



# **CORRELATION BETWEEN ADVERSITY QUOTIENT (AQ) AND CONFLICT STYLE IN THE WORKPLACE**

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## ABSTRACT

In the past decades, a very wide and rich understanding of conflict, conflict at work and human behaviour towards adversity and conflict has been developed. Research has been done about the theories, sources, processes and many other aspects of all these themes. However, unfortunately, none of this has much of a practical use if people (who are at the basis of all these studies) do not know or apply the useful knowledge and techniques developed so far. The Adversity Quotient concept was developed by Dr Paul G. Stoltz and has to do with an individual capacity to adapt to and handle challenging situations can be measured and developed. Amy Gallo, author of the HBR Guide to dealing with conflict, explores how identifying what is people's natural tendency toward conflict is makes a difference when managing disputes in the workplace. The goals of this research was to determine how conflict styles in the workplace relate to AQ and assess how widespread these two theories were amongst the population. In addition, the study aimed to determine the prevalence of knowledge and real-life application of them and, to contribute to the relevant literature with its findings. The chosen methodology was primary research based on questionnaires and Pearson coefficient for further analysis. The results found show that these two concepts are not vastly widespread, but even amongst people who are familiarized with them, they are not put to practice. AQ and both conflict styles are not directly related analysed while mixed, however, individually, each conflict style presents a linear correlation with the same population AQ scores. This shows that different theories can relate and add to improved and developed ways people can deal with difficulties and conflict in the workplace. Individually, theories are more known than used. Instead of studying separate theories, people might be able to apply a mix of attitudes an better their work environment and life.



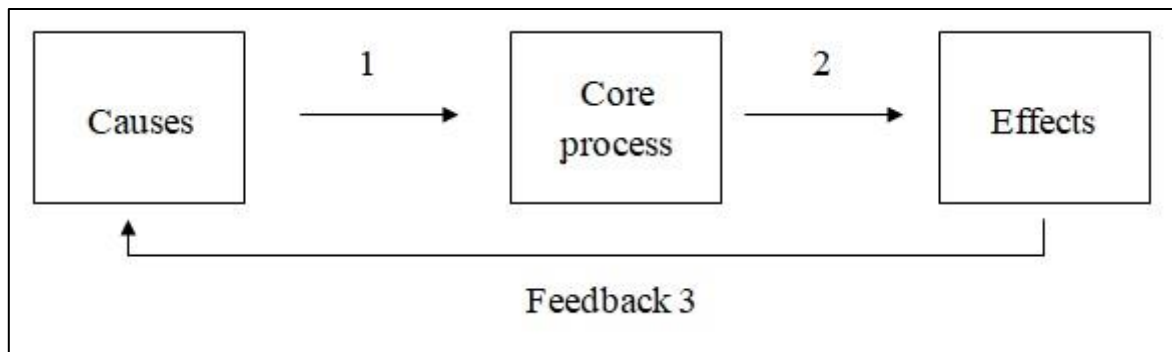
# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE STUDY OF CONFLICT

The literature on conflict is immensely extensive because it has been discussed and studied for a long time. Even before Pondy (1967) explained conflict as a dynamic process that has been used at some point to describe the following: (1) antecedent circumstances (such as a lack of resources or policy differences) that leads to conflictual behaviour; (2) affective states (such as stress, tension, hostility, anxiety, etc.) of the individuals involved; and (3) individual cognitive states, i.e. their awareness of or perception of contentious circumstances, and (4) conflictive actions, from covert aggressiveness to passive resistance, there were several other authors who contributed to this study field.

All definitions added to one another to a general understanding that conflict refers to a situation when one party feels that the interests of the other party are being resisted or negatively impacted. Therefore, conflict is a two-sided or multi-party process. There is also consensus that for there to be conflict, one party must perceive the resistance of the other and specifies that the other, in a disagreement, is obstructing the party's interest(s) or goal because concerns, something cared about, goals, purposes, values, interests, and ambitions are quite similar (Wall and Callister, 1995). Another general agreement is that conflict is inevitable to the human experience and that there is a generic format (Figure 1) where there are causes, much like in any social activity, and a central mechanism that leads to outcomes or impacts (Wall and Callister, 1995). These outcomes have a feedback impact on the causes. Such a conflict cycle occurs in an environment and will go through a number of interactions. Each conflict event only occurs once in a series of similar episodes that make up the connections between organization participants. Therefore, the foundation for a more cooperative relationship may be built if the dispute is truly resolved to everyone's satisfaction, or the participants' desire for a more ordered relationship may cause them to focus on latent problems that they had not previously identified and addressed. The latent conditions of conflict, on the other hand, may be amplified and explode in more catastrophic ways if the conflict is only suppressed but not resolved.

Figure 1 – Conflict cycle



Source: Conflict and its management (Wall and Callister, 1995)

The study of conflict and conflict resolution is so abundant that it is the entire topic of the Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution and much more. Regardless of the outcome, every conflict has an effect on the parties. Individuals, relationships or communications, behaviours, organizations, and issues are all affected differently. Authors De Dreu *et al.* (2004), Kelley and Thibaut (1969) and Levine and Thompson (1996) agree that when an individual or group perceives differences with another individual or group about interests, beliefs, or values that are important to them, conflict is perceived.

### 1.1.1 CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION OUTCOMES

On a personal level parties may develop negative emotions that might show up in a variety of ways, including hostility, social-emotional alienation, stress, and anxiety, personal dissatisfaction might result from negative emotions, low job satisfaction in some cases, though, conflict may bring about stimulating or exhilarating feelings. In interpersonal relationships, the effects of conflict can be found to be changed perspectives about the other parties, differences in communication which may be related to quality or quantity satisfaction lower motivation and performance, a change in behaviour or in the structure of the relationship (Wall and Callister, 1995). Nevertheless, not every consequence of a dispute is negative. Every so often, the communication might deteriorate and may include insults, exaggerations, and misunderstandings, however, on the other hand, it can result in improved and more frequent dialogue.

The residues or products of conflicts appear even when there is no resolution, but they certainly can be managed depending on how the dispute is overseen. Conflict is believed to increase group

productivity and efficiency at moderate levels (Wall and Callister, 1995) and it can boost innovation, enhance decision-making, challenge preconceived notions, increase awareness of underlying concerns, and at times (re)frame problems more precisely (Cosier and Dalton, 1990). It is also possible to experience personal growth, increased self-awareness, and learning. It may encourage the alterations and modifications required for organizational growth.

Looking from the individual and personal point of view, people attempt to resolve issues governed by the influence of their goals and their various interpretations of the conflict. While conflict resolution is one of these objectives, it frequently coexists with others like justice, face-saving, equity, vengeance, or high self-rewards. This can happen in a matter that is guided by experience, which includes what has worked and by their culture and what hasn't. Their objectives, interpretations, encounters, culture, and a variety of other aspects impact the parties involved and support their conflict-management strategies. Stemming from this immense variety, several instruments have been created to measure, quantify, analyse and guide conflict resolution techniques and management. Nevertheless, the resolution of disputes may also include a third-party and, and usually, these parties' step in to mediate disputes because they are expected to help resolve the conflict, or they are called upon to do so. In any of these scenarios, third parties are only likely to get involved if the disputing parties are unable or unwilling to resolve the problem on their own. When third parties step in, they use a wide range of strategies and as they do so, a variety of objectives — harmony versus fairness, organizational effectiveness, or long-term stability — as well as variations in third parties' experiences, demands from others, cultural differences, the nature(s) of the conflict, and the disputants' needs contribute to the variety of the techniques (Wall and Callister, 1995).

### **1.1.2 CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE**

It is generally known that reduced well-being, stress, psychosomatic problems, and burnout are linked to decreased task performance, increased absenteeism and very high levels of turnover, frequent and serious workplace accidents, increased apathy, and decreased commitment (De Dreu *et al.*, 2004). Accordingly, organizational psychologists have looked at a wide range of personal and organizational factors that affect stress and psychosomatic symptoms as well as raise the risk of burnout. The social context in organizations is one set of factors whose relationships to personal

well-being have been repeatedly established. It is believed that other individuals at work, such as co-workers, bosses, or subordinates, have the power to significantly impact how we feel about our jobs and about ourselves (Van Dierendonck *et al.*, 2001).

Nowadays, people spend a major part of their day at work and the environment there has a big impact on how people feel. Workplace relationships may have an impact on both the culture and the overall standard of the work. Also, although it may otherwise offer support, the social environment in which people work it can be at the same time a significant source of stress. Poor connections that are marked by a lack of trust, support, and interest in the issues that an organizational member face have a negative impact on an individual's well-being and significantly increase stress, the emergence of psychosomatic ailments, and feelings of burnout (De Dreu *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, in today's workplaces, learning to negotiate disagreements is not an option anymore. Diversity, dependency, and competition for limited resources will always exist. There can be give-and-take and positive disagreement when motivated people with diverse ideas work to address a problem or an opportunity. Contrary to the increasing pressures people continuously experience on a daily basis which can place unprecedented demands on them and cause stress, healthy competition aids in the development of better products, features, and solutions. Innovation is considered to be the result of "creative abrasion" and people who can dispute constructively rather than destructively and keep challenging debates substantive rather than personal are the most productive (Gallo, 2017).

Pondy (1992) came to the conclusion that organizations are intrinsically competitive and conflict-ridden based on his 25 years of consulting and research expertise. Conflict in the workplace can take numerous different forms, from minor disagreements to significant bullying or harassment occurrences. The functioning of the organization and its processes may be affected by interpersonal conflict, which could result in disaster or malfunction of the organization, affect productivity and cause them to lose their competitive edge. A 2020 report that examines the current situation of working relations in UK organizations (CIPD, 2020) and gathers information in surveys and employee focus groups, from both employers and employees, found that a considerable amount of both employees and employers say conflict happens frequently at work. Just over a third of the employees reported having dealt with a certain degree of interpersonal conflict in the previous year, whether it was a one-off argument or an ongoing problematic relationship. In addition, employees

who have experienced conflict on the receiving end do not share the trust of employers and people managers to take care of it. The report found that while both employers and employees have a high level of confidence in people's abilities to speak up at work, the resolution rate is less than ideal. Less than half of workers who were experiencing conflict said the issue or challenging relationship had been mostly or completely resolved thus far. Additionally, the person's manager was equally likely to have contributed to the conflict's resolution or made it worse.

The report's findings shed light on critical workplace concerns like the standard of interpersonal relationships, the frequency of conflict, the degree of self-assurance people have in reporting bullying and harassment, and the efficiency with which organizations and managers address complaints. For instance, according to the results of the report, it takes managers an average of six days to oversee each disciplinary case and five days to handle a grievance. The majority of employees who are experiencing their most serious conflict report that the most frequent behaviour related with conflict at work is a perceived lack of respect. Also, differences in personality types or ways of functioning are the one thing that led to conflict the most frequently. This encompasses a wide range of various attitudes, conflicts, and interactions amongst people in the workplace.

Another document found that each employee deals with conflict in some capacity (being involved in a disagreement, managing a conflict between co-workers, etc.) on average for 2.1 hours each week, or around one day per month (CCP, 2008). According to Thomas (1992), managers spend 20% of their time on average handling disputes with other people. Handling conflict is a significant drain on the resources of HR departments since, according to the CCP 2008 report, half of the HR employees surveyed spend one to five hours each week on this task. Therefore, instead of using this time to complete projects and reach objectives, time is spent on conflicts.

According to research on conflict management, how conflict is treated at work affects the course and results of conflict for both individuals and organizations. Employee learning, productivity, and job performance are negatively impacted by poorly handled workplace or organizational conflict, which also has an impact on the intensity and frequency of future conflict (Meyer, 2004). The danger of conflict being managed improperly or avoided completely in the workplace is that it can stall projects, harm customer relationships or cost a business money. Team members can be consumed with their disagreements rather than working toward their goals. Additionally, conflict is

emotionally consuming, frequently overflowing into people's personal life. Hours are wasted debating expressed or unspoken viewpoints. Ultimately, persistent conflict over time will affect one's health which represents once more a negative impact to the workplace. When people are led to a burn out and start to occasionally miss work or even need to take time off.

On the other hand, conflict, when managed properly, can provide advantageous results: It can boost creativity, inspire original thoughts, and even help build stronger relationships between co-workers. When people continually inquire whether there is a better way to do something, that creative friction is likely to produce fresh ideas. Furthermore, disagreements rarely yield a fixed quantity of value. When people disagree on a subject, they are compelled to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy in order to, ideally, find the finest answers. Even though it could be uncomfortable when someone disagrees with our thoughts, it is a growth opportunity and brings experience. Criticisms forces self-evaluation and it might lead to a positive change. Connection is made when people start learning more about colleagues' priorities and preferred methods of operation by resolving conflicts together. After a protracted discussion about a specific subject, the outcome is ultimately a learning experience about the counterparts that may collaborate in the future. People are more likely to enjoy interactions with co-workers, feel pleased to go to the office, and be satisfied with accomplishments if they are not afraid to constructively disagree, or even fight, about topics at work.

Of course, that managing conflicts and calming frayed tempers may be perceived as an investment in cases where the outcome is totally favourable. However, workplace disputes that are not resolved well might cause people's emotions to spike and affect staff engagement. Over a quarter of workers stated that they had experienced a workplace conflict that resulted in verbal abuse or physical assault, and a similar amount had witnessed conflict cause illness or absence (CCP, 2008).

Conflict is time-consuming and it diverts attention from meeting organizational priorities and goals. The most typical impacts on people include stress, a decline in commitment or motivation, anxiety, and a loss of confidence; however, others claim that the effects last for years and that their confidence will never be the same again. Considering the increasing rate to which conflicts arise in peoples' lives, effective conflict management has become extremely crucial.

Therefore, its management will call for quick and effective actions. Through the construction and development of the technical, interpersonal, and intercultural competencies of a highly competent workforce, HR experts play a crucial role in helping firms deal effectively with this rapid change since they put a considerable amount of stress on management and employees, which raises the risk of workplace conflict and abnormal behaviour.

## **1.2 THE THEORY ON CONFLICT STYLES**

How people deal with conflict at work is heavily influenced by personality types. There are plentiful variances in the literature of management conflict styles and personalities, however, it turns out that simply dividing individuals into two types – conflict seekers and conflict avoiders – can be quite effective when there is the necessity of dealing with conflicts in the workplace. According to Gallo (2017), when two conflict seekers go off against one other, the techniques used to approach the dispute are different than when two avoiders are in divergence.

It is important to identify the types of people involved in conflict and to assess their behaviour in order to highlight the positive and negative effects of such types of behaviour. Knowing people's innate tendencies in conflict is one of the elements to having a more fruitful conflict. If people can be divided into two categories: those who seek out conflict and are more willing to participate in it (or even find ways to create it) and those who prefer to hide beneath their desks once tensions erupt, who typically avoid conflict or even run away from it, then when in a particular situation, it is beneficial to begin by rapidly assessing what is known about the counterparts. Conflict approached deliberately, seem less terrifying and more manageable. As the scenario changes unexpectedly, people need to be adaptable and flexible, and the knowledge of conflict styles assist the parts in developing the fundamental abilities and techniques required. To manage workplace conflict, it is necessary to understand everyone's natural approach to conflict.

**Table 1 – Typical characteristics of Conflict Seeker and Conflict Avoiders**

<b>Conflict styles at a glance</b>	
<b>Avoiders</b>	<b>Seekers</b>
Shy away from disagreements. Value harmony and positive relationships. Often try to placate people or change the topic. Don't want to hurt others' feelings. Don't want to disrupt team dynamics.	Are eager to engage in disagreements. Care most about directness and honesty. Strongly advocate for their own perspective. Lose patience when people aren't being direct or honest. Don't mind ruffling feathers.

**Source: HBR guide to dealing with conflict (Gallo, 2017)**

Seekers place a higher importance on directness and honesty than harmony and connections. So, they are not afraid to tell you what they believe. They do not mind if their feathers ruffle. They do not seem to mind if things get heated. Indeed, they may actively seek out conflict or increase it once they become involved in it, hence the label "seeker" (Gallo, 2017). Another way of looking at this profile is to see conflict management as a result of strong or low care for self, mixed with high or low concern for others. Hence, the way people react to perceived differences depends on their concerns for their own outcomes and for the opposing party's outcomes. From this perspective, Conflict Seekers have a preference that is aligned with imposing their will on the other party which stems from having a strong concern for oneself and a low concern for others. Convincing justifications and positional commitments are all components of this behaviour. Another possibility is that there is high care for oneself and others which results in a preference for problem-solving that is focused on coming to an agreement that as nearly as possible satisfies both parties' ambitions. It entails exchanging information regarding priorities and preferences, demonstrating insights, and weighing the importance of various topics (De Dreu *et al.*, 2004).

On the other side, a preference for yielding, which is focused on accepting and incorporating the other's will, derives from having low care for self and high concern for others. It entails making compromises, making unwavering commitments, and providing assistance. It is a predisposition for avoidance, which entails downplaying the significance of the problems and making efforts to stop thinking about the problems. In general, conflict avoiders prioritize harmony and relationships. As a



result, they place a high value on teamwork and getting along with their co-workers. And they are willing to compromise on directness and honesty to keep those relationships intact (Gallo, 2017). A typical strategy to conflict is to seek it out at times and avoid it at others, but, also, switch at times. That can be a really strategic switch, for instance, if one knows that is working with an avoider, they need to be more of a seeker to get through the conflict.

Assessing the type of default response to conflict is part of the path in dealing with disputes and how will different styles interact is an afterthought to consider. The conflict styles assessment adds to the skill set of workers to understand what commonly occurs in disputes. The two conflict styles approach presents some alternatives of how to manage conflict between each of the styles.

**Table 2 – How conflict approaches work together**

How conflict approaches work together		
	You are an avoider	You are a seeker
Your counterpart is an avoider	<p>What happens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both of you lean toward doing nothing.</li> <li>• You may tamp down feelings that could explode later on.</li> </ul>	<p>What happens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You tend to bulldoze your counterpart into agreeing with you.</li> <li>• Your counterpart may act passive-aggressively to get his point across.</li> </ul>
	<p>How to manage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of you needs to take the lead.</li> <li>• Say directly, “I know we both don’t like conflict, but instead of doing nothing,</li> </ul>	<p>How to manage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the person to participate actively in the conversation—not hide her opinions.</li> <li>• Don’t be a bully.</li> </ul>

	<p>should we consider other options?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do your best to draw the person out in a sensitive, thoughtful way.</li> <li>• If things get tough, don't shy away. Fight your natural instinct.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be patient with the pacing of the conversation</li> </ul>
Your counterpart is a seeker	<p>What happens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are tempted to play the role of “good guy” and go along with what your counterpart wants.</li> <li>• You might get trampled by your counterpart's requests</li> </ul>	<p>What happens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neither of you is afraid to say what's on your mind.</li> <li>• The discussion turns contentious.</li> <li>• You might end up saying things you don't believe.</li> <li>• You both feel disrespected.</li> </ul>
	<p>How to manage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly ask for what you need: “To have a productive conversation, I need you to be patient with me and watch the tone and volume of your voice.”</li> <li>• Earn the seeker's respect by being direct and to the point.</li> </ul>	<p>How to manage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since you'll both be eager to address the situation, take extra time to prepare for the conversation.</li> <li>• Know that you're likely to feel impatient and schedule your discussion in a way that allows you both to take breaks.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't signal disrespect, which is likely to set the seeker off.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be ready — things may get heated. Suggest a coffee break or a walk or a change of scenery to help even out emotions.</li> </ul>
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Source: HBR guide to dealing with conflict (Gallo, 2017).

### 1.3 THE THEORY ON ADVERSITY QUOTIENT

Adversity is a difficult event or circumstance that happens in every person's lives. Individuals' reactions to adversity decide whether they will experience disappointment, grief, despair, or hopelessness, or whether they will experience happiness, progress, and success. The adversity quotient (AQ), also known as the science of resilience, tries to evaluate a person's ability to deal with adversity in life. Individuals with a high adversity quotient continue to progress successfully and rise in their lives because they can tolerate significant adversity (Singh and Sharma, 2017).

AQ refers to a person's attitude or response when confronted with a situation. It serves as a measure of people's capacity to recover and deal with a negative circumstance in a productive approach (Resilience). It is based on scientifically supported ideas and it is utilized to gauge what it needed to succeed in extremely challenging circumstances. According to Stoltz (1997), the adversity quotient has three concepts: a theoretical framework for understanding and expanding achievement, an appraisal for determining the reaction to challenges, and skill set for improving responses to difficulties. Stoltz (1997, 1998) created the adversity quotient instrument and first offered a theoretical viewpoint on adversity intelligence. In order to comprehend adversity intelligence, adversity quotient, and the purpose and significance of adversity intelligence, both have been approved and used by psychologists, academics, educators, and others. In Angelopoulos, *et al.* (2002) it is hypothesized that AQ will serve as a unifying theory of human behaviour that will provide a better understanding of how people behave in a variety of settings. The goal of AQ has been to empower employees and better equip them to handle challenges and stress at work and one can improve their AQ through an organized training process, which makes it easier for the abilities to be retained over the long term.

A person's ability to formulate and conduct practical plans, their self-confidence, their communication and problem-solving skills, and their ability to regulate their emotions and impulses are all components of resilience. All of these have an impact on how one responds and behaves and the method and theory of Dr Paul G. Stoltz states that anyone can learn and develop them. He believes that an even greater issue is to equip the human mind to work successfully with an increasing number of unpleasant events, because it necessitates the strengthening and evolution of the human operating system to handle the rising demands for information, skills, abilities, and experiences. In addition, learning new information and abilities can only be put to use to the fullest extent when they are completely absorbed and integrated into the system rather than just added to it (Venkatesh and Shivaranjani, 2016).

In a study that looked into how a person's overall life happiness is impacted by various traits (Zhao *et al.*, 2021), AQ was used as a measure of how people's capacities for tenacity and resiliency in the face of various stressful circumstances or adversity can play a crucial role in life satisfaction. To the authors, AQ define a person's ability to overcome internal (such as anxiety, fear, sadness, perfectionism, and low motivation) and external (such as peer pressure, interpersonal relationships, financial, and employment concerns) challenges in order to achieve their goals. According to this interpretation of AQ, endurance and resilience enable people to adapt to, manage, and overcome challenges. The study found that people with higher scores in regulation of emotion, tenacity, and optimism were likely to have greater life satisfaction levels. Furthermore, tenacity and optimism, two components of AQ, were discovered to significantly predict overall life happiness. Tenacity is defined as "an individual's composure, promptness, perseverance, and sense of control when facing situations of adversity and challenge," while optimism is defined as the propensity to see the bright side of situations and have faith in one's own and others' resources. People with high levels of tenacity and optimism may perceive difficulties, challenges, and tragedies in a different way than people with low levels of optimism. Tenacious and upbeat people frequently have good attitudes and affect about themselves and life, reinforced by positive social and personal resources (friends and families), which may help them get through challenging situations and ultimately increase their level of overall life satisfaction (Zhao *et al.*, 2021).

Venkatesh and Shivaranjani (2016) argue that we face challenges every day, from the moment we wake up to the moment we go to bed, our lives are filled with challenges. To deal with the current difficulty, every new day demands higher tempo, huge capability, and fresh capacity. Under extreme stress, people frequently crumble and give in more or less rapidly. In order to help managers, overcome obstacles and remain productive at all times for greater business success and prosperity regardless of obstacles, the HR process now requires the introduction of a new criterion in recruitment, training, and performance management. The Adversity Quotient (AQ), which is the imperative for all business operations, is a measure of management competence that has recently emerged as a new mantra for building and developing an effective managerial workforce.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THEORIES AND THE STUDY**

In any way, individual or involving a third party, conflicts are humanely governed and influenced by individual experiences and personalities which is why studies that include instruments such as the Adversity Quotient and Conflict Styles are necessary. Given the relevance of the subject so far, it is fair to infer that in the future disagreement will continue to be common, and perhaps, not all of it will be quickly recognizable. More and more the workforce will be diversified, and this diversity will create conflict as it results in divergent objectives, viewpoints, values, commitments, and resource needs.

In the book "Put your mindset to work" by James Reed and John Stoltz, the authors enquired thousands of top employers about the qualities they value most in candidates and employers frequently assert that the correct mentality is more important than the appropriate skill set when making hiring, promotion, and retention decisions. They found that companies are very insistent on mentality specially in higher levels of employment because they rely on assumed skillset. Mindset, which has to do with what people think, see, and believe, however, was the most crucial factor for leaders when asked if it was more or less significant than other qualities. Qualities related to what it is called "soft skills" such as honesty, trustworthiness, commitment, adaptability, accountability, and flexibility account for absolute necessities and key components to any organization's or social group's long-term success as well as help people navigate through the hard realities of competing in a truly global job market. Therefore, these qualities must evolve at an ever-increasing rate, and

it is crucial that both employers and employees are aware of as many as possible instruments to assess conflict styles and approaches.

### **1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The primary purpose of this quantitative study will be to examine whether significant associations exist between AQ and conflict styles in the workplace universe. Studying a potential correlation between these two instruments opens a whole new range of possibilities in the study area. For instance, if there can be a relationship at the beginning, considering what different people believe to be an adversity and what disposition they might have to conflict. What influences people to become resilient and if that changes over time. The same can be asked about their conflict styles, is it fixed or is it fluid? What can influence that? Even though, these are not the questions that this research is going to answer, they are a sample of what this type of work can flourish in the future.

One goal of this research is to add to the knowledge about the relationship between AQ and the two conflict management styles. People rarely bring issues to mediation in a detached, objective manner. Different things have diverse meaning to different people, people make meaning in specific ways and while emotions might aid in determining what is important, they can also inhibit them from seeing things properly (Newberry, 2022). Understanding the association between peoples' AQ and the dimensions of conflict management styles can aid all professionals working in peoples' management, the Human Resources field as well as conflict analysis and resolution of workplace related disputes.

Another purpose of this study is to enhance professionals' understanding of conflict styles and behaviour. Most people come to mediation to solve a specific problem. Money, property division, child custody, and corporate relationship duties are all examples of this. When supporting disputants in discovering particular answers to such challenges, problem-solving abilities come in handy. They include helping in finding the most pressing issues, brainstorming, prioritizing, and much more. These skills enable the mediator to help in focusing on what matters most and generate solutions (Newberry, 2022). By offering knowledge about the different personalities' values, strong points, and conflict triggers, as well as behaviour in situations of arguments, this study hope to bring self-insight and improve peoples' confidence when thinking about conflicts in the workplace.

### **1.5.1 OBJECTIVES**

1. To find out the relationship between AQ and conflict styles in the workplace.
2. To find out what is the prevalence of knowledge about the AQ tool and check on the application of it to the respondent.
3. To find out what is the prevalence of knowledge about the two conflict styles – avoiders and seekers - tool and check on the application of it to the respondent.
4. To add to the related literature by the findings of this study.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 CONFLICT STYLES

Friedman *et al.* (2000) found that conflict arises not only from circumstances, but also from the styles that people adopt when they dispute. The way one reacts to the ambiguity, uncertainty, and disagreement that characterize organizational life has an impact on others' responses, which, in turn, shapes one's own work experience. Employees can use a powerful set of tools to help form their own work atmosphere if they are aware of the potential approaches to dealing with conflict and understand the repercussions of those approaches.

There are numerous theoretical models for dealing with conflict. Conflict management or conflict styles are seen by Deutsch (1949), Pruitt (1983), and Rahim (1983) as a dimension of self- and productivity-related concern, and consequently the way to address conflict management is more related to different types of personalities. Deutsch (1949), for example, provided a one-dimensional approach to collaboration and rivalry. Pruitt (1983) provided a bi-dimensional approach incorporating four conflict management styles; Darling and Walker (2001) and Rahim and Magner (1995) all proposed a bi-dimensional model. Five different styles were used in Thomas and Kilmann (1974).

According to the research by Friedman *et al.* (2000), an employee's interpersonal conflict management strategies may influence the level of continuous emotional and task-related disputes at the workplace, which in turn affects how stressed out they feel. Members of the organization must resolve their differences amicably when communicating with one another. To cope with varied situations effectively, one must learn how to apply various conflict-handling styles. The authors present a compelling argument in support of their central theoretical hypothesis, according to which how people are predisposed to respond to conflict situations determines how much conflict they perceive.

The Blake and Mouton 1964 (cited in Thomas, 1992) idea that conflict in organizations is managed differently depending on whether a manager has a high or low concern for productivity and a high or low care for people is the theoretical foundation for the dual concern model. The dual concern



paradigm has proven to be useful from a theoretical and heuristic standpoint. It has provided a foundation for forecasting how different conflict styles will be used. For decades, this basic system has dominated the field of conflict settlement, leading to the creation of various measurements that have been thoroughly researched (Putnam, 1988; Rahim and Magner, 1995).

Nevertheless, the dual-concern paradigm, as well as a number of other conflict behaviour typologies is not unanimous by scholars. Van de Vilest and Euwema (1994) critics both sets of underlying descriptive scope — concern for self/concern for others and integrative/distributive — stating that they appear to be theoretically and empirically problematic "because the worries are intrapersonal and cannot be observed well by others, they are not ambiguous characteristics of intended or exhibited conflict conduct". Cai and Fink (2002) also argue that although the dual model's dimensions have received widespread endorsement, the number of different conflict styles has only been assumed rather than assessed. The two-dimensional paradigm drastically underestimates the complexity of conflict resolution; the five styles are not mutually exclusive, and the meaning of the styles is obviously not universal. Although the model has proven to be a useful heuristic, their research indicates that it is rather oversimplified.

Amy Gallo (2017) defends that everyone favour particular conflict styles depending on their upbringings and temperaments. The author states that people will frequently take on these roles when there is conflict. Some are what she calls Conflict Seekers and like the chance to argue or talk about opposition. On the other hand, some are considered Conflict Avoiders and want to follow the crowd and detest conflict. This is not fixed and most people would fall somewhere in the middle depending on several factors in what it is called "a continuum from seeker to avoider". To use a different conflict style than the natural tendency, individuals need to have the correct attitude and a specific level of emotional intelligence. The first step is, of course, to know and understand the default response. In other words, in order to navigate between the styles and find the best strategy to deal with a conflict, one must first know which natural attitude they have and assess their counterpart's style as well.

## **2.2 ADVERSITY QUOTIENT**

Dr. Paul Stoltz coined the term Adversity Quotient in the book 'Adversity Quotient: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities' published in 1997 as a score that assesses one's capacity to view challenges as opportunities. Later, Stoltz and Weihenmayer (2010) modified the term to the capacity to deal with adversity, or adversity intelligence, which specifically refers to a person's capacity to resist blows and pressures in a situation of frustration as well as to flee from and overcome challenges to prevent psychological and behavioural illnesses. An assessment is carried out utilizing primary characteristics of adversity quotient, called CORE, to determine flexibility or level of adversity quotient in facing problems (Stoltz, 1997).

1. (C) Control is the ability of a person to control his/her circumstances and him/herself when facing problems
2. (O) Origin is the ability of a person to see where the source of the problem is
3. (O) Ownership is how a person recognizes the consequences arising from the problem
4. (R) Reach is a person's perspective on problems and aspects of his life
5. (E) Endurance is a person's perspective regarding the time period when a problem occurs

The degree to which one believes they have control or influence over difficult conditions is referred to as control (Stoltz, 1997). This means that a person's level of control has an impact on the action's direction, level of effort, and perseverance. Those that are somewhat competent in this area are more proactive in difficult situations and can convert misfortune into opportunity (Stoltz, 2000).

The degree of responsibility one feels to better the result of a negative circumstance is referred to as ownership (Stoltz, 1997). A person with a greater level of AQ will take responsibility for the negative situation and address it head on. Such a person will gain knowledge from their experiences, alter their approach to the problem, and take the necessary steps to complete the task. This identifies the types of people who take responsibility for their actions and turn events into learning opportunities (Stoltz, 2000).

Reach refers to the extent to which adversity has an impact on other elements of one's life (Stoltz, 1997). Those with higher AQ levels do not allow adversity to affect their lives in other ways. They believe that misfortune is restricted to a single situation. They are well prepared to deal with adversity because they are empowered (Stoltz, 2000).

Endurance is a person's estimation of how long the cause of adversity, as well as the adversity itself, will persist (Stoltz, 1997). Adversities are seen as transient by those with high AQ, who believe they can be overcome. These people are upbeat and active when confronted with adversity (Stoltz, 2000).

A study that evaluated the Adversity Quotient (AQ) of 199 patent inventors and the importance of individual resiliency in the creation of new businesses used the ARP (Stoltz, 1997) test. The findings and results showed that AQ was able to distinguish between technical innovators who create new firms and those who only work for them, notably in terms of felt control over adversities and perceived ownership for their outcomes. The study also showed that technical entrepreneurs experience significantly higher levels of perceived control and accountability when compared to technical non-entrepreneurs. High AQ is also linked to higher personal earnings, and the study showed that the higher the AQ of patent inventors, the higher their earnings (Markman, 2000).

In a study that aimed to examine how commitment to change, and retention are related in a non-profit organization going through an organizational transformation it was found that AQ might predict both commitment to change and retention. Ownership demonstrated the strongest level of commitment to change, and control, ownership, and endurance were found to be the factors most associated with retention. It was discovered that affective commitment and the commitment profile were favourably connected with the AQ profiles (Langvardt, 2007).

The Adversity Quotient level assessment of secondary school students in relation to their academic self-concept and achievement motivation was carried out by Devkumar (2012), and the study was concluded with the notion that the AQ enhancement program was significantly effective on the secondary school students to raise the AQ level which is a positive outcome considering future challenges that they will face in their academic life.

There are several researches regarding AQ in different fields and with different applications (Phoolka, and Kaur, 2012; Dorji, and Singh, 2019; Canivel, 2010; Singh and Sharma, 2017), but not much can be found relating AQ and management styles. There has been very little, if any, research done about this relationship. The association between AQ and other parameters such as job performance,

organizational obligations, turnover rate, or perceived stress has been studied in the workplace (Styrlund, 2010; Kanjanakaroon, 2012). The data reveal that AQ is linked to job performance, psychological contracts, and organizational commitments, but not to employee turnover or occupational stress (Kanjanakaroon, 2012; Kumbanaruk and Maetheeponkul, 2008; Somaratne et. al., 2020).

The AQ Profile has undergone testing with participants from numerous different countries, and it has proven to be very universal and adaptable across cultures. The normative format is comprehensive since higher scores are often better, suggesting stronger overall resilience and effectiveness. In addition, it has been demonstrated to be extremely trustworthy and consistent in numerous independent investigations studies and proven to have overall dependability of 0.91 in the Cronbach's alpha (a measure of reliability that can range from zero to one) which is higher than that of the majority of widely used psychological tests and achievement assessments (Venkatesh and Shivaranjani, 2016).

Validation studies at the Peak Learning, Inc.'s website lists investigations that the company conducted internationally in various businesses. These are often correlational and comparative in nature. Results of their research indicated that retention in an organization increased by 74% and attrition decreased from 73% to 19% after an AQ training program that was given to 237 workers of a telecommunications company during a period when they were experiencing severe commercial challenges. Sales performance increased significantly, and teams with moderate performance won awards for being the best teams. The AQ program was successful in boosting participant morale and fast getting individuals back on track. Despite the hurricane that was in the area at the time, which should have decreased sales, AQ training of 76 sales professionals of another company showed a significant reduction in attrition and a 50% gain in sales, year over year. The organization's senior management observed an improvement in employee engagement overall, as well as an uptick in peer accountability and morale.

Studies on the predictive validity of AQ at a company showed that AQ was an accurate predictor of sales performance. A one-day AQ training was followed by a 90-day weekly web-based support program for 151 senior executives in a research done at a major global technology business. The study aimed to establish a link between AQ and perceived stress, amount of involvement, perceived

control, and coping capacity. The study's findings indicate that the program caused AQ to rise from moderate to relatively high levels. Following training, participants reported less "stress on the job," higher levels of engagement, perceptions of improved capacity to "cope with stress," improved ability to manage stress and have more control over stress-inducing circumstances, and less stress related to their biggest issue.

According to a research done on 1130 participants from a UK insurance firm, demonstrated a substantial correlation between AQ and an employee's impression of their health, fitness, quality of life, work satisfaction, and other areas of their lives that are connected to their health, happiness, and ability to execute their jobs. Additionally, AQ results show a strong association between attendance of employees.

Sixty corporate leaders received training in AQ and their performance rating was associated with their before- and after-scores. After the training, the findings revealed a strong positive association between AQ and performance. The clients say that these individuals' responses to difficulties, setbacks, and adversity have fundamentally improved, which has had an effect on their financial situation.

Another research was done on 120 account managers and sales managers. The goal of the study was to determine how well AQ might predict sales success under challenging circumstances and the connection between AQ progress and overall performance. For evaluating sales success, specialized rating scales were used to gauge performance. AQ was a strong predictor and driver of performance and sales resilience, according to the results. AQ training significantly enhanced CORE and total AQ profiles.

A study with 251 workers, examined the relationship between AQ and the financial success of bank managers and bank branches employing the Adversity Response Profile (ARP). The findings indicated a strong relationship between performance and AQ. The skill rating and the AQ "Reach" component were shown to be correlated most strongly.

### 3 RESEARCH METHODS

The collection of primary data was done by questionnaires regarding respondents' adversity quotient and conflict styles (Appendix A). The questionnaires were available and distributed online through social networks. This was the chosen method because studies conducted in virtual environments, or that involve using the internet to communicate are more economical and reduce geographical and linguistic barriers, in addition to enabling the dissemination of information with greater ease and participant comfort. Nevertheless, it is recognized that there may be obstacles, such as a restriction on access to technology and a participant's lack of proximity to the researchers, which prevents a face-to-face approach in the execution of the invitation to participate in the study.

Participants were informed that the process is optional, and that they were free to leave at any point. Since the participants were not identified, no private data was gathered. Participants in this study received no financial compensation. In this research there was no interpretation regarding specific data such as gender, age or other related factors and that is why no reference to such was made or scrutinized. Therefore, no basic demographic data, such as gender, age, city, level of education, marital status, and employment status, were gathered for this study. Subjects were assured that their responses will be kept private, respecting confidentiality.

The use of questionnaire was based on the fact that the Adversity Quotient is already available in this form and, consequently, has been rigorously tested and validated. Online surveys can produce very useful data, have high response rates, and guarantee anonymity which encourages more truthful and open responses than interviews also reducing bias. The target audience, while being dispersed geographically, are identified as worker and they were made aware of the questions context.

Certain disadvantages are that there is no way of knowing if there were any misunderstandings caused by the questionnaire and this method does not allow the researcher to clarify doubts. As a closed answers questionnaire, there is no room for respondents to present their own perspective on the issues unless. Even with rigorous preparation, administration, and design, surveys can result in relatively low response rates. Recruitment bias may have occurred since the distribution of the

forms was done online, excluding people without internet access and in English language, excluding non-English speakers (Marshall, 2005).

Because the research involve humans and require behavioural observations and engagement, it was necessary to make ethical considerations. Ethical implications were addressed by completion of the Application for Ethical Approval - Form A for ethical approval. The research was given ethical grant and no referral to the Research and Ethics Committee was deemed required since the questionnaire pose hypothetical scenarios.

### **3.1 ADVERSITY RESPONSE PROFILE**

Adversity Quotient is measured by the Adversity Response Profile (ARP), created by Dr. Paul Stoltz. The AQ Profile is an oppositional, scale-based, forced-choice assessment tool created to determine a person's resilience, or their capacity to adapt positively to challenges, by eliciting their innate response style to a wide range of unfavourable circumstances (Stoltz, 1997). It is a self-assessment questionnaire that assesses a person's approach to difficult situations. The ARP outlines different scenarios or events and measures CORE dimensions – i. Control, ii. Ownership, iii. Reach and iv. Endurance. Following each scenario there are answers from very positive to very negative which must be answered on a five-point scale. The ten questions that address the respondents' Adversity Quotient level comprise that make up the AQ and they are expressed as follows in the table 3. In this study, Ownership was also divided into a sub-aspect called Accountability. The CORE dimensions are given the four CORE aspects appropriate meaning depending on the reported answers, as the scores are essentially created for each of the dimensions. The respondents' responses to the AQ questionnaire from the AQ Profile are provided as a numerical score. The CORE dimensional scales are related to one another as well as functioning independently as a separate measure under the umbrella of AQ. The AQ scores range from low to high, suggesting feedback that is constructive or damaging. A high total score implies a successful outcome, and the more effective reaction is demonstrated by the capable of handling challenging circumstances.

**Table 3 – Questions and the four CORE aspects**

	Question number	Scenario	Range of answers
CONTROL	1	You suffer a financial setback. To what extent can you influence this situation?	Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely
	9	You are not exercising regularly though you know you should. To what extent can you influence this situation?	Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely
OWNERSHIP	8	Your workplace is understaffed. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving this situation?	Not responsible at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely responsible
	10	Your organization is not meeting its goals. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving this situation?	Not responsible at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely responsible
ACCOUNTABILITY	2	Someone you respect ignores your attempt to discuss an important issue. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving this situation?	Not responsible at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely responsible
	6	You hit every red light on your way to an important appointment. The consequences of this situation will:	Affect all aspects of my life 1 2 3 4 5 Be limited to this situation
REACH	3	You are criticized for a big project that you just completed. The consequences of this situation will:	Affect all aspects of my life 1 2 3 4 5 Be limited to this situation
	7	After extensive searching, you cannot find an important document. The consequences of this situation will:	Last forever 1 2 3 4 5 Quickly pass
ENDURANCE	4	You accidentally delete an important email. The consequences of this situation will:	Last forever 1 2 3 4 5 Quickly pass



	5	You are unable to take a much-needed vacation. The consequences of this situation will:	Last forever 1 2 3 4 5 Quickly pass
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Source: Adversity Quotient: Turning obstacles into opportunities (Stoltz, 1997)

The CORE dimensions are given the appropriate meaning depending on the reported answers, as the scores are essentially created for each of the dimensions. The respondents' responses to the AQ questionnaire from the AQ Profile are provided as a numerical score. The CORE dimensional scales are related to one another as well as functioning independently as a separate measure under the umbrella of AQ. The AQ scores range from low to high, suggesting feedback that is constructive or damaging. A high total score implies a successful outcome, and the more effective reaction is demonstrated by the capable of handling challenging circumstances.

Table 4 – Self Explanatory Table Infers the Interpretation of AQP Score

A Self-Explanatory Table Infers the Interpretation of AQP Score		
Low (0-15) AQ Characteristics	Moderate (23-34) AQ Characteristics	High (41-50) AQ Characteristics
<p>Low levels of motivation, energy, performance and persistence.</p> <p>Tendency to “catastrophise” events.</p>	<p>Underutilization of potential.</p> <p>Problems take a significant and unnecessary Toll.</p> <p>A sense of helplessness and despair arises from time to time.</p>	<p>Able to withstand significant adversity and continue forward and upward progress.</p> <p>Maintains appropriate perspective on events and responses on them</p>

Source: Adapted from Venkatesh, J. and Shivaranjani, G., 2016

### 3.2 SEEKERS AND AVOIDERS – CONFLICT STYLES

The understanding of two main conflict styles – conflict seekers and conflict avoiders – is defended by Amy Gallo in the publication Harvard Business Review (HBR) Guide to dealing with conflict (2017) and a questionnaire based on this literature was developed to assess the respondents’ styles.

According to the author, people can be divided into two categories: those who want conflict and those who avoid it. Even though a behaviour can change due to external factors such as where people are (at home or at work?) and with whom they are in disagreement with (a boss or a direct report?) everyone has a default response.

The scenarios created to assess the respondents’ styles are based on the premise that they will be either attracted to or resistant to conflict. There are many influences on a person’s response to conflict, their circumstances, stress, publicity or private conversations and more, however, each one has their own natural tendency and a behaviour to which they gravitate towards most of the time and that is what the questions aim to captivate.

**Table 5 – Survey scenarios to assess the respondents conflict style**

<b>Scenarios in the survey</b>
11. At work, a colleague's bad attitude is affecting the rest of the team and everyone agrees that someone has to talk to them. You:
12. You have been asking for more financial resources for your project but it has been denied due to budget constraints, so you:
13. You are in a meeting and issues from the previous week might emerge in the conversation. Your thoughts are:
14. A co-worker disagrees with you in front of your peers and question a deadline you laid out for the team. Your reactions is:

**Source: HBR guide to dealing with conflict (Gallo, 2017).**

#### 4 DATA ANALYSIS

The link between Adversity Quotient and Conflict Style was determined using Pearson 'r'. The correlation coefficients are used to quantify the strength of a relationship between two variables.

There are various forms of correlation coefficients, but Pearson's is the most common and indicated when trying to figure out how strong and which way a presumed association between two variables is. In terms of linear correlation, the Pearson correlation coefficient is the most often used calculation method. Utilizing a coefficient of correlation allows one to quantify the strength of the relationship between the variables rather than just describing it. Pearson's correlation (sometimes known as Pearson's r) is a linear regression correlation coefficient which yields a value between -1 and +1, with a value of "0" indicating no association at all. The stronger the link between the two variables, the larger the absolute value of the number. Both variables move in the same direction when there is a positive correlation.

The Pearson coefficient, therefore, ranges from -1 to 1 in a manner that:

$r = 1$  denotes a perfect and positive correlation between the two variables.

$r = -1$  A perfect negative correlation exists between the two variables, meaning that when one increases, the other always decreases.

$r = 0$  denotes that there is no linear dependence between the two variables.

According to Prion and Haerling (2014) the following is a "*rule of thumb*" for interpreting Pearson r results: 0.21 to 0.35 is inconsequential, 0.36 to 0.67 is moderate, 0.68 to 0.90 is robust, and 0.91 to 1.00 is quite powerful. It is critical to highlight that the link depicted by the correlation coefficient does not imply that the two variables are causally related. Additionally, there may be another dependency that is "*non-linear*". This research will not attempt to argue that one variable causes the other, regardless of how strong the coefficient might be and the same is valid for the opposite result. This work can only report on the relationship's strength and direction. However, based on secondary research and common-sense study of the phenomena investigated, it is possible to make an educated judgment about which variable may have influenced the other and other inferences.

Other statistical instruments were used to help analyse and illustrate the data found. A distribution curve or bell curve presents independent effects (or effects that are not strongly correlated) that normally distribute. This very useful statistical mode applies two parameters: the median or mean (average), which indicates where it is concentrated, and the variance, which indicates how dispersed the data is or, otherwise, the standard deviation. A central value is typically the point at which the majority of variables congregate, with symmetrical positive and negative deviations around this value. The bell-shaped standard normal distribution curve is symmetrical (Ali and Bhaskar, 2016). Still according to the empirical rule, you may determine what proportion of your data falls inside a range of standard deviations around the mean:

- Within one standard deviation of the mean, 68% of the data are contained.
- The data is within two standard deviations of the mean in 95% of the cases.
- Three standard deviations from the mean are occupied by 99.7% of the data.

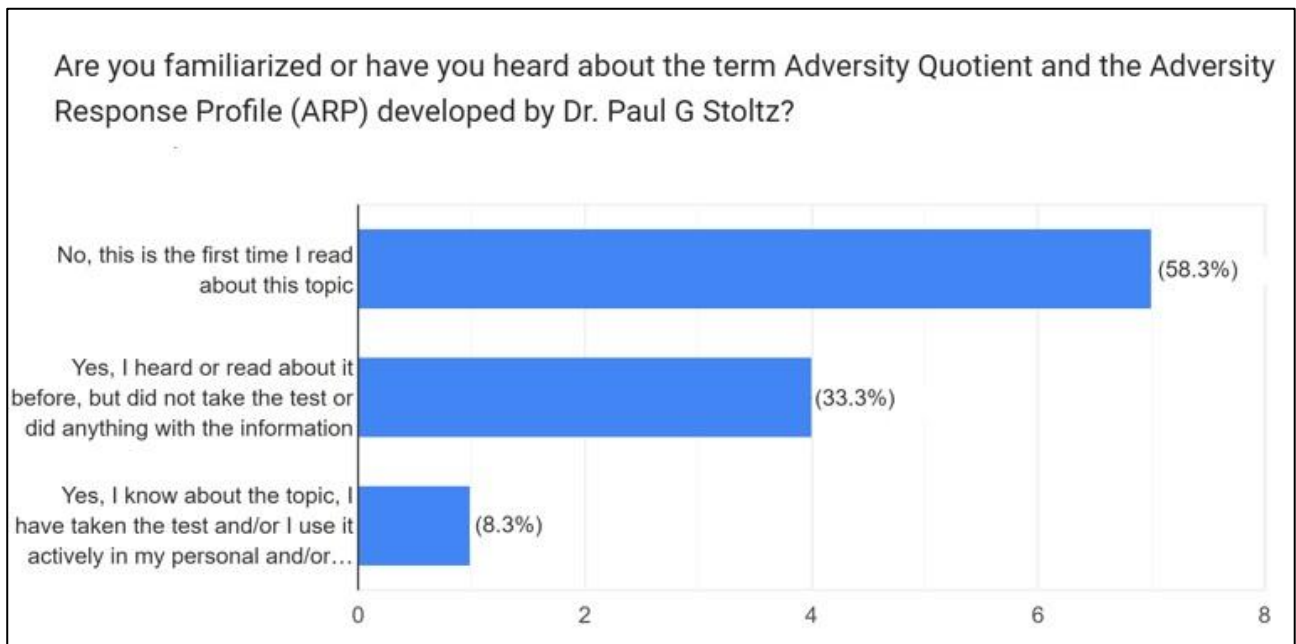
Data visualization that depicts the relationship between two numerical variables is known as a scatterplot. The coordinates of each point representing a dataset member are determined by the values of the two variables for that member. Patterns or correlations can be observed (or not) on this type of graph based on how tightly sets of data points cluster together. However useful as a visual representation, interpretation needs to be limited. A scatter plot that shows a link between two variables does not necessarily indicate that changes in one variable are the cause of changes in the other (Rensink, 2017). Therefore, correlation does not indicate causation.

## 5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The online form was first made available to be answered on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September and left open for responses until the 8<sup>th</sup> of October. During those two weeks, a total of 120 answers were gathered. At this point, the survey was closed, and data was extracted and analysed accordingly.

One of the goals of the survey was to find out what is the prevalence of knowledge about the AQ, and results shows that about 58% of respondents had never heard about the tool. From all the respondents, only around 8% stated using it actively in their personal and/or professional development after taking the test (Graph 1).

**Graph 1 - Familiarity with the AQ and ARP**



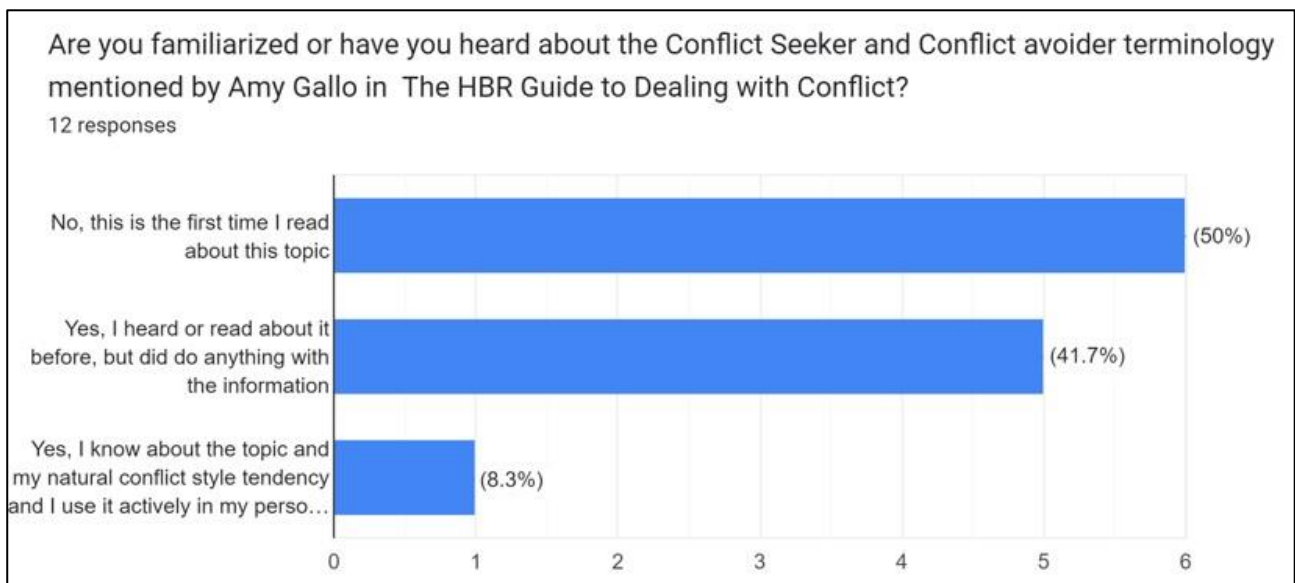
Source: The author

Considering that only 42% actually knew about the tool, this means that from all the people who were aware of the AQ only 20% makes active use of it. It can be inferred, then, that this instrument is still not very popular amongst the surveyed sample and that even though some of the respondents were familiarized with the theory and method of the AQ profile, they do not benefit from the positive changes that the tool has to offer. This is surprising considering that this knowledge is available since 1992 and according to a technical report from 2019 (Grant Consulting, 2019) some of

the versions of the AQ profile had been completed by more than 1,000,000 people globally, representing 137 nations.

Another goal was to ascertain the popularity of the two conflict styles – avoiders and seekers - tool. From the 120 respondents, half of them stated having heard about the theory (Graph 2). However, from those, 17% declare using the understanding of their conflict style in their personal and/or career development.

**Graph 2 - Familiarity with Conflict Styles**



**Source: The author**

The correlation coefficient between the two variants was found to be as follows:

- From 120 respondents an average of 34 in AQ was found where 33% had total score of AQ which is classified as high. None of the respondents scored less than a total of 29 which is classified as a moderate AQ. Therefore, from all the sample there was nobody who had what is considered a low AQ.
- One third of the respondents were deemed Conflict Avoiders and two thirds classified as Conflict Seekers.

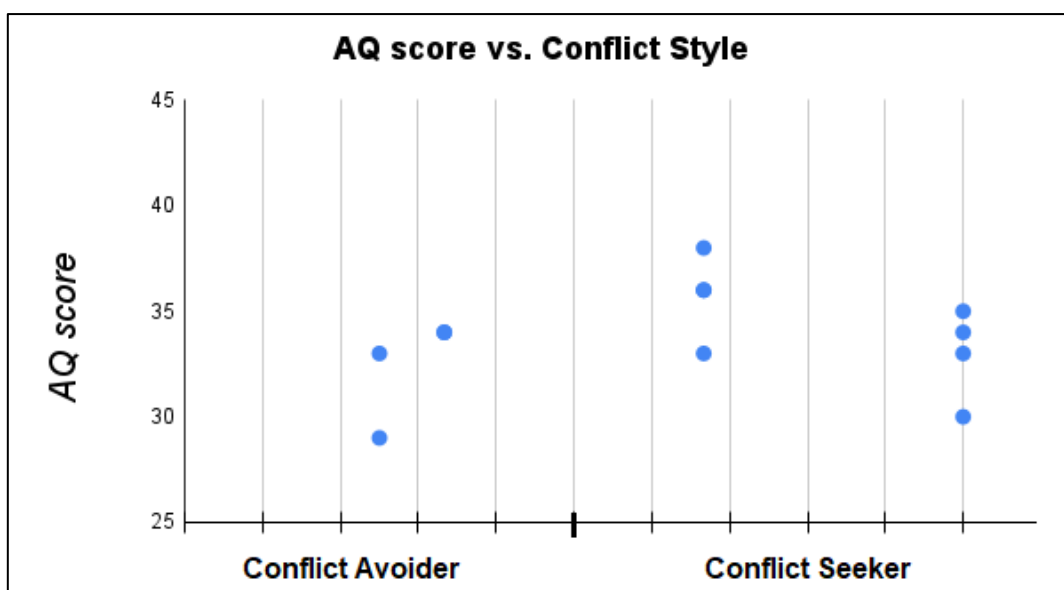
Based on the literature correlation a result between 0.21 to 0.35 is considered to be inconsequential, 0.36 to 0.67 is moderate, 0.68 to 0.90 is robust, and 0.91 to 1.00 is quite powerful and this is the same for negative or positive results.

- The correlation coefficient was calculated by directly applying the Pearson 'r' formula. Overall, the correlation between both scores is 0.14.

This result means that there is no actual and meaningful linear correlation between the general scores of AQ and Conflict Styles since the Pearson 'r' result is close to zero. In other words, there is no linear dependence between the two variables, therefore, neither does one of the variables increases when the other does as well or it increases while the other, on average, decreases. Instead, it is expected that the correlation between these two scores will be very low and scattered points are observed with no pattern of association or even a definition of direction (Graph 3). However, there may be another dependency that is "non-linear." As a result, other methods should be used to investigate the result.

A linear relationship between the two variables would mean that an increase in one variable would result in an increase in the other, always in the same proportion. The result found comparing the overall values of AQ and both Conflict Seekers and Avoiders scores is explained by the understanding that the styles are opposing and, therefore, their grouped results are not linear. In other words, people will point either to one style or the other, in two distinct directions. This is why the correlation needs to be checked against the two styles separately.

**Graph 3 – AQ and Conflict Styles scatter plot**



Source: The author

The Pearson coefficient was then calculated grouping the results that classified respondents as Conflict Avoiders and the same sampled group AQ scores:

- The Pearson 'r' correlation between Conflict Avoiders and their AQ scores was found to be -0.7.

The same was done using the data gathered correlating scores between Conflict Seekers and their AQ:

- The Pearson 'r' correlation between Conflict Seekers and their AQ scores was found to be -0.6.

Plotting the variable and calculating the correlation between the Avoiders with their AQ results, it was found that there is in fact a robust negative linear correlation between the two variables. That is, higher AQ respondents had scores that tend to what can be described as a "lesser" Avoider conflict style. However, contrary to what it could be expected after finding the previous relationship, there is also a negative linear correlation between Conflict Seekers and AQ. Even though this correlation is, according to the literature, a moderate correlation (0.21 to 0.35 is inconsequential, 0.36 to 0.67 is moderate, 0.68 to 0.90 is robust, and 0.91 to 1.00 is quite powerful), it reflects the idea that people who answered closest to Conflict Seeker had lower AQ than people who had more divided answers between a Seeker and an Avoider style. Interestingly enough, considering only the high AQ respondents, there was an absolute prevalence of a Seeker conflict style. In other words, all the high AQ respondents showed to be Conflict Seekers.

As presented earlier, the AQ is collectively made up of four CORE subscales (dimensions): Control, Ownership, Reach, and Endurance. Each question covers these dimensions, and the results show that Control, the dimension which translates into how much a person thinks they have control over what happens next and determines adaptability, good health, and tenacity, is the one with higher average score (n=4) followed by Ownership (which it is combined with accountability). The four dimensions are the thrust, the basis of the AQ because it is the representation of the individuals' response pattern to adversity. Since the cores range from low to high, denoting destructive to constructive feedback, a higher total score denotes a successful outcome. As the scale of answers range, the lowest possible score in this scale would be 1 and the highest 5. Higher scores indicate



that the person responds more skilfully to challenging circumstances which, nevertheless, it can be strengthened and rewired.

**Table 6 – Adversity Quotient results according to the CORE sub-scales/dimensions**

<b>Core dimensions</b>	<b>Average score</b>
Control (Questions 1 and 9)	3,9
Ownership and Accountability (Questions 8; 10 and also, 2 and 6)	3,4
Reach (Questions 3 and 7)	3,3
Endurance (Questions 4 and 5)	2,9

**Source: The author**

## 6 FINDINGS DISCUSSION

The hypotheses that were regarded when collecting data for this survey were:

1. There is a strong correlation between higher AQ and Conflict Seekers which can be correspondent to the hypothesis that there is a weak correlation between higher AQ and Conflict Avoiders.
2. There is a strong correlation between higher AQ and Conflict Avoiders which can be correspondent to the hypothesis that there is a weak correlation between higher AQ and Conflict Seekers.
3. There is no relevant correlation between the AQ and Conflict styles.

It is notorious that people cannot always influence what occurs, they can only have some sort of reaction to it. The first premise means that people with higher AQ are more resilient and have more control over how they react to life events, but also that they are more prone to conflict. AQ is a major player in the workplace. It fuels capacity, energy, optimism, and ability to attain goals. It increases performance and productivity, but there is a question regarding the implication that would mean that Conflict Seekers face every challenge with ease and openness.

The second premise means that those strong minded, resilient people are actually the ones who avoid disputes and choose harmony over confrontation and resolution. Even though there might be some understanding that there can only be one way of dealing with a conflict, which is addressing it, author Amy Gallo (2017) describes four equally possible choices: Deal with it subtly or address it directly, exit the relationship or do not act. Therefore, the avoiding position of “do nothing” is still a conceived way of handling a dispute. When one decides to do nothing, it means either do not speak to a co-worker, ignore a remark, or just leave and continue working away as usual. This method for handling conflict seems simple and requires little effort but should not be mistaken as a pretext. It might be a wise decision, particularly if confronting the problem feels riskier than it might be worth. Therefore, it is a conscious choice and not an automatic tendency. It comes with the risk of having

the problem resurface or build up to an unexpected response. Making the decision to leave a dispute, either temporarily or permanently, demands resilience which is now correlated to AQ.

The last hypothesis is that there is no relevant correlation between the two factors. There are too many variables and interpretations to adversities and conflicts to make a link.

## **6.1 CONFLICT STYLES THEORY RESULTS ANALYSIS**

Of course, it is uncommon for someone to either avoid conflict or actively seek it out. It is more likely that people change their approach depending on the situation (at work or at home), the person they are arguing with (a boss or a direct report), and other factors (is the company under intense investor scrutiny?, is anyone feeling stressed?). The questions in this survey are scenarios that anyone can imagine themselves in and even though no answer can fully describe each individual response to the conflict, there is always a more likely path or natural tendency towards which every person knows themselves to follow. In general, avoiders are people who steer clear of having conflicts, honour harmony and healthy connections, attempt to divert attention or appease others frequently, have concern for the sentiments of others and want to avoid upsetting team dynamics. They frequently make an effort to please the other person or shift the subject when they detect a disagreement coming on. They take initiative to avoid conflict before it arises and frequently have a reputation for being easy to get along with and believe that having good relationships with their co-workers is crucial. These co-workers hesitate because they worry that their viewpoint is not as valuable as someone else's which may hinder a positive collaboration. There can be an excessive amount of time spent talking to themselves or others—complaining, getting angry, reflecting on the past or worrying about the future.

The rational is that in situations as the ones presented in this study, they would tend to function as the following option in each scenario described:

**Table 7 – Scenarios in the survey and the typical attitudes of a Conflict Avoider**

11. At work, a colleague's bad attitude is affecting the rest of the team and everyone agrees that someone has to talk to them. You:
Dread having to do it yourself and have been thinking about it all day, unable to get other things done.
12. You have been asking for more financial resources for your project but it has been denied due to budget constraints, so you:
Feels a knot in your stomach and considers giving up on asking for this investment.
13. You are in a meeting and issues from the previous week might emerge in the conversation. Your thoughts are:
"If I can just keep a smile on my face at the meeting, people will understand that I don't want to talk about it"
14. A co-worker disagrees with you in front of your peers and question a deadline you laid out for the team. Your reactions is:
Think that they are trying to show who is in charge, making you look bad in front of the team. Afterwards, you replay the situation in your mind over and over again.

**Source: HBR guide to dealing with conflict (Gallo, 2017)**

The first question that can rise from this discussion is if there are more Conflict Avoiders or Conflict Seekers in general in workplaces. The majority of the individuals surveyed were classified as Conflict Seekers. There is no comparable data in the literature that can support this finding in terms of a general prevalence in bigger samples or the broad-spectrum population. However not integrated with the workers conflict styles regarded in this study, it was found that conflict is frequently avoided in workplaces, and individuals who start it may not even be aware they are doing so (Kolb and Bartunek, 1992; O'Connor *et al.*, 1993). Also, when conflict is seen as a harmonious condition disturbed, might mean that something is wrong, and that things are not as they should be, and this explains why a few people associate conflict with negativity. In opposition, some kinds of conflict, specifically those brought on by encountering opposing viewpoints, can really be beneficial since they foster innovation and excellence.

Since conflicts over different beliefs, passions, or ideals held by various team members inevitably happen, conflict is something that can be avoided, resolved, or handled without a rule of thumb that ranks conflict styles. In other words, the prevalence of one type of conflict style over the other does not mean much if the relationship with adversity and conflict is not clarified as negative or positive. This set of data alone does not translate into relevant acknowledgements without a further analysis on the workplace environment, job factors and the employees' personalities. For instance, people's relationship with conflict and/or adversity can be significantly impacted by the worker's emotional and psychological state and the workplace culture.

The relevance of the data comes about when the familiarity with individuals' tendencies is recognized. As it was found, only 50% of respondents had a certain level of knowledge about the Conflict Styles theory. From them a small percentage, only 17%, declared using the understanding of their conflict style in their personal and/or career development.

If we consider employees as an organization's most valuable resource, or "human capital", it is unfortunate that the majority of workers does not follow-up with their knowledge on that subject. Conflict related training in organizations helps enhance conflict management in the first stages of conflict and by the involved parties themselves. Proper training and self-assessment can have powerful outcomes on conflict resolution. Information regarding conflict in the workplace, conflict management and AQ resulting from various types of study has been swiftly spread throughout society. As Gilin Oore *et al.* (2015) concluded, abilities that contribute to a good conflict handling such as perspective-taking, psychological detachment, dual self- and other focused motivational states, and emotion regulation—can be assessed as dispositional tendencies or situationally changed with little amounts of training. Their research demonstrate how mind-set instructions may influence conflict behaviour and override dispositional inclinations. Therefore, these mindsets were considered to be highly trainable. According to the authors, most of the instructions just need a small amount of natural talent, a few minutes, and a little bit of desire to properly execute. Conflict efficacy can be greatly increased by taking on another person's viewpoint, thinking of a conflict in increasingly abstract or distant terms, concentrating on one's own and one's partner's interests, and cognitively reappraising a hostile attack.

On the one hand, it possible that people have other developing or coping strategies in place, however, there is also a concern that the growing insight into the subject has been left aside by employees and employers at the cost of well-being and occupational health. Another possibility is that employee training in conflict related knowledge and techniques could not result in practical use if the organization's conflict culture is more competitive.

By the results found, it can be speculated that Conflict Seekers, people who are more likely to address conflict directly, asking probing inquiries to determine the cause of the issues are also individuals who have the ability overcome internal (such as worry, fear, sadness, perfectionism, and low motivation) and external (such as peer pressure, interpersonal relationships, financial, and employment concerns) challenges in order to accomplish their goals. However, these characteristics are not exclusive to Seekers and people who prefer to shy away from disagreements and value harmony also show perseverance and resilience. Furthermore, because it is rare that someone will behave exclusively one way in all situations, it is acceptable that a person with a less marked or even extreme conflict tendency, neither towards Seeker or Avoider altogether, demonstrates higher AQ scores and navigates smoothly through workplace and life's challenges. This is comparable with the results found when correlating the two styles with their correspondents AQ results.

Gilin Oore *et al.* (2015) analysed the positive individual and organizational characteristics that are linked to a rise in people responding well to organizational conflict and their findings supports the idea above mentioned that flexibility and adaptability is key. The relationship with conflict is facilitated by people's cognitive flexibility in shifting between different points of view or, more generally, in being able to "zoom out" of a conflict scenario. There is a positive outcome when there is an adaptability in individuals' conflict style to the situation, emotional control, cognitive flexibility, and a balance of self- and other-focused attention. In addition, the same study argues that a balanced attention on oneself and the opposing party (or parties) in conflict is another personal trait that influences effective responses to organizational conflict.

The data found is also in accordance with the dual concern concept, where a conflict's behaviour falls into one of four main quadrants when two motivations—satisfying one's own interests vs the interests of others—are combined (Rhoades and Carnevale, 1999). Low self-interest coupled with high other-interest motivates an accommodating or obliging approach; high self-interest coupled

with low other-interest motivates a competitive or forcing approach; jointly high self- and other-interest motivates a collaborative or integrating approach; and low self-interest coupled with high other-interest motivates the avoidance of conflict (Pruitt, 1983; Rahim, 1983; Thomas and Kilmann, 1974). Accordingly, an avoidant strategy is typically insufficient to achieve long-term conflict navigation success. When someone is extremely concerned with preserving a good rapport and not, conflict is not adequately addressed. At the other end, a combative or coercive approach to addressing conflicts prevents people from forming connections. Flexibility sources conflict resolution which can provide the groundwork for moving forward in a way that is mutually satisfactory.

History of habits shapes peoples' relationship to conflict. If someone was shamed or criticized in a discussion early in their career, they might decide to stay quiet and out of concern for their own safety and harmony. Or perhaps your first mentor liked to spar with other employees to show them there was nothing to be afraid of. Businesses also have their set of customs, whereas certain groups of people also operate under their own unique set of guidelines. Some workplaces might expect conflicts to be managed in private meetings or emails because open conflicts are not welcome. On the contrary, it is possible that some companies people are expected to be used to settle disputes and instead, conflict is frequently discussed more openly. Making an informed decision about how to oversee a conflict will be made easier if there is awareness on the natural communication style. For instance, if there is an Avoider involved, their natural tendency might be to do nothing. Knowing, however, that this is the most common behaviour, the reluctance to manage problems can be addressed and the people involved in the conflict can help overcome this tendency.

While seekers are eager to argue with one another and have directness and honesty as important values, they can vociferously support their own viewpoint and become impatient with those who aren't upfront or truthful and do not mind causing controversy. Avoiders function as if being forceful will result in negative consequences, therefore, they may choose to approach conflicts in a less direct manner. In fact, they may try to avoid conflict rather than seeking it out because they are aware of the social costs associated with doing so. Elshaug, Knott, and Mellington (2004) emphasize that any solution to a workplace dispute must be examined from multiple angles, including an individual's psychological and physical well-being, an organization's concerns with absenteeism and lost productivity, and society's costs related to mental health and family well-being. There are higher

chances that wiser decisions about how to handle a dispute and, if it is necessary to confront it in the first place, have a constructive conversation, by being aware of which style is present amongst the parts.

This work does not intent to analyse the conditions that form each persons' individual tendency to deal with conflict, nor to look at differences concerning age, gender or cultural differences. However, it is important to observe patterns and tendencies within styles and approaches in order to better deal with conflicts in the workplace. Employees that were considered to be seekers up until a previous performance review where they were called out for an "aggressive" approach may be facing difficulties and frustration due to this misinterpretation of style. Or this type of people might be in lack of a genuine and honest input because their co-workers are frequently terrified of them and do not want to set them off. A conflict seeker can be perceived as difficult and combative people and are in risk of not receiving the critical feedback required for the routinely work. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that there is not a worse or better style. The assessment and evaluation proposed it is only to help people manage conflicts in a more structured way.

**Table 8 – Scenarios in the survey and the typical attitudes of a conflict Seeker**

11. At work, a colleague's bad attitude is affecting the rest of the team and everyone agrees that someone has to talk to them. You:
Has no problem telling them yourself and get it over the way at once.
12. You have been asking for more financial resources for your project but it has been denied due to budget constraints, so you:
Know this is the right choice, even if the board doesn't realize it yet so you will keep insisting on it.
13. You are in a meeting and issues from the previous week might emerge in the conversation. Your thoughts are:
"Why can't we get into this right now? Everyone should just lay out what they think. Why are we being so nice?"
14. A co-worker disagrees with you in front of your peers and question a deadline you laid out for the team. Your reactions is:



Make sure to shut them down immediately also to show others not to cross that line with you.

Source: HBR guide to dealing with conflict (Gallo, 2017)

## 6.2 AQ DISCUSSION

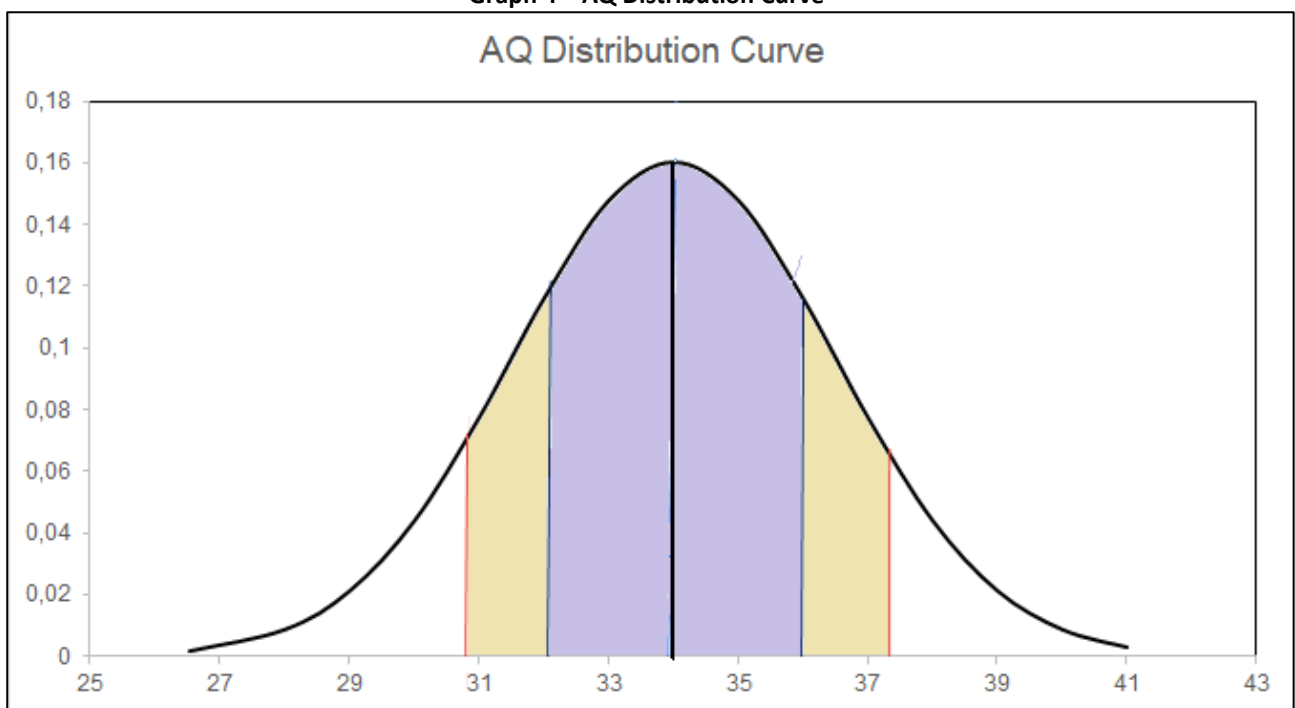
The average AQ results found (n=34) are lower than the global mean for AQ scores, which is representatively n=39 (Venkatesh and Shivaranjani, 2016). According to Venkatesh and Shivaranjani, (2016), AQ standards differ from group to group according on the industry and employment. For instance, a common observation is that people who work in traditionally adversity-rich professions tend to have the highest average AQ. Even though it was not the scope of this research to look into the reasons why individuals develop resilience and the relationship between the AQ and their workplace type, the results found might reflect that the respondents are part of a group that possess more stable occupations since the literature argues that these individuals tend to score below the global mean. Additionally, the idea that people tend to choose occupations based on their AQ can be further studied and verified.

The factors that foster resilience depend on both the individual and the environment in which they are embedded. According to Ungar (2004) there are three groups of mechanisms generators of resilience. The first, known as a compensatory factor, refers to the personal qualities of people who are able to balance off (or lessen) their exposure to risk. Examples include faith, a positive attitude toward life, defensive personalities, and internal locus of control. The theory of AQ highlight intelligence, problem-solving skills, strong communication skills, and a sense of responsibility. The second group identified by Ungar (2004) is challenge factors. It represents mechanisms that help individuals become more resilient when risk can be managed and increase their capacity for adaptation. The author uses diseases, losses experienced by the individual over the course of their life, family breakups as examples of how trauma may act as a protective mechanism against the stress of upcoming crises. In these situations, the difficulty to which the person was exposed serves as knowledge to face future difficult situations. Finally, the third mechanism includes protective factors that interact with challenge factors to lessen the likelihood of adverse outcomes resulting from adverse conditions. They can be viewed as procedures or mechanisms that support individual

growth. Examples are family stability, belonging to safe neighbourhoods, and personal coping mechanisms.

The average AQ score (n=34) is the mean in the distribution curve presented below. Most peoples' AQ scores are concentrated in the middle part of the curve, around the mean. The amount of people with scores near the extremities, very low or very high AQ scores, are considerably lower. In fact, 25% of respondents are exactly in the mean AQ score. 33% scored above the average and 41% under.

**Graph 4 – AQ Distribution Curve**



Source: The author

The majority of groups exhibit a typical bell-shaped distribution of AQ scores when tested (Venkatesh and Shivaranjani, 2016). As expected, results showed this constant and symmetric distribution on both sides of the median. A diversity of continuous data sets exhibit this curve in the shape of a bell when compiled and graphically represented in nature. It was not the purpose of this work to create such a tool, however, it is valid to note that having this curve in hands, researchers can compare scores and make inferences. For instance, using this normally distributed population data and one individual score, it is possible to calculate how it relates to the mean. In other words, how much above or under the average this person scored in that specific population.

This is important because if compared with any random population sample, a person is never correctly placed. As discussed, AQ varies with the culture, environment, and many other variables. Based on vocation and industry, the AQ means change from group to group. Therefore, AQ should be compared within fields. This work started the discussion with the general perception that people who work in typically adversity-rich occupations tend to have the highest average AQ scores, and that this might support the concept that people prefer to pick employment based on their AQ and at the same time that AQ is a product of their activities and, therefore, it can be built.

The first step to enhancing peoples' resilience to hardship, raising capacity, and ultimately raising overall AQ is to understand them. According to Stoltz (1997), the Adversity Quotient (AQ) was developed to measure the unconscious pattern of response to adversity and to raise it means to assist people to become more valuable at work. A study that analysed the effect of Adversity Quotient (AQ) on Problem-Solving Ability (Fitri, 2017) found that the subjects with above the average AQ have enhanced problem-solving abilities. It concludes that subjects with higher AQ will not readily give up until they are able to overcome a particular difficulty because they believe that it is an opportunity to accomplish their objective. Dr. Paul G. Stoltz lists the following as the main justifications for why it is important to increase one's capacity for dealing with adversity: AQ can be assessed and tracked against performance or other important variables in a meaningful and reliable manner. It is possible to permanently strengthen and rewire AQ. AQ is a natural complement to existing learning, performance, evaluation, and change programs, not an add-on. AQ can be applied to a wide range of applications because it is an adaptable technology rather than a program.

### **6.2.1 ADVERSITY QUOTIENT BREAKDOWN**

The Control factor means that those people who discover some aspect of the issue they can control, even in circumstances that seem overwhelming or beyond of their control have higher AQs. They feel they have a lot more power and influence in difficult circumstances than do people with lower AQs who mainly react as if they have little to no control and frequently give up. As mentioned, Control was the aspect of the AQP with higher marks in the sampled survey and it is a reflection of how these individuals work through the day-to-day challenges. Control starts with the belief that the undesirable circumstance can be changed, and it can be said the most significant element of AQ.

Action against conflict depends on responsibility and accountability. Therefore, higher AQ individuals believe themselves responsible for handling circumstances, regardless of their origin. Ownership, which also included Accountability, was found to be the second highest scored subcategory in the survey. Responsibility and ownership have a dual effect on AQ. From one side, people with lower AQs avoid responsibility and frequently feel mistreated and powerless. They see themselves as the cause of the hardship which to a certain extent, is a positive feature because when someone believes that they are to blame for their difficulties, they will also believe that they are the ones who can make things better. However, when taken too far, it can cause despair and demoralization and make a person dysfunctional. The full abdication of responsibility and belief that one is the victim of outside forces is the other extreme reaction at the other end of the spectrum. Since the individual feels they are neither the cause or the source of the hardship, there is a feeling of actual or supposed helplessness to do anything about it. On the one hand, this might be advantageous since it helps keep someone from being hopeless and taking responsibility for everything that goes wrong. On the other hand, because the source of the difficulty is elsewhere, it may provide the person with a justification for doing nothing to overcome it. Adversity is managed by people with high AQ in a balanced manner. They accept responsibility for their actions, learn from their failures, and put in more effort. Low AQ people frequently over-blame themselves, have negative self-concepts, and feel powerless. Even when they have the ability to act, they typically choose not to.

Reed and Stoltz (2011) emphasize that everyone has someone to answer to at work. Every company owes its clients something and staff members are held accountable to one another. The board is answerable to the owners, while the chief executive is answerable to the board. In truly great businesses, the client is everyone's boss. Accountability extends beyond the boundaries of a work description and develops into a deeper sense of obligation to stand up and change problems over which an employee may have some possible impact over it. Masters of responsibility do not let titles and positions prevent them from adding value whenever and wherever they can. Ownership and accountability speak to the temptation of claiming credit when things go well, but also to the mistake of assigning blame when things do not go well.

How much of someone's job or personal life are impacted by one situation and how far a difficulty goes beyond the current circumstance is regarded as the factor Reach. Efficiency and effectiveness

in issue solving depend on managing the repercussions and limiting the impact of adversity. Those with higher AQs keep obstacles and problems at bay and prevent them from contaminating their productive work environments and personal lives. A setback in one area can spread to other, unrelated areas and become destructive in people with lower AQs who have a tendency to exaggerate situations.

Finally, the perception of how long a hardship can last relates to the ability to preserve optimism and requires the ability to see past even the most significant challenges. Higher AQ individuals possess the extraordinary capacity to remain hopeful and upbeat in the face of the most arduous challenges. Adversity is perceived by people with lower AQs as lasting continuously, if not permanently.

### **6.3 AQ AND CONFLICT STYLES PEARSON 'R' CORRELATION COEFFICIENT ANALYSIS**

Contrary to the Avoider-Seeker Conflict Style, the AQ defines then that the higher the quotient, the better. Therefore, it is possible to understand that there is no reasonable rationale to make a linear association between higher AQ and neither of the conflict styles as the results from the research shows. Further analysing the reasons why an instant correlation cannot be made and, ultimately, a very important understanding and premise of this study is that conflict and adversity are not interchangeable concepts. Meaning that people with high adversity quotients are expected to be more equipped to endure and sustain adversity which is not equivalent to say that people are more prepared to deal with conflicts or, better said, more willing to face conflict.

Stoltz (1997) provided a three-level concept of adversity named Societal Adversity, Workplace Adversity and Individual Adversity. At the social level adversity stems from the idea that society is undergoing rapid change. Phoolka and Kaur (2012) list a great number of examples of societal adversity that express ways that people feel exposed as members of society. It includes drug misuse, drunkenness, human trafficking, the trade in human beings for their organs, criminality against young people, child maltreatment, adolescent pregnancies, teen suicides, domestic violence, sexual assaults, and a decline in morals are prevalent in society globally. The problems have been made worse by technology and information overload. Children and teens are becoming dependent on television, the internet, and entertainment devices, which pulls them away from the ties,

connections, and morals that they may pick up from their parents and grandparents. Couples are pursuing their own jobs, which not only takes up the valuable time they used to spend with their children but also pulls husband and wife farther apart, increasing the divorce rate because they seldom find any quality time to spend together. The legitimacy of long-held institutions like the legal system and educational systems decline, deteriorated living conditions. Natural resources are running out, significant species are becoming extinct, air, water, soil, and noise pollution is increasing, forests are being carelessly cut, storms and tsunamis are wiping out communities, and global warming has grown into an unmanageable threat. There are hate crimes, hatred against minorities and different religions everywhere. The recession is gripping the global economy. All of them indicate socioeconomic hardship.

Adversity at work originates by the idea that the only thing that stays the same is change. That is what individuals throughout the world are experiencing at work. The feeling among employees is that they must always be in alert to adapt to their surroundings. The era of social security, lifetime employment, regular salary and bonuses, pensions, and old age benefits is over. As a result of pay reductions made in the name of cost-cutting, downsizing, restructuring, reengineering, mergers, acquisitions, takeovers, competition, etc., today's workers live in a very unstable environment. To survive in the workplace, they must adapt to rapidly changing technologies, update their knowledge and abilities, and demonstrate the ability to multitask and possess numerous skills. They are then confronted with various moral challenges at work (Phoolka and Kaur, 2012).

Finally, individual adversity begins at the social level, permeates the workplace, and ultimately burdens the individual. Any systemic tragedy eventually affects individuals as well. For instance, hate crimes, a social evil, result in beatings or fatalities of people, leaving behind grieving and bitter families. An ordinary man is forced to fight for his rights by corruption in government agencies, or it drives him to the point where he wants to remain silent and observe calmly any wrongdoing in society. Whether or not he is a contributing factor to that societal hardship, every person is susceptible to it and on the receiving end of it (Phoolka and Kaur, 2012).]

Conflict on the other hand is the result of individuals occasional differences and inherent individuality. People are not exactly the same and will approach a task differently depending on their expectations, goals, and preferred working methods is a basic part of collaborative work. They

will each have a different amount of time to devote to solving a problem, as well as varied ideas about what the issue actually is. At times, these discrepancies will cause conflict. Easterbrook *et al.* (1993) states that it is simple to list instances where the majority of individuals would agree that there is a disagreement (for example: a strike; a lawsuit; a war) but that conflict cannot be easily defined. There are many diverse perspectives on what precisely makes conflict in the broad sense. Pondy (1967) outlines the main conflict types in formal organizations as disputes between interest groups competing for limited resources, disputes along any vertical axis in the organizational hierarchy and disputes between parties in a lateral or functional relationship, and in particular, the issues of coordination.

Also, this conceptualization brings to the discussion the understanding that dealing or enduring an adversity does not translate into seeking or avoiding it. Adversity, then, cannot be considered to be a synonym of conflict. Adversity relates to the everyday struggles to keep up with the expectations of today. The resilience of managing the chaos, ambiguity, and complexity that humans encounter on a daily basis is the gap between what it is and what is needed. Adversity then is understood as an affliction or bad luck which everyone can suffer. Typically happening suddenly and affecting anybody or anything—a relationship, a career, a loved one, one's health, one's employment, one's financial situation, a business, etc. Every challenge in life can be characterized as adversity, but how one approaches these challenges determines how easy or difficult life becomes. The ordinary troubles in life will not be a problem at all, and the bigger ones will be simpler to manage if one has the ability to transform adversity into a challenge rather than being depressed over every disturbance happening around.

As the results showed, it is more likely that the interaction between the variants is not consequential or linear but otherwise connected. Every person's adversity is distinct since it is experienced first-hand and what can be a tragedy for one person might merely be a hiccup for another. In other words, a person can only change their view and perception about an adversity and AQ refers to that, however, it does not relate to whether a person will be more inclined to pursue this issue or not. Hence, it differs from the tendency regarding conflicts and quick assumptions should not be made. The fact that a direct linear correlation cannot be found, makes it even more evident that people's relationship with adversity and conflict are to be studied and analysed individually.

## 6.4 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The first major limitation to this study regards the concept that each individual holds in terms of adversity and conflict. Previous experiences, company culture and personality shape the way people look at situations and define how they act upon them. Conflict is commonly understood to be a fight, a struggle, or the collision of opposing principles. However, this everyday view is flawed when there is a confusion between conflict issues which is the disagreement itself and the people involved in the issue, their feelings and cognitions, and most importantly, what the conflict outcomes might be (positive or negative). Therefore, conflict should not necessarily be described as struggle and combat and issues in conflict must be separated from within-person and between-person experiences for analytical purposes.

Another limitation has to do with the questionnaires' reach. It is likely that the sampled population is composed of highly educated workers, multiple of them that might have studied the themes during the same master's degree course, living and working in Ireland and, therefore, showing a pattern related to this country and not others. Also, because there is no incentive to the participation, what motivates people to answer might be their interest in the topic covered, level of training, and emotional readiness to participate. Confidence in the data is a concern because many the answers are impossible to verify. On the other hand, the online application of the questionnaire exerts less pressure to elicit responses, consequently, respondents have more time to gather the information, and it should be anticipated that they will do it with higher informational quality.

Even though the correlation Pearson ' $r$ ' coefficient is one of the most widely used technique for evaluating the correlation between two quantitative variables it presumes a normal distribution of the two samples and the linear behaviour of the relationship between the variables. Even in the face of abundant evidence, failure to observe these premises results in ambiguous conclusions. Therefore, it is possible that other types of relationships can be observed between the theories.



## 7 CONCLUSIONS

Decades of research have established deep, thorough and comprehensive understanding of conflict, conflict management and all sorts of personal/career development instruments for workers. However, unfortunately, cross-studies and interface between different tools such as this study are still scarce. Even though the study of conflict in the workplace and empowering strategies are vast, as this research found, even when familiarized with a theory, most workers still do not apply them to their reality. The reasons for that were not addressed but the importance of building resilience and self-awareness were thoroughly explored by this paper. This is why such a study is so important, it not only collects information but also, it spreads, even if only somewhat superficial, knowledge about the explored subject.

AQ profile has undergone thorough testing and exhibits no bias based on age, gender, or race showing itself to be one of the most reliable resilience measurement tools currently in use. The AQ framework has been created for both effective usage by individuals and in corporate settings as tool to help people increase their capacities and capabilities so they can accomplish more. It can be used to assist organizations and aspiring leaders in building their resilience and improve performance.

There are many obstacles and problems in the world to be faced and success in life and in the workplace should not be only measured by IQ and EQ. As Venkatesh and Shivaranjani (2016) concluded, people with high AQ scores recover more quickly from harsh experiences than people with low AQ scores. High AQ scores are consistently higher performers in their work profiles and are in line for promotions to advance their professions with a positive attitude, passion, and drive to preserve their vitality, health, and happiness as these factors leads to first-rate accomplishments. Since performance heavily depends on an individual's capacity to handle conflicts, their AQ and Conflict Style which it all comes together in a deep self-awareness. Nevertheless, since this knowledge may be developed and sharpened, it is ideal to begin understanding it as soon as possible. The fact that few people are familiarized with these tools means that it would be extremely beneficial to have it included in corporations' trainings and its existence promoted.

This paper also evidenced what the literature has already established that the way people handle difficult situations have repercussions for employers and society at large. The value of a process for

resolving employment conflicts has long been recognized by scholars of organizational behaviour and industrial relations. De Dreu, Van Dierendonck and Dijkstra (2004) key finding was that conflict at work is bad for people's wellbeing, especially when it involves relationships and is in a compliant, passive way. At the same time, conflict appeared to have fewer severe effects on personal wellbeing when it was task-related and handled in a cooperative, proactive manner. Organizations are thereby responsible for the way conflicts are handled and how employees approach such situations, and it is essential to not only know, but put to use expertise such as the AQ and peoples' conflict style tendency.

This research findings help support the idea that positive results stem from workplaces where people are given opportunities to have their concerns heard and treated seriously, as well as perceptions of fairness. Organizations are by their very nature competitive and conflict-prone; however, conflict may occasionally be constructive and good. Companies, HR employees, staff and their leaders must implement processes and manage relationships so that interpersonal conflict is addressed, and all members participate in task-related discussions that they approach in a proactive and cooperative manner. This research shows that these actions must be more than paperwork or checking boxes, there is a immense benefit for people and companies if they are more than just an idea and become practice.

It was found that people who do not shy away from conflict, Conflict Seekers, are also people who possess high levels of resilience (high AQ). The correlation between Conflict Seeker style and AQ was found to be negatively correlated in a moderate way meaning that the more Conflict Seeker characteristics found, the lower was the score for AQ. People who avoid conflict, Conflict Avoiders, present both moderate and high AQ scores. A strong and negative linear correlation was found between Conflict Avoiders and the AQ score which translates into a higher AQ with less Conflict Avoider characteristics. This suggests that a mid-way in terms of conflict style or even a more fluid and transitional style is more associated with high AQ than any more extreme or defined style.

The methods used by individuals to approach and manage their differences and personal difficulties are crucial for changing conflicts and routinary situations into productive rather than dysfunctional circumstances. Without a constructive approach, task-related disagreements are prone to turn into tense personality conflicts. This research could be reproduced among diverse sociocultural groups

while taking into account various moderator variables, such as gender, age, years of experience, and work fields, in order to further support the study's conclusions. These further comparative studies provide helpful information on the level of the present study's findings' external validity.

## **APPENDIX**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **Part 1**

#### **CORRELATION BETWEEN ADVERSITY QUOTIENT (AQ) AND CONFLICT STYLE IN THE WORKPLACE**

Thanks for taking the time to fill out this form.

All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. Your responses will be confidential and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address or IP address.

The survey's questions will focus on assessing people's approaches to difficult situations using two different background tools: the Adversity Response Profile (ARP), given by Dr. Paul Stoltz and Conflict Style tendencies, adapted from the work of Amy Gallo.

The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only as part of the Master's in Dispute Resolution dissertation at Independent College Dublin.

There are 14 questions to be answered, requesting an estimated 5 minutes' completion time.

Your participation is voluntary and by sending in your responses, you agree to participate in the survey and give this project permission to use your answers.

However, you may decide to withdraw from the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to request that any data you have supplied be withdrawn.

## Part 2

Imagine the following events as if they were happening right now

- The first ten questions have answers that represent how affected you are in each of these situations in a linear scale. To assist you in understanding the linear scale, a short sentence for each option has been added to the questions.

***Select the number that better represents your answer to each of the related questions.***

- The last four questions present only two options.

***Choose the answer that better describe your natural tendency even if the option does not fully express your conduct.***

1. You suffer a financial setback. To what extent can you influence this situation?

1 Not at all

2 Slightly

3 Only partially, equivalent to external influences

4 For the most part, but not entirely

5 Completely

2. Someone you respect ignores your attempt to discuss an important issue. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving this situation?

1 Not responsible at all

2 Slightly responsible

3 Only partially, equivalent to external influences

4 For the most part, but not entirely

5 Completely responsible

3. You are criticized for a big project that you just completed. The consequences of this situation will:

1 Last forever

2 Last a long time until it is over

3 Normally pass

4 Slightly bother me before it passes

5 Quickly pass

4. You accidentally delete an important email. The consequences of this situation will:

1 Last forever

2 Last a long time until it is over

3 Normally pass

4 Slightly bother me before it passes

5 Quickly pass

5. You are unable to take a much-needed vacation. The consequences of this situation will:

1 Last forever

2 Last a long time until it is over

3 Normally pass

4 Slightly bother me before it passes

5 Quickly pass

6. You hit every red light on your way to an important appointment. The consequences of this situation will:

1 Affect all aspects of my life

2 For the most part affect other aspects of my life, but not entirely

3 Only partially affect other aspects of my life, equivalent to other influences

4 Slightly affect other aspects of my life

5 Be limited to this situation

7. After extensive searching, you cannot find an important document. The consequences of this situation will:

1 Last forever

2 Last a long time until it is over

3 Normally pass

4 Slightly bother me before it passes

5 Quickly pass

8. Your workplace is understaffed. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving this situation?

1 Not responsible at all

2 Slightly responsible

3 Only partially, equivalent to external influences

4 For the most part, but not entirely

5 Completely responsible

9. You are not exercising regularly though you know you should. To what extent can you influence this situation?

1 Not at all

2 Slightly

3 Only partially, equivalent to external influences

4 For the most part, but not entirely

5 Completely

10. Your organization is not meeting its goals. To what extent do you feel responsible for improving this situation?

1 Not responsible at all

2 Slightly responsible

3 Only partially, equivalent to external influences

4 For the most part, but not entirely

5 Completely responsible

11. At work, a colleague's bad attitude is affecting the rest of the team and everyone agrees that someone has to talk to them. You:

0 Dread having to do it yourself and have been thinking about it all day, unable to get other things done.

1 Has no problem telling them yourself and get it over the way at once.

12. You have been asking for more financial resources for your project, but it has been denied due to budget constraints, so you:

0 Feels a knot in your stomach and considers giving up on asking for this investment.

1 Know this is the right choice, even if the board doesn't realize it yet so you will keep insisting on it

13. You are in a meeting and issues from the previous week might emerge in the conversation. Your thoughts are:

0 "If I can just keep a smile on my face at the meeting, people will understand that I don't want to talk about it"

1 "Why can't we get into this right now? Everyone should just lay out what they think. Why are we being so nice?"

14. A co-worker disagrees with you in front of your peers and question a deadline you laid out for the team. Your reactions is:

0 Think that they are trying to show who is in charge, making you look bad in front of the team. Afterwards, you replay the situation in your mind over and over again.

1 Make sure to shut them down immediately also to show others not to cross that line with you.

### Part 3

The term "Adversity Quotient" was first used by Dr. Paul Stoltz in his 1997 book "Adversity Quotient: Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities". It is a theory and method frequently used worldwide to assess and improve a person's capacity for overcoming adversity.

Are you familiarized or have you heard about the term Adversity Quotient and the Adversity Response Profile (ARP) developed by Dr. Paul G Stoltz?

- No, this is the first time I read about this topic
- Yes, I heard or read about it before, but did not take the test or did anything with the information
- Yes, I know about the topic, I have taken the test and/or I use it actively in my personal and/or career development



Amy Gallo is a contributing editor at Harvard Business Review, where she writes on a variety of subjects such as professional development, managing oneself, and leading others. One of her books is The HBR Guide to Dealing with Conflict that outlines a simple procedure for handling ambiguous circumstances and helps determine when people are typically seekers or avoiders when it comes to conflict.

Are you familiarized or have you heard about the Conflict Seeker and Conflict avoider terminology mentioned by Amy Gallo in The HBR Guide to Dealing with Conflict?

- No, this is the first time I read about this topic
- Yes, I heard or read about it before, but did do anything with the information
- Yes, I know about the topic and my natural conflict style tendency and I use it actively in my personal and/or career development

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