

HOW CAN THEY SURVIVE ON EDUCATION PROCESS (AN ADVERSITY QUOTIENT ANALYSIS APPROACH)

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Abstract: *Continuing education at a boarding school is quite challenging for students. Not only are they faced with the complexity of other problems, which are not found in conventional schools. This study explores the factors that cause students attending Dayah Nurul Ulum, Peureulak, East Aceh, Aceh, Indonesia, to persist with the learning process in the boarding school system. Using a qualitative case study research approach, empirical data was collected through in-depth interviews with students who have attended the school for 6 years. Through Stolz's adversity quotient framework, this study found that santri's resilience in completing their education in dayah is supported by several factors, namely: (1) optimistic attitude, (2) adaptability, (3) emotion management skills, and (4) social support. This article also argues that their internal motivation and high self-esteem as santri are also reinforcing factors for their success to survive.*

Keywords: *adversity quotient, dayah, Islamic education, santri, survival skill*

Introduction

To continue education in a *dayah* (Islamic traditional educational institution) is one of the alternatives often chosen by the community. Among the people of Aceh, *dayah* is the primary choice for some people, especially in the rural community (Rizal, Iqbal, & Najmuddin, 2018). They believe that *dayah* is the most appropriate place to prepare their children to live independently and learn religious sciences.

Dayah has a unique character compared to other conventional schools. The effectiveness of teaching and learning with a denser subject content compared to schools, in general, makes the *dayah* education system more challenging. Furthermore, learning in the *dayah* is obtained from the teaching and learning process in the classroom and can be obtained from the entire series of activities and life in the *dayah*. At least two main characters characterize *dayah* education, namely: (1) a cultural character that allows students to learn thoroughly, not only limited to the transfer of knowledge but also aspects of overall personality formation; and (2) strong community participation and support for a series of activities in *dayah*. In addition, *dayah* education teaches independence. As stated by Buto and Hafifuddin (2020), *santri* (students in Islamic traditional educational institution) who study at *dayah* also learn to be independent

(intellectual independence), independent in worship, learn to be social (social independent), manage finances (economic independence).

The ability of humans to overcome challenges, problems and difficulties in life is called the adversity quotient (AQ) (Parvathy & Praseeda, 2014). Stoltz (2000) defines AQ as the ability to manage and overcome difficulties in life. Shen (2014) explains that the adversity quotient (AQ) is an intelligence to measure and predicts a person's ability to respond to difficulties. Vinas dan Aquino-Malabanan (2015) defines adversity quotient as a measurement of how individuals perceive and resolve a challenge.

Santris are accustomed to learning and living independently to develop their potential and abilities. The denser dayah learning system stimulates students' ability to be active and creative in adjusting to the character of learning in the dayah. Students' ability to manage themselves will eliminate the sense of burden and pressure during the learning process in the dayah environment, even though students are burdened with the responsibility of completing two different curricula, the madrasah curriculum during the day and the dayah curriculum at night. The expected consequence is that students can make decisions and solve difficulties or problems with their mindset and way.

The problems of *santri* in dayah have received much attention from scholars. Ishak et al. (2022) highlighted the development of discipline among students. In addition, Barri (2016) raised the issue of *santri*'s ability in time management. The study of Maulida, Mukti, & Budianti (2022) examines the efforts of moral development. The *santri*'s problems raised in various studies are still related to moral formation and academic abilities. Meanwhile, studies on *santri* soft skills' ability to manage themselves and survive life's dynamics in the dayah environment have not yet received an adequate portion. This study aims to explore the factors that influence the AQ of the *santri* of Dayah Nurul Ulum, Peureulak, East Aceh, Aceh, Indonesia, so that they can survive the learning process in the boarding school system.

Literature Review

Dayah as a Traditional Islamic Education Institution in Aceh

If on the island of Java, it is called pesantren. In Minangkabau, West Sumatra, it is known as *surau*, and then in Aceh, it is known as Dayah. Dayah is an organization with a particular authoritative model of Islamic education in Aceh. It is a pre-independence Islamic Education Institution with a traditional Education model like traditional pesantren in other regions. The word dayah comes from the Arabic word زاوية (*zawiya*), which means "corner". The choice of the term "corner" historically refers to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, who taught his companions in the corner of the Medina mosque (Buto & Hafifuddin, 2020; Duhri & Jakfar, 2020; Ibrahim, 2014).

In general, dayah has similar models, styles and methods of learning, adheres to the Syafi'iyah school of thought in *fiqhiyah* and follows the views of Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari and al-Maturidi in theology with traditional pesantren in Java. Dayah not only acts as a centre of da'wah and a proud institution of traditional Islamic education but also as a controller of the Acehnese people's understanding of Islam (Hanafiah, 2018). It also played a significant role in Aceh's Malay history and preserved the traditional Islamic education model from the secular model. Later generations continued the same learning system in the corners of mosques and sitting in a semi-circle around the teacher.

In Aceh's historical record of Acehnese traditional Islamic education development, dayah has always been highlighted. Although not supported by solid evidence, many scholars believe that dayah was the first traditional Islamic education to be introduced and later became an educational tradition in Southeast Asia. The simple Islamic learning model was sitting half-circle

with a teacher in the corner. The first Dayah in Aceh was Dayah Cot Kala around the 10th century, located in Peureulak, East Aceh (Mirsal, 2017; Yahya, 2019). Later other *dayahs* emerged and developed and became more sophisticated such as the dayah Dayah Baiturrahman in the 16th-17th centuries. Ali Hasjmi argues that it was founded in the 10th century and peaked in its development as Islamic Education in Southeast Asia or its golden age in 16-17 AD. In the past, dayah played a role as a centre for da'wah. Later dayah became a centre for developing the intellectuality of Muslims (Duhri & Jakfar, 2020; Isbah, 2020).

Several books are considered official references used in the dayah environment, such as Kitab Matan Taqrib, Bajuri, I'anatu al-Thalibin, and Mahalli in the field of fiqh, Kitab Aqidatu al-Islamiyah, Jawahiru al-Kalamiyah, and Kifayatu al-Awwam in the field of tawhid, as well as Kitab Taisir al-Khalaq fi Ilmi al-Akhlaq, Ta'lim Muta'alim, and Minhaju al-Abidin in the field of morals.

Dayahs are found in almost all parts of Aceh. In Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar there are Tgk. Chik Oemar Dyan, Dayah Darul Hijrah, Dayah Darul Ulum, Dayah Darul Ihsan, Dayah Babun Najah, and others. In Pidie there is Dayah Jeumala Amal, Dayah Al-Furqan Bambi and others. In North Aceh and Lhokseumawe, there is Dayah Syamsud Dhuha and dayah Ulumuddin. In East Aceh, there is Dayah Nurul Ulum, and many other integrated and modern *dayahs* have sprung up from 1990 until now (Abubakar, 2011).

Adversity Quotient

The term "adversity quotient" (AQ) refers to a score that determines how well an individual is able to cope with the challenges that arise in his or her life. It is also referred to as the science of resilience, which means that challenges can be transformed into opportunities. AQ is one of the reliable indicators of an individual's success in life, and it is particularly helpful for predicting attitude, mental stress, perseverance, longevity, learning, and response to changes in an environment (Dorji & Singh, 2019). The term "adversity" can also refer to unfavorable circumstances and challenges. When faced with challenging circumstances, one is forced to acquire new knowledge and conduct a self-evaluation of their capacity and bravery (Dorji & Singh, 2019). The ability to overcome challenges in one's academic life, professional life, or personal and social life is what we mean when we talk about AQ. According to him, AQ is about prevailing over the challenges that life throws at you, be they academic, professional, or personal and social.

AQ is a person's ability to survive in the face of difficulty to create high learning motivation. In this case, fostering student learning motivation is one way to develop students' ability and willingness to learn (Sofyani & Susanto, 2021). Resilience, calmness in the face of a variety of problems, and the ability to find alternative solutions to problems are all aspects of AQ that are intended here. In other words, this implies that adolescents are expected to have the ability to remain resilient and calm in the face of a variety of challenges, as well as to be capable of discovering alternative solutions for each of their challenges (Hidayati & Farid, 2016). Problem solving and the ability to persevere in the face of adversity are two skills that are essential to human existence. The degree to which an individual is able to work through challenges and prevail in the face of adversity determines whether or not they will have a happy life. The AQ divides people into three categories: (1) quitters are those who lack the will to accept challenges in their lives; (2) campers are those who already have the willingness to try to face existing challenges and problems, but they stop because they feel satisfied and are no longer able; and (3) climbers are those who choose to continue to survive and struggle to face various kinds of things, both in the form of problems, challenges, and obstacles (Sofyani & Susanto, 2021). Talent, willpower, intelligence, health, personality characteristics, genetics, education, and self-belief are some of the factors that can have an impact on an individual's AQ intelligence.

(Sofyani & Susanto, 2021). AQ has four dimensions (CO2RE) (Riyanti & Aini, 2018), including (1) control (C), (2) origin and ownership (O2), (3) reach (R), and (4) endurance (E).

Based on the opinions described above, it can be synthesized that AQ is the level of a person's ability to overcome a difficulty and solve problems in his life, which is indicated by indicators: (1) self-confidence, (2) accepting difficulties, (3) taking action to face difficulties, (4) taking risks, and (5) surviving difficulties. The motivation contained in a person has different characteristics, which include (1) persevering in facing tasks, (2) resilient in facing difficulties, (3) showing interest, (4) preferring to work independently, (5) getting bored quickly on routine tasks, (6) being able to defend his opinion, (7) not easily giving up things he believes in, and (8) enjoying looking for and solving problems, (8) being able to solve problems, and (8) being able to solve problems (Sofyani & Susanto, 2021; Stoltz, 2000)

As a result, self-adjustment takes on a much greater significance during the adolescent stage of development. One of the necessary and sufficient conditions for the development of individual mental health or mental health as a whole is the capacity for healthy self-adjustment to one's surroundings. Many people, particularly adolescents, go through hardships and are unable to find happiness because they are unable to adapt to the demands of family life, school, work, and society (Hidayati & Farid, 2016). Students who have difficulty solving math problems are expected not to lose enthusiasm and continue to try to find a way to solve these math problems. Solving the problem requires the student's fighting power to achieve maximum learning results. This resilience and fighting power is conceptualized by Stoltz as resilience intelligence or fighting power or also called adversity (Mustika, 2018).

Stoltz expresses AQ as a person's ability to observe difficulties and complain about these difficulties with their intelligence so that it becomes a challenge to solve them, especially in achieving a goal, aspiration, hope, and, most importantly, personal satisfaction from the results of the work or activity itself (Mustika, 2018).

When confronted with challenges, a person's resilience or endurance under pressure is another name for AQ. According to Stein and Book (2004), resilience is defined as the capacity to cope with unpleasant experiences and stressful situations without falling apart. This is accomplished by actively and passively overcoming challenges. The capacity to keep one's composure and exhibit patience while confronting challenges without allowing one's feelings to cloud one's judgment is an essential component of resilience. People who are resilient in the face of adversity will confront the challenge at hand, rather than avoiding it, and they will not give in to a feeling of hopelessness or helplessness. The AQ referred to here is resilience, calmness in facing various problems and can find alternative solutions to problems (Hidayati & Farid, 2016).

The ability to adjust to the environment The ability to adjust to a healthy environment is one of the essential prerequisites for creating individual mental health (Hidayati & Farid, 2016). Many individuals, especially adolescents, suffer and cannot achieve happiness because they cannot adjust to family life, school, work and society. Few adolescents experience stress or depression due to their failure to adjust to the existing and complex environmental conditions. Likewise, for adolescents living in orphanages, the orphanage environment becomes the primary social environment for making adjustments. Being in an orphanage allows them to learn to socialize with their peers or caregivers for the first time. Adolescents must develop and adjust to become their principal capital in the broader community. Adolescents who cannot adapt to their environment will have a negative and unhappy attitude (Hidayati & Farid, 2016).

Due to their inability to adapt to the complicated environmental conditions that already exist, only a small percentage of adolescents suffer from stress or depression. Resilience, calmness in the face of a variety of problems, and the ability to find alternative solutions to problems are all aspects of AQ that are being discussed here. AQ is one of the reliable indicators of an individual's success in life. It is particularly helpful for predicting an individual's attitude,

mental stress, perseverance, longevity, learning, and response to changes in their surrounding environment (Dorji & Singh, 2019). In other words, adolescents are expected to have the ability to remain resilient and calm in the face of a variety of challenges, as well as to be capable of locating alternative solutions to each of these challenges (Hidayati & Farid, 2016).

Based on research by Muslimah and Satwika (2019), there is a relationship between optimism and AQ. According to Carver and Scheie (2009), optimistic individuals tend to feel confident and persistent in facing demands despite experiencing difficulties (Wardani & Sugiharto, 2020). According to Stoltz (2000), individuals with high adversity will have an extraordinary ability to be hopeful and optimistic to go through difficult situations. In contrast, individuals with low adversity will perceive that difficult situations last for a long time and gradually.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a single case study method. This case study used a sample from one educational institution, Dayah Nurul Ulum, Peureulak, East Aceh, Aceh, Indonesia. This research used data collection techniques through in-depth interviews involving four *santri* who attended the dayah, supported by direct observation at the research location. Research participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique with several criteria. The selection criteria for research participants are *santri*, who has spent time studying at the dayah for 6 years, have exemplary achievements, and expressed willingness to be involved in this research as a resource person.

The research instruments used in this study were interview guides and observation sheets. The interview guide was used to guide in-depth interviews with research participants, while the observation sheet was used to record the observed teaching-learning process. Data collected from interviews and observations were analyzed using techniques proposed by Huberman and Miles (2002). The analysis consists of three main stages: data reduction, presentation, and verification. This method allows researchers to understand and analyze qualitative data in a more structured and systematic way. The validity of the data in this study was guaranteed through data triangulation, namely by collecting data from several sources and using different data collection techniques. In addition, the results of data analysis were also discussed and validated with research participants and teachers.

Result and Discussion

History of Dayah Nurul Ulum, Peureulak

Dayah Nurul Ulum is an Islamic educational institution founded on the initiative of several community leaders in Peureulak District in 1988, whose initial domicile was in Gampong Blang Batee, Peureulak District, East Aceh Regency, which is under the auspices of the Dayah Nurul Hilal Foundation. The name "Nurul Ulum" was assigned to this Islamic educational institution with the aim that *nurul ulum*, which means the light of knowledge, can radiate its light to every *santri* who lodges in it. Thus the students can absorb all forms of knowledge taught.

In a situation of deprivation, Dayah Nurul Ulum strives to improve its identity to realize the noble ideals of providing proper education to the nation's children as the next generation, even with minimal facilities. However, in 1990, this already sad situation was exacerbated by establishing Aceh as a Military Operation Area as a step by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to attack and destroy the Freedom Aceh Movement (GAM), which wanted to separate itself from the Republic of Indonesia. The implementation of Aceh in the Military Operation Area at that time caused Dayah Nurul Ulum to begin to fade its light because the parents of students who came from various regions within the province of Aceh felt that the security of

their sons and daughters in Gampong Blang Batee would be threatened, so they decided to move their sons and daughters to educational institutions that were close to their place of origin.

In 1991, the administrators made a policy to move the location of the pesantren to a relatively safer area. Finally, they chose Gampong Cot Keh, which is also still included in the Peureulak District area, the new location for developing the pesantren. In this new location, the pesantren carried out educational activities with tremendous passion and enthusiasm even though the physical condition of the existing building after moving the location was straightforward.

Like other private Islamic educational institutions, Dayah Nurul Ulum lacked government attention then. Therefore, all elements of the pesantren were determined and eager to continue to struggle to develop this educational institution, and this effort was not in vain. After three years of operation in this new location, the flowers of pesantren progress began to blossom. This development continued until it peaked in 1998/1999, marked by the increasing number of students studying in Dayah Nurul Ulum. This also indicates the increasing public confidence in organizing Islamic education within Dayah Nurul Ulum.

Dayah Nurul Ulum Peureulak, organized by the Dayah Nurul Hilal Foundation, aims to actively build humans who are devoted to Allah through education to participate in helping the Government make a complete human being (*insan kamil*). Implementing the teaching and learning process within the Dayah Nurul Ulum is carried out with a boarding system, where all existing students and/or students are required to live in a dormitory while studying. The curriculum is applied in the formal education and Nurul Ulum pesantren/dayah curricula. So that students who complete their education will get 2 (two) certificates in the form of; 1) a formal education unit certificate and 2) a pesantren/dayah certificate. Until now, within Dayah Nurul Ulum, there are 3 (three) types of formal education units organized by the Dayah Nurul Hilal Foundation, consisting of primary and secondary education levels in the form of; 1) Private Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs)-Nurul Ulum; 2) Private *Madrasah Aliyah* (MAS) Nurul Ulum; and 3) Private Senior High School (SMAS)-Plus Nurul Ulum, all of which have been accredited through the National Accreditation Board of the Republic of Indonesia.

Factors Affecting Survival Skills in Education Process

This study was conducted to understand the experience of *santri* in facing and overcoming challenges in the educational process in dayah related to AQ. Through interviews, all respondents showed behavior reflecting a high AQ level. Life in this quite challenging dayah seems to be a natural selection to choose students with high fighting power to survive and abort the rest. Dea, as she is called, explained, “*Di awal masuk sekolah, untuk angkatan kami jumlahnya sekitar 160an orang. Sekarang, di kelas 6 ini, jumlah kami tersisa 26 orang saja (At the beginning of school, our batch numbered around 160. Now, in 6th grade, there are only 26 of us left)*” (Luqyana, 2023). The number of remaining students shows that only about 16.25% of students have a high level of AQ. Shohib (2013) also found similar results that only 18% of respondents had high AQ. Even Saidah and Aulia’s (2014) research showed that out of 75 respondents involved in the study, only 1 was identified as a climber.

Their form and ability to overcome the challenges of completing education in dayahs are supported by four main factors, namely: (1) optimistic attitude, (2) adaptability, (3) emotion management skills, and (4) social support. The tendency of *santri* to see the positive side of life’s challenges in the environment, such as the challenge to live independently and a more significant subject load, turns out to train their AQ. Malia (2023) exemplifies optimism by changing the perception of difficult situations as a challenge and worship. Other respondents expressed optimism by increasing motivation and mental endurance. “*Anak dayah harus tahan banting (Students in dayah must be resilient)*” as Malia termed it. This finding confirms the results of several studies (Farida, 2018; Ifania & Sugiasih, 2021; Muslimah & Satwika, 2019; Shabrina,

2018; Syarafina, Nurdibyanandaru, & Hendriani, 2019; Utami, Hardjono, & Karyanta, 2014; Wardani & Sugiharto, 2020) which has confirmed that optimism has a significant positive effect on AQ.

Adaptability allows *santri* to adjust to changing situations. Similarly, the respondents explained that they felt culture shock, especially in the early days of entering the dayah environment. Some aspect that causes this is the dormitory system that forces them to live together with other people in one room. Furthermore, they had to queue and share when they wanted to use the bathroom or the dining room. What is particularly jarring is the difference in the dayah learning system, carried out at night with dense curriculum content. Especially for *santri*, who graduated from elementary school, the complex religious subjects and Arabic language are a tremendous challenge. Despite the difficulties, the respondents stated that these difficulties were only felt in the first year. They admitted that they have been able to follow the rhythm of activities carried out in dayah easily until now. This adaptability has helped *santri* overcome various kinds of difficult or unexpected situations. They claimed to be able to reduce stress levels and increase the ability to think creatively to develop strategies and find the right solutions to the things they face. This study's results align with Safi'i et al. (2021), which state that people with high AQ tend to have high adaptability. In contrast to the findings in this study, in the context of a career, Shalihah, Yudianto & Hidayati (2018) mentioned that there is no significant relationship between AQ and adaptability.

The ability of students to manage emotions is also a significant factor in surviving the educational process in dayah. Being away from family is enough to torment the students' feelings (Luqyana, 2023). Feelings of longing for their parents often plague them. Especially when they face unpleasant things in dayah, the feeling of longing is even more vital. In addition, the feeling of liking the opposite sex partner is also felt by the *santri*, considering that when viewed from the life span, these *santris* are in the adolescent phase. The students must manage this perceived sexual attraction because the dayah environment severely limits interactions between men and women. If anyone violates it, they will get punishment by the caregiver in the dormitory (Jannah, 2023). In order to manage these emotions well, the students spend time with healthy and productive activities, such as sports, studying or focusing on memorizing the Quran.

In the context of AQ, a person who can manage emotions well will be better able to overcome challenges and difficulties. When a person can manage emotions that arise in difficult situations, he or she can maintain the level of motivation and resilience needed to keep going, despite failures or obstacles. Therefore, to improve one's AQ, there needs to be a balance between the ability to manage emotions and other factors that contribute to the ability to overcome challenges and difficulties. This can include thinking positively, taking appropriate risks, and having adequate social support. This research argument is in line with the findings of Mulyasari and Maryam (2023) that high emotional intelligence influences the higher a person's AQ.

In addition to these three internal factors, social support from the immediate environmental circle also plays a crucial role. As social beings, *santri* also recognize that the surrounding environment helps strengthen their feelings to survive the educational process they are going through. The social support obtained significantly contributes to increasing the AQ of a *santri*. Many studies have shown that social support can increase a person's ability to cope with stress and face difficulties (Baqutayan, 2011; Cohen & McKay, 1984; Ditzen & Heinrichs, 2014; Hefner & Eisenberg, 2009). Social support can help a person to develop the skills and resources needed to cope with problems, increase self-confidence, and reduce levels of anxiety and depression. In the context of AQ, social support can help a person to develop the ability to cope with problems and face challenges. Social support can help a person develop social skills, such as building solid relationships and obtaining support from others. Social support can also help a

person develop practical coping skills, such as managing emotions and solving problems constructively.

The results of this study show that AQ can affect the ability of students to face educational challenges. A high level of AQ is associated with a better ability to overcome academic problems. The four factors identified as supporting an individual's ability to overcome life's challenges, namely optimistic attitude, adaptability, emotion management skills, and social support, have also been confirmed in previous studies. Therefore, the results of this study can provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influence *santri* to survive to complete their education and academic life in dayah. However, this study has several limitations, such as the number of respondents who are still very limited. Therefore, further research can be carried out to test hypotheses quantitatively with a more significant number of respondents and a more representative sampling method to strengthen the results of this study.

Conclusion

Undergoing the educational process in a dayah is not as easy as in a conventional school. It takes good enough resilience to go through this process well. This study has found that at least 4 essential factors can make *santri* able to survive to complete their academic life in dayah: optimistic attitude, adaptability, emotion management skills, and social support. These four factors, either directly or indirectly, have implications for increasing the adversity quotient in *santri*. This research confirms that these four factors determine *santri*'s success in completing their education in dayah.

For this reason, managers of dayah educational institutions need to pay attention to these factors so that *santri* can live their academic lives well. There are several limitations in this study, especially in the aspect of the number of samples involved in this study. Therefore, further research can be carried out to test hypotheses quantitatively with a more significant number of respondents and a more representative sampling method to strengthen the results of this study.

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