

QUARTER LIFE CRISIS: EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YOUNG ADULTS IN THEIR TWENTIES

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Abstract

The twenties of a person's life often present unique and complex challenges, often known as the Quarter Life Crisis. Significant changes in social, economic, and personal demands can create uncertainty, anxiety, and feelings of crisis in young adults. The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges and coping strategies of young adults in their twenties who are experiencing a quarter-life crisis. This study used a qualitative research method with a case study approach. Data collection techniques were carried out by literature study and interviews with 5 young adults in their twenties who experienced a Quarter Life Crisis. The data that has been collected is then analyzed in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the challenges faced by young adults in their twenties included uncertainty about the future, confusion, anxiety, and pressure to achieve success. The coping strategies used to overcome this are by seeking support from others, doing activities that are liked, and seeking professional help.

Keywords: Challenges, Coping Strategies, Older Adults, Twenties

Introduction

In every journey of life, humans go through a series of complex developmental stages. Starting from childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, to the elderly stage of development, each of these stages has distinctive characteristics, tasks, and challenges that individuals must face. One of the most challenging stages is early adulthood. This period is often characterized by a search for identity, emotional turmoil, social isolation, as well as changes in values and adaptation to changes in lifestyle.

Early adulthood is a period where individuals are faced with a variety of problems that demand responsibility. During this time, individuals experience significant changes, including physical changes, cognitive development, and emotional-psychosocial aspects (Syifa'ussurur et al., 2021).

The phenomenon of emotional crisis that occurs when a person is in the emerging adulthood process is often known as a quarter-life crisis. Quarter Life Crisis is a condition of identity crisis that occurs because individuals are not ready to face it when they are in

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the transition phase from adolescence to adulthood, as defined by Robbins and Wilner (Fazira et al., 2023). According to Azri Agustin, a clinical psychologist from the Faculty of Psychology, Gadjah Mada University (UGM), the term Quarter Life Crisis refers to the age range of 18 to 30 years, which is the middle period of young life (Zulfikar, 2022).

Someone who is experiencing a quarter-life crisis feels a loss of zest for life, feelings of failure, decreased self-confidence, and a loss of meaning in life. They even tend to avoid social interaction. Significantly, what is felt by individuals who are experiencing a quarter-life crisis is a feeling of confusion about the state of life that feels monotonous, excessive worry about the future, and pondering and questioning various life decisions that have been taken (Herawati & Hidayat, 2020).

Previous research by (Hamka et al., 2022) showed that members of the religious community experienced a quarter-life crisis due to getting a lot of pressure from the family both in terms of work and marriage which eventually led to a sense of pressure, feelings of inferiority, and comparing their achievements with the achievements of other individuals. The coping strategy carried out by respondents in this study was to actively participate in religious activities and increase worship practices.

Another study by (Kharisma, 2023) The description of the quarter-life crisis experience in new psychology students at Jambi University that has been studied is academic challenges, post-graduation pressure, the influence of interpersonal conflicts, self-comparison, and hopelessness. The strategies in dealing with quarter-life crises carried out by fresh graduates of psychology graduates at Jambi University are self-acceptance, growth mindset social support, psychological influence, and religiosity. The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges and coping strategies of young adults in their twenties who experienced a quarter-life crisis.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative research methods with a case study approach. According to (Moleong, 2017) qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and others holistically and using descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special natural context by utilizing various natural methods.

Data collection techniques were carried out by literature study from Google Scholar and interviews with 5 young adults from various regions in Indonesia (Bandung (S), Jakarta (A), Denpasar (D), Medan (P), and Pontianak (R)) who are in their 20s and are experiencing Quarter Life Crisis. The collected data were then analyzed in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Results and Discussion

Quarter-life crisis is a concern felt by individuals as they begin to leave the comfort and security of adolescence to enter real adult life. During this period, individuals experience a variety of emotional and behavioral changes. The term quarter-life crisis first appeared in 2001 when a student named Abby Wilner expressed her feelings of

confusion about the future after graduating from college. This feeling of confusion is generally related to work, career, and relationship issues (Nash & Murray, 2010; Rosalinda & Michael, 2020).

According to Robinson (2015), a quarter-life crisis can be divided into 2 forms, including The Locked-out form This form will occur when the individual enters the adult role but feels unable to fulfill it. In this phase, the individual will feel unemployed, have poor interpersonal relationships, and feel unable to be financially independent. In the first phase of this form, individuals will feel optimistic when entering a social role that is challenging for the individual but can be the beginning of a sense of disappointment and frustration (Artiningsih & Savira, 2021).

The second phase includes resolution and choices. In the fourth phase begin to plan new strategies to achieve previously planned goals. This phase usually individuals compromising on achieving and changing goals in their lives. This phase will end with progress in a role that is fixed and not like at the beginning of the crisis.

The Locked-in form This form will occur when the individual feels trapped in the adult role. This can occur when individuals begin to make commitments as adult roles settle into stable patterns of adult development, individuals have expectations that can have a positive effect on their lives, but individuals can realize that they don't expect it, so they feel trapped and feelings of frustration arise (Putri et al., 2015). In conclusion, this phase indicates that a crisis period is growing in the individual's life, this is determined by a commitment (series of commitments) in the life structure that is no longer desired but is not yet considered a realistic change.

According to (Hassler, 2009), the quarter-life crisis has seven dimensions that cover various aspects. First, is the dimension of indecision, which refers to a condition in which a person feels difficult and hesitant in making or has made decisions in his or her life. Second, is the dimension of despair, which describes an individual's feeling that they have not achieved accomplishments or feel they have failed in achieving independence.

Third, the negative appraisal dimension, which includes a negative view of achievements and efforts that have been made, because the results do not match expectations or do not meet existing social standards. Fourth, the trapped in difficult situations dimension, where individuals feel they have no way out of their lives and feel trapped in difficult situations.

Fifth, the anxious dimension, describes individuals' worries about things that have not yet happened, especially related to their future. Sixth, the distress dimension, includes situations where individuals feel there is pressure and high social expectations when they are faced with demands to be independent in their lives.

Finally, the dimension of worry about interpersonal relationships is where individuals worry that they have disappointed their family or partner because they have not been able to meet the expectations or standards that have been set. All of these dimensions are part of the diverse and complex experience of a quarter-life crisis.

The Quarter Life Crisis challenges faced by the interviewees as young adults in their twenties include several key aspects. One of the quarter-life crisis challenges faced

by the interviewees was uncertainty about the future. The interviewees felt unsure about what they wanted to do with their lives. They felt pressured to make big decisions about careers, relationships, and life goals.

Interviewee (R) said, "I feel like I am at a crossroads. I don't know what I want to do with my life. I want to be successful, but I don't know how to get there". Uncertainty about the future can lead to feelings of stress and anxiety. Interviewees feel worried that they will not succeed in life or will not find happiness.

In addition to uncertainty about the future, interviewees also experienced confusion and anxiety. They felt confused and anxious about the future. They worry that they will not succeed in life or will not find happiness. Interviewee (S) said, "I feel like I don't know what I'm doing. I feel like I have no direction in life". Confusion and anxiety can make it difficult for people to focus and make decisions. Interviewees found it difficult to take action and pursue their goals.

Interviewees also felt pressure to achieve success. They felt they had to meet other people's expectations or their own. Interviewee (D) said, "I feel like I have to be successful. I feel like I have to fulfill my parents' expectations". The pressure to achieve success can lead to feelings of stress and frustration. Interviewees feel like they are not good enough or that they will never achieve their goals.

Uncertainty about the future, confusion, and anxiety, and pressure to achieve success are some of the quarter-life crisis challenges faced by the interviewees as young adults in their twenties. These challenges can lead to feelings of stress, anxiety, and frustration. One of the causes of the crisis in their twenties is the easy access to technology that allows them to see and compare other people's lives and personal information on social media. This often makes individuals feel less confident and tend to compare themselves to what they see on these social platforms.

Several factors influence the onset of Quarter Life Crisis in millennials, including (1) the influence of social media, (2) the level of education, (3) their current job, (4) support from family, (5) pressure from the surrounding environment, and (6) alignment between personal aspirations and expectations coming from their environment. All of these factors have the potential to trigger a crisis in these young individuals (Sari & Prastiti, 2021).

Quarter-life crisis generally lasts for about one year, but its duration can vary depending on how individuals deal with it (Herawati & Hidayat, 2020). According to (Robbins, 2004), individuals who experience a crisis are individuals who have difficulty making adjustments to demands that come from themselves as well as demands from parents, family, and the social environment.

Crises in their twenties can arise when individuals find it difficult to cope with the demands and expectations that came at the beginning of their 20s. Therefore, individuals experiencing a quarter-life crisis are advised to develop coping mechanisms that help them deal with the various pressures that arise during a quarter-life crisis (Atwood & Scholtz, 2008).

The coping strategies used by the interviewees to overcome the quarter-life crisis included several approaches. One was to seek support from others. This includes talking to friends or family members about the feelings and challenges they are experiencing, as well as seeking advice or views from those who are more experienced. In addition, informant (P) also uses activities that they enjoy as a way to cope with a quarter-life crisis. This could include taking up hobbies, sports, or creative activities that can help them feel more balanced and happy.

Through these activities, they can distract themselves from their worries and find joy in the activities they enjoy. Furthermore, seeking professional help is also a strategy used by informant (A), this involves consulting a therapist or counselor who can help them explore and address the issues they face in more depth. This therapist can provide emotional support, problem-solving tools, and a more objective view of their situation. Thus, the interviewees used these coping strategies to help them cope with the quarter-life crisis and develop ways to better face the challenges of early adulthood.

When a person successfully overcomes a quarter-life crisis, in addition to achieving stability in their lives, they will also become more competent in dealing with various problems. What's more, individuals who go through a quarter-life crisis successfully will realize that sometimes unpleasant changes are a natural part of the journey toward desired achievements (Argasiam, 2019).

In contrast, those who remain trapped in a quarter-life crisis will continue to feel feelings of helplessness, self-doubt, and fear of failure (Martin, 2016). Those who are unable to overcome the quarter-life crisis will also feel a lack of confidence regarding their achievements, long-term plans, and life goals may feel uncertain (Pande, 2011).

Conclusion

Young adults in their twenties face a range of significant challenges in this period, one of the main challenges faced is uncertainty about the future. These adults often feel confused and anxious about their career choices, relationships, and life goals. These challenges can create feelings of identity crisis and deep confusion. In addition, the pressure to achieve success is also an important factor that influences young adults in dealing with a quarter-life crisis.

To cope with these challenges, the individuals in this study used a variety of coping strategies, one of the most common strategies being to seek support from others, such as friends, family, or partners. Discussing their feelings and concerns with others can help them feel more heard and gain insight from different perspectives. In addition, young adults also use preferred activities as a form of coping, this includes engaging in hobbies, sports, or creative activities that can help them feel more balanced and happy.

Some individuals in this study also sought professional help in coping with their quarter-life crisis such as counseling or psychological therapy to help them overcome feelings of deep confusion and anxiety.

Future research suggestions in delving deeper into the challenges and coping strategies of young adults in their twenties could include the following: 1) The Role of

Technology, Examine the role of technology, especially social media, in influencing quarter-life crisis and coping strategies. Does social media increase distress or provide additional support? 2) Interventions, Future research could also explore the types of interventions or support that are effective for individuals experiencing quarter-life crisis. Are there educational or support programs that can help individuals better cope with these challenges? 3) Comparison with Previous Generations, Explore how quarter-life crisis experiences in the current generation may be different or similar to previous generations. Are there changes in challenges and coping strategies over time? 4) Aspects of Mental Wellbeing, Further studies could focus on aspects of individuals' mental well-being during quarter-life crisis and how coping strategies may affect their well-being.

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