



## THE EFFECT OF ADVERSITY QUOTIENT ON WORKFORCE AGILITY WITH PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AS A MEDIATION VARIABLE

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effect of Adversity Quotient on Workforce Agility with Perceived Organizational Support as a mediating variable. The proposed hypothesis is that adversity quotient affects workforce agility in civil servants with perceived organizational support as a mediating variable. The population consists of 3,083 civil servants in the Pidie Jaya Regency government environment. The sample consisted of 253 civil servants, using cluster sampling technique. This study employed a quantitative method with three scales: workforce agility scale, adversity quotient scale, and perceived organizational support scale. In this study, each variable will be analysed or CFA (confirmatory factor analysis) will be conducted with a critical loading factor value of 0.7. The hypothesis testing was carried out using SmartPLS (Partial Least Square) version 3.0 software. The results indicate that (1) there is an effect of adversity quotient on perceived organizational support among civil servants, with a t-statistic value of 47.031 > 1.96 and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. (2) There is an effect of perceived organizational support on workforce agility among civil servants, with a t-statistic value of 20.249 > 1.96 and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. (3) There is an effect of adversity quotient on workforce agility among civil servants, with a t-statistic value of 43.291 > 1.96 and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. (4) There is an effect of adversity quotient on workforce agility among civil servants with perceived organizational support as a mediating variable, with a t-statistic value of 18.558 > 1.96 and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary organizational environment is increasingly characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), a condition that demands rapid responsiveness and continuous adaptation from organizations across sectors. In such a disruptive era, public sector organizations can no longer operate with rigid bureaucratic logics or mechanistic structures that prioritize procedural stability over responsiveness. Instead, they require human resources capable of operating with speed, flexibility, and adaptive capacity to respond effectively to dynamic changes (ESDM, 2021). Within this context, civil servants are expected to function not merely as administrative executors but as agile actors who can navigate uncertainty, support innovation, and sustain organizational performance in the face of ongoing transformation.

The accelerating pace of change has heightened organizational awareness of the strategic importance of talent. Organizations increasingly compete to attract, develop, and retain highly talented employees, either through external recruitment or internal training and cadre development. The shortage of agile talent has emerged as a serious challenge to long-term organizational growth and sustainability (Alavi, 2020). Modern organizations require employees who are capable of continuous learning, proactive problem-solving, and adaptive improvement in their daily work processes. Workforce agility enables organizations to respond more effectively to environmental turbulence by enhancing flexibility, innovation, and speed in decision-making and execution (Saeed et al., 2022). Empirical studies further demonstrate that workforce agility contributes to key strategic outcomes, including efficiency, timeliness, quality, and task diversity, thereby supporting organizations in achieving their broader objectives (Bratianu, 2014; Ghozali, 2011; Hair et al., 2011).

In increasingly competitive and complex environments, organizational success depends on the ability to anticipate change, respond quickly to shifting policies and technologies, and systematically adapt to evolving stakeholder demands. Scholars argue that workforce agility represents a critical intervention variable in predicting adaptive performance across diverse organizational contexts (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2021). While adaptive performance refers to employees' behavioral adjustments in response to change, workforce agility emphasizes proactive initiative, flexibility, and the capacity to overcome difficulties throughout the adaptation process (Shahraki et al., 2021; Phoolka & Kaur, 2022). This distinction is particularly relevant in the public sector, where civil servants are frequently required to implement policy reforms and organizational restructuring under conditions of institutional uncertainty and heightened public accountability.

Within the Indonesian public sector, organizational restructuring initiatives have generated significant turbulence. Research by Salsabila & Utami (2023) shows that bureaucratic restructuring within the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (PANRB) introduced new work cultures and organizational behaviors, shortened command chains, and redistributed authority and responsibilities. Although these reforms aimed to enhance organizational agility and accelerate public service delivery, many civil servants were found to be insufficiently prepared to cope with the resulting changes. This lack of preparedness has manifested in resistance to change, confusion regarding new roles, and challenges in adapting to functional position transfers. Such conditions underscore the need for individual and organizational capacities that support workforce agility within public institutions.

One critical individual factor associated with agility is adversity quotient (AQ), defined as an individual's ability to endure, manage, and overcome difficulties. Agility is widely recognized as a key determinant of organizational effectiveness, yet technology alone is insufficient to achieve agility without a workforce capable of using it adaptively (Putri & Pitafi, 2019; Sherehiy & Karwowski, 2014). Individuals with high adversity quotient are more likely to transform obstacles into opportunities, persist under pressure, and seek constructive solutions rather than disengagement or blame (Fari et al., 2023). Empirical evidence suggests that individuals with higher AQ demonstrate stronger resilience, problem-solving capacity, and endurance in the face of organizational change, making AQ a crucial psychological resource for workforce agility (Thani et al., 2022; Worley & Lawler, 2010).

Beyond individual characteristics, external and organizational factors play a decisive role in shaping workforce agility. Organizational environments that promote empowerment, teamwork, and supportive leadership have been shown to enhance employees' adaptive capabilities (Vliet Molen, 2019). Perceived organizational support (POS), grounded in social exchange theory (Uyun, 2019) and the norm of reciprocity (Wei et al., 2020), reflects employees' beliefs regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Hameel & Mhaibes, 2022; Indainanto et al., 2023). When employees perceive strong organizational support, they are more likely to reciprocate with higher commitment, engagement, and adaptive behaviors that benefit organizational goals (Das & Suar, 2022).

Recent empirical findings further reinforce the importance of perceived organizational support in fostering workforce agility. Storme et al (2020) report a strong positive correlation between POS and workforce agility ( $r = 0.72$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with regression analysis indicating that POS significantly predicts workforce agility ( $\beta = 0.57$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and explains 56% of its variance. These findings support social exchange theory by demonstrating that employees who feel supported by their organization tend to respond with increased flexibility, adaptability, and proactive engagement. In the context of civil servants facing continuous policy and system changes, organizational support can serve as a critical buffer that enables individuals to maintain agility despite uncertainty and pressure.

Despite the growing body of research on workforce agility, empirical studies that simultaneously examine the role of adversity quotient and perceived organizational support particularly among civil servants remain limited. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the effect of adversity quotient on

workforce agility among civil servants, with perceived organizational support serving as a mediating variable. By integrating individual resilience and organizational support perspectives, this study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how public sector institutions can cultivate an agile workforce capable of responding effectively to the challenges of a VUCA environment.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative explanatory research design aimed at examining the causal relationship between adversity quotient and workforce agility among civil servants, with perceived organizational support functioning as a mediating variable. The quantitative approach was chosen to allow for systematic measurement of latent psychological constructs and to test the proposed structural relationships empirically. The study was conducted within the context of public sector organizations, which are currently undergoing continuous bureaucratic reform, organizational restructuring, and digital transformation, thereby requiring a workforce capable of responding adaptively to dynamic and uncertain conditions.

The population of the study comprised all civil servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN) employed by the Government of Pidie Jaya Regency, totaling 3,083 individuals. Given the size and organizational complexity of the population, a cluster sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness while maintaining feasibility. The population was first grouped into clusters based on organizational units within the local government structure, consisting of offices and agencies. From a total of 242 organizational units, five clusters were selected, from which 253 civil servants participated as respondents. This sampling strategy was considered appropriate because it reflects the hierarchical and functional distribution of civil servants across governmental units while reducing sampling bias associated with simple random sampling in large bureaucratic settings.

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire distributed directly to respondents in the selected clusters. All measurement instruments employed a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4), which was chosen to minimize neutral responses and encourage clearer attitudinal positions. The questionnaire consisted of three main scales corresponding to the study variables. Workforce agility was operationalized as a pattern of positive adaptive work behavior characterized by proactive action, flexibility, and resilience in responding to unpredictable organizational changes. This construct was measured using 28 items adapted from the workforce agility dimensions proposed by Athamneh A. Mohamed Husni and Juraifa Jais (2023), encompassing proactivity, adaptability, and resilience (Sikumbang et al., 2024).

Adversity quotient was defined as an individual's capacity to withstand, manage, and overcome difficulties in order to achieve desired outcomes. This variable was measured using a 44-item scale developed based on the CORE dimensions control, origin and ownership, reach, and endurance which capture cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to adversity. Perceived organizational support was conceptualized as employees' perceptions regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Measurement of this construct employed an 18-item scale based on the framework proposed by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2014), covering perceptions of fairness, supervisor support, and organizational rewards and working conditions. For all scales, unfavorable items were reverse-coded to ensure consistent interpretation of higher scores as reflecting stronger levels of the construct being measured.

Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were screened to ensure completeness and suitability for analysis. The analytical technique used in this study was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares approach (PLS-SEM), implemented using SmartPLS version 3.0. PLS-SEM was selected due to its flexibility in handling complex models with multiple latent variables, its suitability for prediction-oriented research, and its robustness under conditions of non-normal data distribution and moderate sample sizes, which are common in social science research involving organizational settings.

The analysis proceeded through two main stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. This stage involved examining indicator loadings to ensure adequate item reliability, internal consistency reliability through composite reliability values, convergent validity through average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity to confirm that each construct was empirically distinct from the others. Second, the structural model was assessed to test the hypothesized relationships among variables. This included evaluating path coefficients to determine the strength and direction of relationships, coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ) to assess explanatory power, and the significance of both direct and indirect effects using a bootstrapping procedure. The mediating role of perceived organizational support was specifically tested by examining the indirect effect of adversity quotient on workforce agility through perceived organizational support alongside the direct effect. Through this methodological approach, the study sought to provide a robust empirical explanation of how individual

resilience resources and organizational support mechanisms interact to foster workforce agility among civil servants operating in a volatile and reform-driven public sector environment.

### 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This study examined the influence of Adversity Quotient (AQ) on Workforce Agility (WA) among civil servants (ASN) in the Pidie Jaya Regency Government, with Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as a mediating variable. Data were collected through a questionnaire administered to 253 ASN, and the analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 3.0). Following Hair (2010), descriptive statistics were first used to describe respondents' general tendencies and to provide context for interpreting the structural relationships.

The descriptive results show a consistent pattern: respondents' perceptions of AQ, POS, and WA fall predominantly within the moderate category, indicating that the adaptive capacity of ASN exists but has not yet reached a strong or optimal level. For AQ, all four dimensions are categorized as moderate, with Control (mean = 3.268) scoring the highest, followed by Reach (mean = 3.202), Origin and Ownership (mean = 3.156), and Endurance (mean = 3.149). This profile suggests that ASN tend to feel relatively more able to exercise control over difficulties than to sustain endurance or to fully internalize responsibility during adversity. In practical terms, this implies that resilience resources among ASN are present but still vulnerable, particularly when changes are prolonged and pressure accumulates over time. POS also appears moderate across its dimensions, with Justice (mean = 3.274) and Supervisor Support (mean = 3.272) slightly higher than Organizational Rewards and Working Conditions (mean = 3.240). The closeness of these means indicates that ASN perceive support as relatively balanced, yet it remains insufficiently strong to be categorized as high suggesting that fairness and supervisory care exist, but the organizational environment may not consistently provide a strong sense of recognition and resource adequacy. Similarly, WA is moderate across all dimensions, where Proactivity (mean = 3.267) is the highest, followed by Adaptability (mean = 3.247) and Resilience (mean = 3.108). The comparatively lower resilience dimension signals a potentially critical weakness: while ASN may be able to respond and adjust in the short run, they may struggle to sustain stability and psychological endurance under extended turbulence, such as policy shifts, restructuring, or increased performance demands.

Before testing the structural model, measurement quality was evaluated using convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. The analysis indicated that after iterative refinement, where indicators with loadings below the acceptable threshold were removed, the measurement models for AQ, POS, and WA achieved acceptable validity and reliability. Discriminant validity based on cross-loadings showed that each indicator loaded more strongly on its intended construct than on others, suggesting that AQ, POS, and WA are empirically distinguishable and not merely overlapping reflections of the same latent phenomenon. Reliability statistics also confirmed that the constructs were measured consistently, supporting the appropriateness of proceeding to structural estimation.

The structural model demonstrated very strong explanatory power. The R-square value for POS was 0.770, indicating that AQ explains 77.0% of the variance in perceived organizational support. Meanwhile, the R-square value for WA was 0.989, suggesting that AQ and POS together explain 98.9% of the variance in workforce agility. Substantively, this means the model captures the dominant determinants of agility within this dataset, positioning AQ and POS as highly consequential factors for shaping ASN agility. At the same time, the unusually high R-square for WA should be interpreted with methodological caution, as it may reflect a very tight model specification or high shared variance among constructs that conceptually relate closely in practice.

Hypothesis testing via bootstrapping confirmed that all direct and indirect paths were positive and statistically significant. AQ significantly influenced POS ( $\beta = 0.878$ ;  $t = 47.031$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), indicating that ASN with higher adversity quotient tend to perceive stronger organizational support. This relationship can be interpreted as a psychological and relational mechanism: individuals with stronger coping capacities may be more capable of recognizing and using organizational resources, interpreting managerial actions as supportive, and maintaining constructive relationships in the workplace, which strengthens their overall perception of support. In the context of public sector reform, this is important because support is not only a structural provision but also a perception shaped by employees' cognitive and emotional resilience (Ritonga et al., 2024).

POS also significantly influenced WA ( $\beta = 0.317$ ;  $t = 20.249$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), suggesting that when ASN perceive their organization as fair, supportive, and attentive to working conditions, they become more agile in responding to change. This finding reinforces the argument that agility is not merely an individual attribute; it is enabled by the organizational climate. In practical terms, perceived support functions as a

psychological safety mechanism that reduces fear of failure, encourages experimentation and learning, and motivates employees to engage in adaptive behaviors such as acquiring new skills, collaborating, and adjusting work routines. The descriptive pattern is consistent with this interpretation: support is moderate, and agility is also moderate implying that strengthening support may realistically elevate agility, especially in the resilience dimension that currently appears weakest.

AQ showed a strong direct influence on WA ( $\beta = 0.704$ ;  $t = 43.291$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), indicating that ASN who are better at managing adversity tend to be more agile. This relationship confirms the theoretical premise that workforce agility requires not only skill readiness but also psychological endurance and proactive coping. Under reform pressures, agile ASN are those who do not merely comply with change but can remain proactive, adjust strategies, and sustain performance under uncertainty. The relatively lower resilience score in WA (mean 3.108) suggests a key implication: strengthening AQ, especially the endurance and ownership aspects may be essential to prevent agility from being short-lived or reactive only at the beginning of change.

Most importantly, the mediation test confirmed that POS significantly mediates the relationship between AQ and WA, as shown by the specific indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.278$ ;  $t = 18.558$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). This implies that adversity quotient contributes to workforce agility more effectively when ASN perceive high organizational support. Put differently, individual resilience (AQ) is a powerful resource, but its impact on agility is amplified when the organization provides a supportive context through fairness, supervisor support, and conducive working conditions. This finding carries a strong practical implication for public sector HR strategy: developing resilient employees through training or psychological strengthening initiatives will produce stronger agility outcomes if institutional support systems are strengthened simultaneously. Without organizational support, even high-AQ individuals may face prolonged strain and reduced motivation over time; conversely, support without resilience may lead to dependency and limited initiative. The synergy between AQ and POS therefore becomes central to sustaining workforce agility in government institutions.

In sum, the integrated results indicate that ASN in Pidie Jaya demonstrate a moderate baseline of adversity handling, perceived support, and agility, and that agility is shaped by both individual resilience and organizational support mechanisms. The significant direct effects of AQ on POS and WA, the direct effect of POS on WA, and the significant mediation pathway collectively suggest that strengthening workforce agility in the public sector should not be approached as a purely technical reform agenda. Instead, it requires an integrated development strategy that strengthens civil servants' adversity quotient, particularly endurance and responsibility-taking while simultaneously building a supportive organizational environment that enhances fairness, supervisory support, and practical working conditions. Through this dual approach, public institutions can better prepare ASN to sustain agility and adaptive performance amid continuing bureaucratic reforms and the evolving demands of public service delivery.

This study provides empirical evidence that Adversity Quotient (AQ) plays a pivotal role in shaping Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Workforce Agility (WA) among civil servants (ASN). The findings demonstrate that AQ has a strong and significant effect on POS, as reflected by a high t-statistic (47.031) and a p-value below the accepted significance threshold ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that ASN who possess higher resilience, control, and endurance in facing adversity tend to perceive their organizations as more supportive, fair, and responsive to their needs. Such perceptions are not merely structural outcomes but are closely linked to the individual's psychological capacity to interpret and utilize organizational resources. Furthermore, POS is shown to have a significant positive influence on workforce agility ( $t = 20.249$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), confirming that organizational support functions as an enabling context for adaptive, proactive, and resilient work behavior. ASN who perceive fairness, supervisory support, and conducive working conditions are more likely to demonstrate agility in responding to organizational changes, policy reforms, and dynamic work demands. This finding reinforces the argument that workforce agility is not solely an individual trait but a relational outcome emerging from reciprocal interactions between employees and their organizations.

The direct effect of AQ on workforce agility is also statistically significant ( $t = 43.291$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), highlighting that individuals with higher adversity-handling capacity are better equipped to adapt, remain proactive, and sustain performance under uncertainty. Importantly, the mediation analysis confirms that POS significantly mediates the relationship between AQ and workforce agility ( $t = 18.558$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the influence of AQ on agility is strengthened when ASN perceive strong organizational support. In other words, individual resilience becomes more impactful when it is reinforced by a supportive organizational environment. Taken together, these findings suggest that workforce agility in the public sector is the result of a synergistic interaction between internal psychological resources and external organizational support mechanisms. Strengthening only one dimension without the other may limit the sustainability of agility. Therefore, efforts to enhance ASN agility should integrate both individual capacity development

and organizational support systems to ensure adaptive performance in an increasingly volatile and complex administrative environment.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical findings, several practical implications can be drawn for civil servants, government institutions, and future research. For ASN, the results underscore the importance of continuous self-development, particularly in strengthening adversity quotient. Cultivating resilience, openness to change, and proactive coping strategies enables individuals to navigate uncertainty more effectively. At the same time, maintaining positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors and remaining open to learning opportunities can enhance perceptions of organizational support, which in turn fosters greater agility. From an institutional perspective, government organizations are encouraged to prioritize the development of adversity quotient and perceived organizational support as strategic components of human resource management. Investment in structured training programs focusing on resilience, stress management, adaptive thinking, and problem-solving is essential to prepare ASN for ongoing reforms and digital-era challenges. Equally important is the creation of a supportive organizational culture characterized by fairness, transparent communication, recognition of contributions, and strong supervisory support. Leadership at all levels plays a critical role in modeling adaptive behavior, providing psychological safety, and encouraging innovation and learning. Integrating AQ and POS indicators into performance management and talent development systems may further strengthen workforce agility. Regular evaluation of development programs and organizational support initiatives is necessary to ensure their effectiveness and alignment with evolving organizational needs. By adopting a holistic approach that balances individual capability development with institutional support, public sector organizations can enhance their readiness to respond to uncertainty and sustain performance over time. For future research, longitudinal designs are recommended to capture changes in AQ, POS, and workforce agility over time, particularly in response to organizational reforms. Further studies may also explore moderating variables—such as leadership style, organizational culture, or job characteristics—that could influence the relationships identified in this study. Comparative research across different public sector contexts or between public and private organizations would enrich understanding of how workforce agility is shaped in diverse institutional settings. In addition, qualitative approaches could provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of ASN in developing resilience and agility within complex bureaucratic environments.

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