ is crucial for developing a well-rounded learner capable of overcoming academic obstacles and thriving in a competitive landscape. Ultimately, the study advocates for educational systems to prioritize the cultivation of both AQ and EQ, thereby preparing students not only for academic achievement but also for personal growth and emotional well-being in their future endeavors. By integrating these dimensions into educational curricula, institutions can better support students in their journey toward becoming resilient, emotionally intelligent individuals equipped to face the multifaceted challenges of the modern world.

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