CHAPTER – 8

Limitations, Challenges, Suggestions and Recommendations for Further Research
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Limitations

While a review of the findings of this research has helped integrate the different integration modules, it is also important to acquaint oneself with the limitations and constraints faced in order to view the research findings in total perspective. Just as one cannot conjure a flawless piece of research that can apply to all possible situations, so also it is necessary to be aware that this research may apply to a restricted range of settings, with a specific type of population because of certain inherent constraints within which it was conducted.

Some of the limiting factors that could have possible affected the findings of this study are described here in detail:

1. Varied Industry Selection

As mentioned in Chapter 3 (Research Design and Methodology), the sample organizations in the study are all from the service industry. One issue consistently mentioned in the literature on this subject is that the service orientation of these organizations is one of the determining factors for structure of the organization, as well as behaviour of the people in organizations. Hence keeping in mind the focus of being a high on service orientation, companies from IT, ITES, Retail, Hotel and Hospitals have been considered for this study.
2. Geographically Restricted Sample

As it was not possible to collect data periodically and follow-up with the numerous branches of the companies located all over the country, the majority of the data was collected from Mumbai. Although the study has great authencity since Mumbai is the industrial and commercial capital of India, it would be wise to bear in mind that every city has its own culture, tradition and work values, which may have some bearing on creating and developing a Leadership pipeline having high AQ®. In this sense, data from other towns and cities would have lent greater generalization to the findings. This was however, not practically realizable.

3. Restricted Sample Size

The target population considered for this study was employees from the top management of companies. Since most of the companies in India have a pyramid structure, which gets leaner as one goes upwards, there are very few number of employees working at the top management level. Secondly even though the researcher approached all the top management employees of the 13 companies who participated in this study, owing to their busy schedules and continuous travels, not all the employees were willing to participate in the study. Hence it was only 131 individuals who finally participated in this study.

4. Restricted Sample Size at Higher Hierarchical Levels

The sample in this study comprised of top management employees from all the functions of the organization. They were further classified into CEO and Director, VP and AVP, Divisional Head, Manager, Executive Assistant and Medical Professionals. However, as is commonly observed, the sample size was the highest in Divisional Heads, followed by Senior Managers, Medical Professionals, VP / AVP and CEO / Directors. Thus the majority of the study was from the mid level of the top management band employees, restricting the study to be extended to the highest level i.e. CEO and Directors, who primarily as the key
Leaders are responsible to carry out the mission of the organization and be example setters to other leaders and teams of the organization.

5. Technique of Gathering Data

The principal source of gathering data for measuring the participants Adversity Quotient®, was an on-line AQ® tool designed & developed by Peak Learning under the guidance of Dr. Paul Stoltz, founder of the AQ® studies. Though the validity and reliability of the tool has been established (as brought out in the “Research Design and Methodology” chapter), the response to the AQ® tool totally depended on the respondent’s sincerity while answering the questions. Perhaps this can be viewed as a limiting factor in the study.

Similarly, the source of data gathering for the Performance data from the sample was undertaken by a questionnaire designed by the researcher. This form was reviewed by three heads of organizations and they viewed it to be complete for collecting the performance data of participating employees of companies. However, the performance review being one sided (by the appraiser) and being undertaken subjectively, it may have a restriction of perception of the appraiser on the ratings provided in the areas of Performance banding and Strengths banding.

Challenges

Some of the challenges that the researcher faced while pursuing this research study are given below:

1. Unavailability of any reference material in India

The study on Adversity Quotient® was formerly founded in USA in 1997 by Dr. Paul Stoltz and his team from the Peak Learning Organization Inc. Since then the team have conducted many studies strengthening their convictions on AQ®,
though all these studies have been undertaken in USA. Having embarked on the journey of this research, in the initial days itself, the researcher tried to find various sources through which information could be collected on the subject Adversity Quotient®. The researcher had approached all the common libraries, book stores and college libraries in Mumbai, however no books or materials could be obtained on AQ®. The researcher then purchased the two books available then through Amazon on-line bookstore from USA and received the delivery of these two books only after two months. Thus the researcher initially referred the two books written by Dr. Paul Stoltz namely, “Adversity Quotient®: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities” and Adversity Quotient® @ Work: Make Everyday Challenges the Key to your Success”. However, as the researcher progressed further in this study, there were articles, dissertations, reports etc. which could be referred and helped in giving shape this research.

2. Reluctance of Organizations to Participate in this Study

Most organizations being large and being multi-nationals, they indicated confidentiality as a prime reason for not being able to participate in the study. Hence to secure the 12 organizations, the researcher had to approach 40 organizations. Some of the organizations agreed to participate in the study but once questionnaires were revealed, the reluctance set in wasting lot of field level time. Once the study progressed, the researcher spent more than 3 times of the usual effort planned to extract responses from the participating top managers owing to apparent reluctance caused due to down sizing, compensation correction etc. happening on account of recession that set in globally mid 2008 onwards and had affected the participating companies too.

3. Reluctance of Organizations to Share Performance Data

Since the Performance data is highly confidential & critical information in all organizations, it was a major challenge in obtaining this data from the participating companies.
4. Reluctance of Participants to Divulge Additional Information

Participants were reluctant to divulge certain additional information like compensation, socio economic status, spouse status, total working experience etc. It was only after several attempts of connect and comfort provided by the researcher to the participants, assurances that the information being shared would be strictly used only for the study and that it would not be shared or passed on to anyone, that the participants were open to share their personal information.

5. Increased number of meetings and telecon’s to connect with the participants

The researcher approached all the top management employees of the 13 companies. However, because of their busy schedules and continuous travels, only 131 employees participated in the study. Since there was (a) an AQ® tool to be responded, (b) a form to be filled giving details on certain additional information and also (c) a performance evaluation form to be filled, the researcher had to approach the participants twice for (a) and (b) and approach the Head – HR for availing information on (c). This became a mammoth task following unending visits, calls, follow-ups which had to be done owing to the unavailability of the participants (many-a-times they were traveling, in meetings, on leave etc.)

Suggestions and Recommendations for Further Research

As mentioned earlier, some of the directions for future research may emanate from the limitations of the present study as listed above. One may accept the view that research in behavioural sciences should be treated as an ongoing process of updating information and verifying hypotheses again and again on
different samples with different methodologies and experimental designs. Research findings and their practical applications should also go hand in hand. The present research is no exception. One future direction of research, therefore, could be to plan fresh studies short of the limitations of this study. A few suggestions for future research in this area are as below:

1. Study to be applied in Diverse Industrial Settings:

In this study it was demonstrated that the mean AQ® value of Hospital and ITES industries were at the highest and closest to the global mean of AQ®, followed by IT, Hospital and Retail industries. All these five sectors belong to the same industry i.e. the service industry. This study, therefore, concentrated on comparisons within one type of industry only, all 5 industries being highly service oriented. Studies need to be conducted in respect of other industries too such as manufacturing, processes, banking, academics, armed & allied forces, railways, aviation etc.

2. Study to be applied Across Hierarchical Levels:

The target population considered for this study was restricted to the top management professionals, limiting the number of participants for the reasons mentioned above. Studies need to be conducted in respect to the other levels of hierarchy. Further research can be undertaken by applying this study across all the employees of one organization having global operations with multiple locations in India and overseas. Further research can be undertaken by applying this study across one or many functional employees across different industries. Further research can be undertaken by applying this study across all the women employees of organizations having global operations with multiple locations in India and overseas.
3. Study to be applied covering many Organizations:

In this research the AQ® and other variables of Leaders in organizations was studied and how owing to their higher AQ®, it lead to creating sustainable optimism for their companies. Further research can be undertaken by applying this study across many Organizations to check the “Organizations AQ®” and its bounce-back ability / sustainability in current turbulent times. This would be an interesting subject owing to the large scale changes that is happening in the economic, political, environmental scenario in which the organization has to sustain & grow.

4. Study to be applied for strengthening Organization Culture in Diversity:

Further research can be undertaken by applying this study to establish and further strengthen the prevailing culture meshed across the diversity of the Organizations operations. This can be undertaken either in one company or in multiple companies across industries; one location or across multiple locations and countries.

5. Study to be applied for enhancing Job Satisfaction:

Further research can be undertaken by applying this study to measure and enhance the job satisfaction across the Organizations global operations. This can be undertaken either in one company or in multiple companies across industries; one location or across multiple locations and countries.

6. Study to be applied for implementing work-life balance:

Employees working across levels, cities in organizations in current times are very stressed owing to lack of time and resources. Hence huge number of burn out cases are being witnessed in organizations leading to compulsory breaks in career
owing to health reasons, motivational reasons, depression etc. Further research can be undertaken by applying this study to measure the well being of employees and the findings may help in bringing out various initiatives for work-life balance that be developed and implemented in the organization.

**Concluding Comments**

This research has been a serious endeavour on the part of the researcher to throw some light on the emerging concept of Adversity Quotient®. As has been consistently shown throughout this thesis, we are at a stage in our economy where change is an all pervasive phenomenon. A Leader’s ability to absorb, adapt and rise in these changes continuously creating sustainable optimism will be a key factor of the Leader’s, teams and the organizations survival. In a liberalized and globalized Indian economy, there is, therefore a considerable need for organizations to place emphasis on constantly creating & developing Leaders with high Adversity Quotient®.

This research study has made a sincere effort to identify the correlates of Adversity Quotient® and the impact it has on the individual’s performances leading to the Organization’s sustainability and growth as well. By achieving this objective one can concentrate on building those attributes that have been found to have a positive link to the enhancement of one’s Adversity Quotient®. Furthermore, this research has also shown that Adversity Quotient® plays an important role not only in the field of developing and shaping leaders, but also in improving the organization’s performances and profitability.

In conclusion, it can be said that knowing and trying to enhance one’s AQ® is a journey and not a destination. We must all embark on it if we want to survive today’s complex & uncertain challenges and come out as Climbers consistently.