



The Influence of Self-Esteem, Social Support and Quarter Life Crisis in Early Adults

Wardha Hayati Khailia

Faculty of Psychology, Gunadarma University, Indonesia

Address: JRWV+4C2, UI Access Road, Kelapa Dua, Monument, Cimanggis District, Depok City, West Java 16451

Author correspondence: wardahhayatik30@gmail.com

Abstract: When individuals enter the early adult stage, they are faced with many demands and challenges from those around them. Individuals who are unable to adapt to the various problems they face and are unable to progress to the expected stage of development will experience various psychological problems, such as quarter life crisis. The purpose of this study is to examine how much influence self-esteem and social support have on quarter life crisis in early adulthood. The participants of this study amounted to 106 male and female early adults in the Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi areas. The approach used in this study is a quantitative approach. The sample determination used non-probability sampling technique, namely purposive sampling. The results of this study indicate that there is an influence between self-esteem and social support on quarter life crisis by 22.4%. This research self-esteem has a stronger influence than social support, because in the early adult phase it is able to make a meaningful contribution to the next process of individual life, as well as for healthy personal development.

Keywords: Quarter life crisis, self-esteem, social support, early adulthood

1. INTRODUCTION

In the course of life, every human being will certainly go through phases of development starting from the prenatal period, infants, children, adolescents, adults, to the elderly. In each phase of development, changes occur in various aspects, including physical, emotional, attitudinal, social, intellectual, moral, interest, personality, talent, language, creativity and motivation. Basically, each of these aspects will form new combinations and connections which will then create physical and psychological specializations that differ from one individual to another (Habibie, Syarofah, & Anwar, 2019).

Individuals who have mature self-preparation in facing changes at each stage of development will develop towards maturity. Meanwhile, individuals who lack the ability to deal with all the changes in this phase will experience worries and feel difficulties about what will happen in early adulthood (Aristiawati, 2021).

Alexandra Robins and Abby Wilner were the first to introduce the term quarter life crisis (Robbins, A., & Wilner, 2006). The term departs from Jeffrey Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood, which explains that quarter life crisis is a period in which individuals relentlessly question their future, including feelings of anxiety regarding their career, financial situation, and social life. Quarter life crisis is usually also characterized by

reactions in individual emotions such as feelings of frustration, feelings of panic, feeling helpless, feeling that they have no purpose in life and others (Anjayani, 2021).

One of the impacts caused when someone experiences a quarter life crisis is depression. When a person has not prepared himself to face the life that will happen in the future and the reality faced is not as expected because of too high expectations, then a person will feel hesitant and anxious to look to the future, feel hopeless and depressed because his abilities do not have the same standards as other people's abilities, dislike himself, find it difficult to determine his life priorities and often compare himself to the achievements of others, making himself feel helpless (Robinson, Litman & Demetre, 2016).

This is in line with research conducted in the UK by Robinson & Wright (2013) to 1,023 respondents in their 30s, which found that more than 70% of respondents had experienced a quarter life crisis phase at the age of 20-29 years. The data shows that the crisis is experienced by more women than men with a ratio of 39% men and 49% women. Men experience crises related to finance and work and women experience quarter life crises related to marriage age, family problems and are trapped in toxic relationships that are uncomfortable romance to divorce. Another survey conducted by LinkedIn (2017) in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and India on 6,014 respondents found that 75% of respondents had experienced a quarter life crisis at the age of 25-33 years.

There are several things that can affect quarter life crisis. The first is self-esteem, which is an important construct in developmental psychology and refers to positive and negative evaluations of oneself. Positive self-esteem can be seen as a critical protective factor against health problems and social behaviors. Positive self-esteem can be seen as a critical protective factor from health problems and social behavior (Yang, et al., 2020).

The relationship between self-esteem and quarter life crisis in Husain & Suminar's research (2022) that the higher the level of self-esteem of a person in early adulthood, the lower their level of quarter life crisis.

However, other studies show that there is no strong conclusion regarding the causality of the relationship between self-esteem and stress, anxiety, or depression so it is suspected that this effect is also caused by a third variable (Sowislo & Orth, 2013). Research from Rossi & Mebert (2011) also showed that Emerging Adults' psychic trends were generally positive with their depression scores decreasing. These findings support the hypothesis that there may be other variables at play.

Another variable that is thought to affect quarter life crisis is social support. As research conducted by Scientific (2022) social support has an influence on quarter life crisis. Social support where individuals have interpersonal relationships with each other that require support from each other.

Social pressures from the environment, family, work and future expectations if you do not get social support from people around you, will hinder development which can cause frustration, despair, worry and depression (Atwood & Scholts, 2008).

In previous research conducted by Astuti & Hartati (2013) that not all early adults have social support from around well and they really need social support, especially from parents and peers who can help them have a positive impact on their mental health. Research conducted by Santi (2020) on early adulthood, shows that one aspect comes from the closest people to reduce the burden of problems in their lives.

The results of research conducted by Ameliya (2020) show that the lower the social support, the higher the quarter life crisis. This is reinforced by the opinion conveyed by Sarafino, E., Smith, T. W., King, D., & Delongis (2015) which explains that social support can provide mental health and well-being benefits despite the frustrations experienced. Therefore, social support can function as an external protection mechanism in dealing with changes in transition and worry where at this time individuals have a tendency to feel psychological pressure which causes high quarter life crisis.

Based on the explanation that has been presented, researchers want to see a comparison of which influence is greater in minimizing quarter life crisis in early adulthood, whether self-esteem or social support. Researchers chose these two factors because they are considered to represent sources that can affect the occurrence of quarter life crisis, namely from internal factors and external factors.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Participants

The participants in this study were 106 early adults aged 20-29 years old from Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi. The research was conducted online, g-form questionnaire. Then, respondents were given information about the purpose of the study and requested availability to become a research sample. The g-form was administered on December 17, 2023 to January 3, 2024.

The average age of participants was 25 years. The majority of early adult participants were female as many as 65 people (61.3%), while the rest were male as many

as 41 people (38.7%). The majority of participants lived in Jakarta (N=38; 24.2%), followed by Bogor (N=8; 5.15%), Depok (N=23; 14.6%), Tangerang (N=20; 12.7%) and Bekasi (N=16; 10.2%).

Design

This research is a quantitative type. The research design used is a non-probability sampling technique, namely purposive sampling.

3. MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Quarter-Life Crisis in this study will be measured by a measuring instrument designed by Robbins and Abby Wilner (2001) and translated by (Anjayani, 2021). The measuring instrument consists of 15, namely there are 10 favorable items and 5 unfavorable items. The acquisition of values based on the answers chosen by the respondent in accordance with the types of favorable and unfavorable statements, namely Strongly Disagree (STS), Disagree (TS), Agree (S), and Strongly Agree (SS). The highest score on the favorable statement is given to the SS (Strongly Agree) answer which is given a score of 4, Agree (Agree) is given a score of 3, TS (Disagree) is given a score of 2, and STS (Strongly Disagree) is given a score of 1. Conversely, the unfavorable statement the highest score is given to the STS (Strongly Disagree) answer is given a score of 1, Disagree (TS) is given a score of 2, Agree (S) is given a score of 3, and SS (Strongly Agree) is given a score of 4. An example of an item from this scale is "I have several Dreams and know how to realize them". Reliability is 0.79.

Self-esteem, namely RSES (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale) This measuring instrument compiled by Rosenberg (1965) consists of 10 items and is a unidimensional Self-Esteem measuring instrument. This scale measures Self-Esteem globally for both adolescents and early adults. The RSES in this study is a version that has been adapted by Azwar (2021) into Indonesian. This measuring instrument consists of 5 favorable items and 5 unfavorable items. The acquisition of values based on the answers chosen by the respondent in accordance with the types of favorable and unfavorable statements, namely Strongly Disagree (STS), Disagree (TS), Agree (S), and Strongly Agree (SS). The highest score on the favorable statement is given to the SS (Strongly Agree) answer which is given a score of 4, Agree (Agree) is given a score of 3, TS (Disagree) is given a score of 2, and STS (Strongly Disagree) is given a score of 1. Conversely, the unfavorable statement the highest score is given to the STS (Strongly Disagree) answer is given a score of 1, Disagree (TS) is given a score of 2, Agree (S) is given a score of 3, and SS (Strongly Agree) is given

a score of 4. Starting with the sentence “Overall, I am satisfied with myself”. The reliability is 0.81.

Social support is a social support measurement scale using aspects based on the theory of social support by Sarafino (2011). Consists of 14 items. The acquisition of values based on the answers chosen by the respondent in accordance with the types of favorable and unfavorable statements, namely Strongly Disagree (STS), Disagree (TS), Agree (S), and Strongly Agree (SS). The highest score on the favorable statement is given to the SS (Strongly Agree) answer which is given a score of 4, S (Agree) is given a score of 3, TS (Disagree) is given a score of 2, and STS (Strongly Disagree) is given a score of 1. Conversely, the highest score unfavorable statement is given to the STS (Strongly Disagree) answer which is given a score of 1, TS (Disagree) is given a score of 2, S (Agree) is given a score of 3, and SS (Strongly Agree) is given a score of 4. An example of an item from this scale is “Attention from my family makes me comfortable”. Its reliability is 0.67.

This study also included additional exploratory questions. These exploratory questions are intended to find out the reasons for information on problems experienced by early adults that are not explored in the scale.

4. ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

This study used multiple regression test data analysis techniques with the help of the SPSS (Statistical Packade for Social Science) version 24 for windows program. While other descriptive data is presented using percentage calculations.

Table 1. Reasons that burdened the mind of the original adult in the last few months

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Alasan	Disebut sebanyak
Education	22 (20,8%)
Uccupation	48 (45,3%)
Financial	11 (10,4%)
Other	25 (23,6)

Table 1 shows the reasons given for what has been the burdened the minds of early adults in the past few months. The most cited reason was work.

Table 2. Regression Analysis Summary Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
1	.466 ^a	.217	.202	8.27604

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem, Social Support

From table 2 above, it can be explained that the R Square value is 0.217. It can be interpreted that the proportion of variance from the quarter life crisis variable that has been explained by the self-esteem and social support variables is 21.7%. The remaining 78.3% is influenced by other variables and outside of this study. The next result is an analysis of the influence or impact of all independent variables on quarter life crisis. The results of the F test are seen in table 3 below.

Table 3. ANOVA of all Independent Variables on Dependent Variable

No	Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2035.949	2	1017.974	14.834	.000 ^b
	Residual	7068.501	103	68.626		
	Total	9104.450	105			

- a. *Dependent Variable: Quarter life crisis*
b. *Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem, Social Support*

Based on the results of the F test table 3. It can be seen that the p (probability) value in the far-right column is 0.000 with a value of $p < 0.05$. So the null hypothesis which states that “there is no effect of self-esteem and social support on quarter life crisis” is rejected. This means that there is a significant influence of the independent variables, namely self-esteem and social support on the dependent variable, namely quarter life crisis.

Next, look at the regression coefficients of all independent variables. This regression coefficient is obtained from the T test results. Then if the p value < 0.05 , it means that the resulting regression coefficient has a significant effect on the quarter life crisis variable. The results of the regression equation of each independent variable on quarter life crisis in early adulthood in table 4 below.

Table 4. Regression Coefficient of Each IV

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	73.824	5.505		13.410	.000
	SE	-.464	.092	-.469	-5.050	.000
	SS	-.012	.099	-.012	-.125	.901

- a. *Dependent Variable: Quarter Life Crisis*

It can be seen that both variables have a significant value, namely self-esteem while social support does not. This can also be seen from table 4. above in the significance column. If $p < 0.05$ then the coefficient of the resulting regression has a significant effect on quarter life crisis and vice versa. The explanation of this coefficient obtained from each

independent variable is that the self-esteem variable has a regression coefficient value of -0.469 with a significance of 0.000 ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). This proves that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of self-esteem on quarter life crisis is rejected. This means that self-esteem has an influence on quarter life crisis. Then the social support variable has a regression coefficient value of -.012 with a significance of 0.901 ($\text{sig} > 0.05$). This proves that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of social support on quarter life crisis is accepted. This means that social support has no influence on quarter life crisis.

The most common problem experienced by early adults is about work. Arnett (2000) explains that early adulthood is characterized by changes and in-depth exploration of various matters such as work, romance and worldview. This is common and is often associated with the emergence of early adulthood. This exploration exposes individuals to many changes that have an impact on feelings of discomfort within the individual, resulting in emotional instability (Nugsria et al., 2023).

The results of research conducted by Anjayani (2021) show that the early adult phase makes individuals feel that they are always approached by problems and always feel burdened, then each individual has different emotional stability. Emotional instability results in differences in response between individuals. This is explained by Nash & Murray (2010) that individuals who feel happy and enthusiastic, because they feel challenged by new living conditions that have never been felt before, but on the other hand there are also those who feel anxiety, depressed and empty. Individuals who respond negatively to various problems encountered in the stages of development, are likely to experience various psychological problems, such as feelings of uncertainty and experience an emotional crisis or commonly referred to as a quarter life crisis, which is something that is natural for individuals, but if it is not addressed properly, it will have a negative impact on those experiencing it (Robbinson & Wilner, 2001; Atwood & Scholtz, 2008).

The characteristics of early adults who experience quarter life crisis according to Thorspecken (2005) such as clueless, which is a condition of feeling completely “not knowing” about oneself. Then there are too many choices which make individuals confused and even feel panic. Then the third is indecisive, causing individuals to not be able to commit. The fourth is hopeless, a condition where individuals feel resigned to the existing reality. Finally anxious, the many choices make individuals have many thoughts about the future.

From the above characteristics during the quarter life crisis phase, it is necessary to form a character about oneself and is an important factor in direct behavior related to various aspects of life, this is called self-esteem. Branden (1992) explains that without being equipped with self-esteem, individuals will have difficulty overcoming life's challenges and experiencing various happiness in their lives. He also said that self-esteem contains survival value, which is a basic human need. This allows self-esteem to make a meaningful contribution to the next process of individual life, as well as for healthy personal development.

The process of character building about oneself to how to survive to overcome challenges in life in order to survive certainly needs social support from parents and peers. According to Santi's research (2020), it is explained that one aspect of facing a quarter life crisis is to need social support from the closest people to reduce the burden of problems in their lives.

However, in this study, social support has no influence on quarter life crisis. Previous studies were mostly more specific such as family support or peer support. Another possible factor that causes social support to have no effect on quarter life crisis is that there is no explanation of what aspects make social support have an influence. Perhaps in early adulthood the support of certain people is significantly influential. Like the results of research conducted by Asrar & Taufani (2022) that peer support has a significant effect on quarter life crisis with an effective contribution of 8.9%. Explained by Faqih (2020) that social support from peers can relieve the pressure or difficulties experienced and provide a sense of security and comfort.

5. CONCLUSION

This study found that internal factors (self-esteem) have the highest influence on quarter life crisis compared to external factors (social support). Self-esteem is needed for individuals who are in the quarter life crisis phase. As explained by Edwards (2010) high self-esteem can protect individuals from health or social issues, anxiety, stress and depression and help individuals to develop in achieving life satisfaction and success. Meanwhile, future researchers can improve the shortcomings of this study by paying attention to external factors that have not been discussed, such as mapping the classification of social support variables.

REFERENCES

- Agustin, I. (2012). *Terapi dengan pendekatan solution-focused pada individu yang mengalami quarter life crisis* (Tesis tidak dipublikasikan). Universitas Indonesia. <https://lib.ui.ac.id/detail.jsp?id=20300702>
- Akta, R. A., dkk. (2021). Emotional intelligence dan stress pada mahasiswa yang mengalami quarter life crisis. *Jurnal Psikologi Konseling*, 19(2), 1035. <https://doi.org/10.24114/konseling.v19i2.31121>
- Ameliya. (2020). *Hubungan antara dukungan sosial dengan quarter life crisis*. <https://repository.radenintan.ac.id/id/eprint/12581>
- Anjayani, S. P. N. (2021). *Faktor-faktor quarter life crisis (Studi kuantitatif deskriptif pada mahasiswa tingkat akhir Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang)*. <https://eprints.walisongo.ac.id/id/eprint/15076>
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469–480. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469>
- Asrar, A. M., & Taufani, T. (2022). Pengaruh dukungan sosial teman sebaya terhadap quarter-life crisis pada dewasa awal. *JIVA: Journal of Behaviour and Mental Health*, 3(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.30984/jiva.v3i1.2002>
- Astuti, T. P., & Hartati, S. (2013). Dukungan sosial pada mahasiswa yang sedang menyusun skripsi (Studi fenomenologis pada mahasiswa Fakultas Psikologi Undip). *Psikologi*, 13, 69–81. <https://ejournal.undip.ac.id/index.php/psikologi/article/download/8339/6870>
- Atwood, J., & Scholtz, C. (2008). Quarter-life time period: An age of indulgence, crisis or both? *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 30(4), 233–250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-008-9066-2>
- Azwar, S. (2021). *Penyusunan skala psikologi*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. <https://pustakapelajar.co.id/buku/penyusunan-skala-psikologi>
- Branden, N. (1992). *Power of self-esteem*. Barnes & Noble Books. https://books.google.co.id/books/about/Power_of_Self-Esteem.html?id=jac7tJ-RSpOC&redir_esc=y
- Habibie, A., & Syakarofath, N. A. (2019). Peran religiusitas terhadap quarterlife crisis (QLC) pada mahasiswa. *E-Journal Gamajop*, 5(2), 129–138. <https://doi.org/10.22146/gamajop.48948>
- Husain, K. I. S., & Suminar, D. R. (2022). Pengaruh self-esteem terhadap quarter-life crisis pada emerging adult dengan self-compassion sebagai moderator. *Buletin Riset Psikologi Dan Kesehatan Mental*, X, 1–11. <https://www.lib.unair.ac.id>
- Ilmiah, A. F. (2022). *Pengaruh efikasi diri dan dukungan sosial terhadap quarter life crisis mahasiswa tingkat akhir UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang*. <http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/id/eprint/45039>

- Joan, D. A., & Scholtz, C. (2008). The quarter-life time period: An age of indulgence, crisis or both? *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 30(4), 234. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-008-9066-2>
- Nash, R. J., & Murray, M. C. (2010). *Helping college students find purpose: The campus guide to meaning-making*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2011.0049>
- Nugsria, A., Pratitis, N. T., Arifiana, I. Y., & Psikologi, F. (2023). Quarter life crisis pada dewasa awal: Bagaimana peranan kecerdasan emosi? *INNER: Journal of Psychological Research*, 3(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.35747/hmj.v6i2.488>
- Robbins, A., & Wilner, A. (2001). *Quarter life crisis: The unique challenges of life in your twenties*. New York: Tarcser/Putman.
- Robinson, O. C., Demetre, J. D., & Litman, J. A. (2016). Adult life stage and crisis as predictors of curiosity and authenticity: Testing inferences. *Journal of Behavioral Development*. <https://jbd.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/04/22/0165025416645201.full>
- Robinson, Wright, & Smith. (2013). The holistic phase model of early adulthood crisis. *Journal of Adult Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10804-013-9153-Y>
- Rossi, N., & Mebert, C. (2011). Does a quarterlife crisis exist? *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 172(2), 141–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.2010.521784>
- Santi, Y. A. (2020). *Hubungan dukungan sosial terhadap koping stres pada dewasa awal yang mengalami fase krisis hidup seperempat abad di Kota Bandung* (S1 Thesis, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia). http://repository.upi.edu/54383/1/S_PSI_1600272_Title.pdf
- Sarafino, E. P., & Smith, T. W. (2011). *Health psychology: Biopsychosocial interactions* (7th ed.). John Wiley & Sons. https://books.google.com/books/about/Health_Psychology_Biopsychosocial_Intera.html?id=tdAbAAAAQBAJ
- Sarafino, E., Smith, T. W., King, D., & Delongis, A. (2015). *Health psychology: Biopsychosocial interactions* (Canadian ed.). John Wiley & Sons. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270899066_Health_Psychology_Biopsychosocial_Interactions
- Sowislo, J., & Orth, U. (2013). Does low self-esteem predict depression and anxiety? A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 139(1), 213–240. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028931>
- Thorspecken, J. M. (2005). Quarterlife crisis: The unaddressed phenomenon. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of The New Jersey Counseling Association*, 120–126. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327764080_Development_and_Validation_of_Quarterlife_Crisis_Scale_for_Filipinos
- Yang, S., Ng, P. Y., Chiu, R., Shuying, L., & Klassen, R. (2020). Criteria for adulthood, resilience, and self-esteem among emerging adults in Hong Kong: A path analysis approach. *Children and Youth Services Review*.