

## Research Article

## The Role of Adversity Quotient in Academic and Social Adjustment: A Study on Non-Local Students in Makassar

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### ABSTRACT

*Non-local students often face significant challenges adjusting to their new academic and social environments. In college adjustment, it is necessary to have effort or fighting power (adversity quotient) to adapt to the place where they study. This quantitative study aims to examine the effect of the adversity quotient on college adjustment among non-local students in Makassar. The research participants consisted of 386 non-local students from outside South Sulawesi Province, currently in their first and second years of study in Makassar. The data collection instrument uses the College Self-Adjustment scale and the Adversity Quotient scale with a Likert scale model, both of which are modified scales. The data analysis technique used simple linear regression analysis with the help of SPSS software version 26. The results of this study prove that adversity quotient can have a significant influence on college adjustment ( $P=0.000$ ;  $P<0.05$ ). Subsequently, the percentage of adversity quotient contribution is 35.9% to college adjustment, while 64.1% is influenced by other variables that are not studied. Students who strive to adapt to the college environment will have good academic and non-academic performance and will survive in the following years. Conversely, students who make less effort to adapt to the college realm will have an impact on learning achievement results and feelings of dissatisfaction with their college experience.*

**Keywords:** Adversity Quotient; College Adjustment; Non-Local Students.

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## 1. Introduction

Unfavorable situations often undermine one's sense of empowerment, leading to despair. Struggle intelligence will lead individuals to have good self-control and an awareness of responsibility to resolve difficulties despite being in difficult situations (Nuralisa, Machmuroh & Astriana, 2016). This ability is called adversity quotient. With a high adversity quotient, individuals are very confident that they can face obstacles or misfortunes that come their way in achieving goals (Tian & Fan, 2014). This condition is said to be related to non-local students. Fauzia, Asmaran and Komalasari (2021) suggest that someone who has continued their college education to another area is often referred to as a wandering student.

Non-local students pursuing higher education inevitably face various challenges requiring them to adapt. Adapting to a new cultural and social environment while being away from family and close ones poses significant challenges for non-local students. Self-adjustment is crucial as a foundation for the academic lives of non-local students during their college years. College adjustment refers to how students adapt to various aspects of campus life, including academics, social interactions, emotional well-being, and institutional affiliation (Baker & Syrik, 1984).

Preliminary data reveals that first- and second-year non-local students in Makassar face significant challenges in four areas: academic, social, personal-emotional, and institutional adjustment. Academic challenges include adapting to a new learning

system, meeting lecture assignment demands, and developing independent learning skills (Hapsari & Hamamah, 2019). Social challenges involve overcoming cultural differences, collaborating with group mates, and communicating in regional languages used daily (Chue, et al., 2019). Personal-emotional challenges are associated with regulating emotions, feelings of loneliness and homesickness, anxiety due to fear of missing out, and low self-confidence. Institutional challenges include adapting to campus rules and managing the ever-changing lecture schedules. According to Oetomo, Yuwanto, and Rahaju (2017), college adjustment among first- and second-year students is influenced by various factors, including academic anxiety, competence, motivation, psychological and physical barriers, openness, and self-confidence.

Academic adaptation refers to students' ability to learn effectively, complete tasks efficiently, and achieve academic success. However, students who struggle to adjust academically often experience academic stress (Saniskoro & Akmal, 2017). Socially, as inherently social beings, humans require interaction. For non-local students, this involves navigating unfamiliar social environments, which can be particularly challenging during their college experience. These academic and social challenges also require students to regulate their personal emotions, which are positively linked to overall self-adjustment in college. Additionally, students' ability to adapt to institutional settings is shaped by the values and policies implemented by the university.

Students who struggle to adapt to higher education often experience significant challenges in various aspects of their lives, especially non-local students who face additional difficulties due to their distance from family and close friends. These challenges demand resilience and proactive efforts to overcome. The concept of Adversity Quotient (AQ) emphasizes the ability to address challenges independently rather than attributing them to external circumstances (Stoltz, 1999). A high AQ enables individuals to confront obstacles and setbacks effectively while working toward their goals (Tian & Fan, 2014). According to Dostie and Jayaraman (2009), AQ is not a fixed trait and can be developed over time. Its role is to foster resilience, allowing individuals to quickly find solutions in unfavorable situations (Hidayati & Farid, 2016). Furthermore, individuals with a high AQ are less likely to blame others and instead take responsibility for overcoming difficulties (Hartosujono, 2015).

College adjustment poses significant challenges for non-local students as they adapt to new cultural environments in higher education. Siregar and Kustanti (2018) note that non-local students who struggle to face these challenges, particularly those caused by culture shock, often experience negative self-adjustment, leading to academic failure and frustration. Similarly, Alfira (2020) highlights a relative influence of the Adversity Quotient (AQ) on social adjustment, suggesting that resilience plays a key role in helping non-local students adapt socially. Further, Sari and Rinaldi (2018) found a positive correlation between AQ and self-adjustment among migrating students. Building on this background, the current research aims to examine the role of AQ in facilitating college adjustment for non-local students. AQ serves as a critical factor in empowering students to overcome challenges by enhancing their resilience, enabling them to adapt both academically and non-academically through actionable and effective strategies.

## **2. Method**

This study used quantitative methods. Participants were collected by non-probability sampling with purposive sampling. This study involved 386 participants, consisting of 145 males and 241 females. Criteria Participants are first-year and second-year non-local students (semester 2 = 272, semester 4 = 144 people) who are actively

studying in Makassar (UNISMUH = 76, UNM = 68, UIN Alauddin = 57, UNHAS = 51, UPA = 42, UNIBOS = 27, Poltekkes Kemenkes = 26, other universities = 39). Participants were from various regions outside South Sulawesi Province: 174 from South Sulawesi, 82 from Kalimantan, 66 from Nusa Tenggara, 25 from Papua, and 39 from other provinces.

Data were collected with the Self-Adjustment in College scale and the Adversity Quotient scale. The College Self-Adjustment Scale has been constructed by Pratiwi (2017) based on the dimensions of the variables proposed by Baker and Syrik (1984). The Adversity Quotient scale is a construction scale by Dewanda (2019) based on aspects of the theory proposed by Stoltz (1999). Both scales were prepared through a modification process tailored to the conditions of non-local students. Scale trials were conducted on 200 non-local students to see the reference for the preparation of the scale to be used. The data analysis involved descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS version 26 software.

### 3. Result and Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis of the College Adjustment category that has been carried out, it is obtained that as many as 24 participants in the very high category, as many as 88 participants in the high category, as many as 159 participants in the medium category, as many as 101 participants in the low category and as many as 14 participants in the very low category.

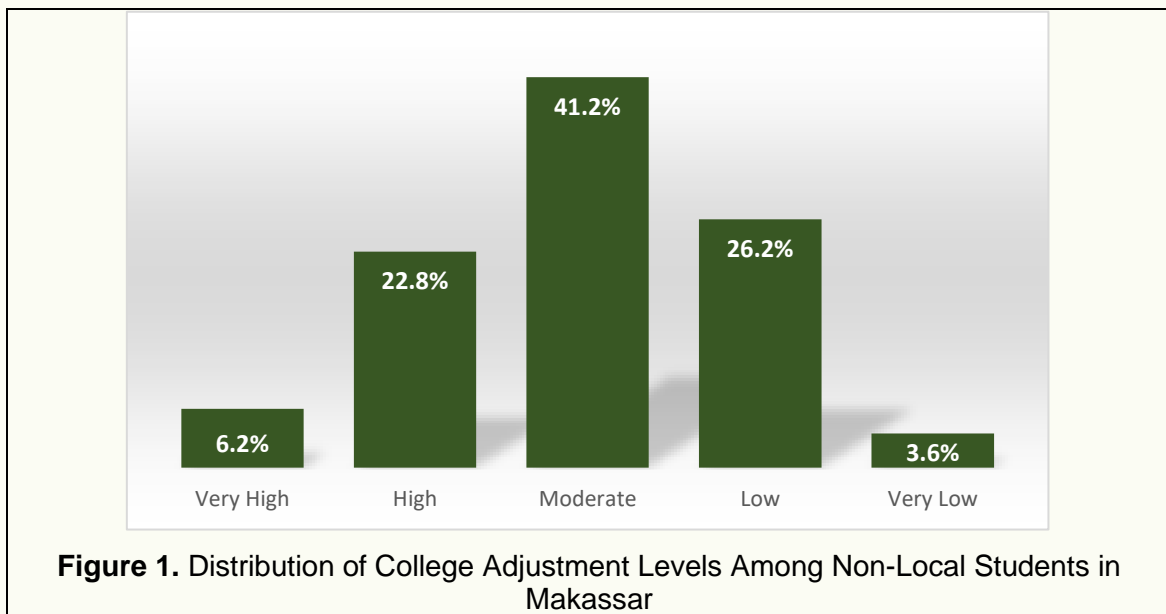


Figure 1 shows the distribution of college adjustment levels among non-local students in Makassar. Most students (41.2%) fall into the moderate adjustment category, indicating that they are adapting reasonably well but have room for improvement. Notably, 26.2% are in the low adjustment category, and 3.6% are in the very low category, highlighting significant challenges in adaptation. Only 6.2% of students achieve very high levels of adjustment.

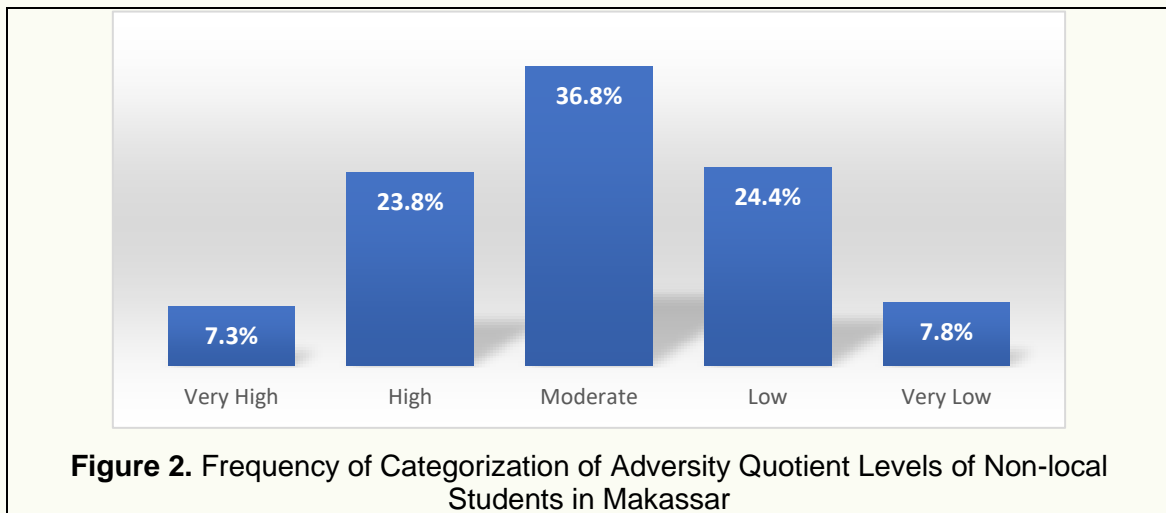
These findings suggest a need for targeted interventions, especially for students struggling to adapt. Further analysis will explore this data based on dimensions of adjustment, including academic, social, personal-emotional, and institutional satisfaction.

**Table 1.** Frequency of Categorization of College Adjustment Level of Non-local Students

Dimensi	VH	H	M	L	VL
<i>Academic Adjustment</i>	20 (2.7%)	95 12.6%	156 20.8%	103 13.7%	12 1.6%
<i>Social Adjustment</i>	20 2.7%	124 16.5%	141 18.8%	89 11.9%	12 1.6%
<i>Personal – Emotion Adjustment</i>	23 3.1%	105 14.0%	164 21.8%	78 10.4%	16 2.1%
<i>Institutional Satisfaction</i>	19 2.5%	133 17.7%	131 17.4%	84 11.2%	19 2.5%

Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the frequency of categorization for college adjustment levels across academic, social, personal-emotional, and institutional attachment dimensions. These findings indicate variation in adjustment levels across dimensions, with the majority of students categorized at moderate levels.

Furthermore, an analysis of Adversity Quotient (AQ) categories reveals that 28 participants are in the very high category, 92 in the high category, 142 in the medium category, 94 in the low category, and 30 in the very low category. This distribution suggests that AQ plays a significant role in influencing the ability of non-local students to adjust to college life.



As for the effect of college adjustment on adversity quotient, the regressional results are obtained as follows:

**Table 2. Regression test**

Variabel	R Square	F	Sig.	N	Note
<i>College Adjustment to Adversity Quotient</i>	0.359	215.113	0.000	386	Significant

This study defines college adjustment as encompassing four dimensions: academic, social, personal-emotional, and institutional satisfaction, as suggested by Baker and Syrik (2002). Academic adjustment specifically refers to how students adapt to the academic demands of college. This is reflected in their active participation in academic activities, preparedness for learning, and success in completing various lecture assignments. Moreover, motivation and clear goals are critical aspects that enable students to succeed in adjusting academically.

Social adjustment is the process of student involvement in social activities with various parties and feelings of satisfaction with the social environment in college. This dimension provides an overview of the form of student participation in establishing interpersonal relationships with people in the college environment. These interpersonal challenges include relationships with new people, mingling with friends with different backgrounds, an open attitude to lecture problems and relationships with lecturers or educators.

Personal-emotional adjustment is self-adjustment related to the personal and emotional form of students in college. This dimension refers to the ability of students to respond to general psychological pressure such as stress due to academic and social demands. Students who have low levels in this dimension tend to have more negative life experiences. Meanwhile, institutional attachment is the extent to which students can commit to the goals of educational institutions. This dimension describes the form of students' adjustment to college rules and their satisfaction with studying at the institution. Students who are not satisfied with the place where they study have the possibility of not continuing their studies at the institution.

The hypothesis test results show that Adversity Quotient (AQ) contributes 35.9% to college adjustment among non-local students in Makassar, as indicated by the R-Square value of 0.359. The F-value is 215.113, with a significance level of 0.000 ( $P < 0.05$ ), confirming a significant relationship between AQ and college adjustment. This suggests that the resilience (fighting power) of non-local students plays a crucial role in their ability to adapt to college life. However, the analysis also reveals that most non-local students in Makassar demonstrate a moderate level of college adjustment. While many students prioritize academics, establish friendships, and actively engage in campus activities, they still face challenges such as difficulty adapting to flexible lecture hours, managing heavy workloads, and navigating cultural and language differences. Several factors influence college adjustment, including self-monitoring (Lestari, Meiyuntariningsih & Ramadhani, 2023), social support (Estiane, 2015), self-esteem (Putri & Kusdiyati, 2024), and resilience (Musdalipa, 2020). Addressing these factors holistically can help improve the adjustment process for non-local students

The level of fighting power (adversity quotient) among non-local students in Makassar is predominantly at a moderate level. This indicates that most students demonstrate a reasonable ability to manage both academic and non-academic demands, showing responsibility and persistence. However, they often perceive that not all challenges need to be fully resolved. While many non-local students make efforts to adapt to the demands of higher education, their attempts are not always maximized. According to Stoltz (1999), individuals with a moderate level of adversity quotient, referred to as 'campers,' are characterized by their ability to respond to challenges but with limited optimization. This reflects the need for targeted support to help students progress to a higher level of resilience and adaptability.

Most non-local students in Makassar demonstrate a moderate level of adversity quotient (AQ) in adapting to college life. This indicates that, both academically and non-academically, these students show persistence and responsibility in facing challenges, but they often believe that not all challenges need to be fully addressed. Stoltz (1999) categorizes AQ into three levels: high (climbers), moderate (campers), and low (quitters). Consistent with this classification, most non-local students in Makassar fall into the *campers* category, indicating they respond to challenges but do not maximize their efforts to overcome them.

College adjustment encompasses both academic and non-academic dimensions. In the academic adjustment dimension, 20.8% of non-local students in Makassar fall into



the medium-level category. To improve their academic adjustment to a higher level, these students are encouraged to routinely engage with lecture materials rather than relying solely on exam preparation. Research by Huda and Mulyana (2018) demonstrates a significant relationship between adversity quotient (AQ) and academic performance index. This suggests that students with a moderate or higher level of AQ are more likely to achieve better academic performance, indicating the importance of fostering resilience and persistence in academic contexts.

In the social adjustment aspect, 18.8% of non-local students in Makassar demonstrate a medium-level social adjustment. To improve this, non-local students are encouraged to strengthen their resilience by adopting new learning habits and communication styles, which can help elevate their social adjustment to a higher level. Research by Dara, Dewi, and Rahma (2020) shows that Adversity Quotient (AQ) significantly contributes to social adaptation success, accounting for 17.1%. Unlike local students, non-local students face additional challenges in the social sphere due to differences in ethnic and cultural backgrounds, requiring greater resilience and adaptability.

In the Personal-Emotional Adjustment dimension, 21.8% of non-local students in Makassar are categorized at a moderate level. While many students perceive that the demands of higher education help them grow as individuals, they also experience anxiety when interacting with new people due to language and cultural differences. Research by Devinta and Handrasutomo (2015) highlights that an inability to overcome culture shock can lead to discomfort, anxiety, and fear. Meanwhile, Kusumaningtyas and Wibowo (2024) demonstrate that Adversity Quotient (AQ) training effectively reduces culture shock in non-local students, indicating that resilience training plays a critical role in helping students manage their emotions.

Additionally, 17.7% of non-local students in Makassar demonstrate a high level of Institutional Attachment. This suggests that these students have strong resilience (AQ), enabling them to comply with university policies, feel satisfied with campus facilities, and enjoy their studies. It is crucial for higher education institutions to maintain and improve facilities, infrastructure, and policies to support student adjustment further. Social, emotional, and academic adjustments significantly contribute to students' endurance and institutional attachment, as emphasized by Mattanah (2016).

## **4. Conclusion**

The research concludes that the Adversity Quotient significantly contributes 35.9% to College Adjustment among non-local students in Makassar. This highlights the importance of fostering resilience and adaptability in students to support their academic and social adjustment. The remaining 64.1% is influenced by other factors, which warrant further investigation to develop a more comprehensive understanding and intervention framework for improving college adjustment.

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