



THE EXISTENCE OF THE QUARTER LIFE CRISIS PHENOMENON IN YOUNG ADULTS ON POST-COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH IN PAREPARE CITY COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to explore the phenomenon of Quarter Life Crisis among young adults in Parepare City before and after the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on mental health. This ex-post facto research involved young adults without permanent jobs in Parepare City. A purposive sampling technique was employed, with a total sample of 300 respondents. The study results indicate a significant effect of Quarter Life Crisis on Covid-19 prevention (Sig. 0.002 < 0.005) and on mental health (Sig. 0.014 < 0.05). A mental health workshop is proposed as an intervention to assist individuals experiencing a Quarter Life Crisis.

Keywords: Quarter Life Crisis, Mental Health, Covid-19.

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INTRODUCTION

The quarter-life crisis (QLC) has emerged as a significant phenomenon affecting young adults, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic's far-reaching effects on mental health have intensified the prevalence of QLC, a period characterized by emotional and psychological turmoil as individuals transition from adolescence to adulthood. The present study, titled "Eksistensi Fenomena Quarter Life Crisis Pada Dewasa Muda Terhadap Kesehatan Mental Pasca Covid-19 Pada Masyarakat Kota Parepare," aims to investigate the impact of QLC on mental health among young adults in Parepare, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, both before and after the pandemic. This introduction provides a comprehensive overview of the importance of understanding QLC, the effects of the pandemic on mental health, and the rationale for focusing on young adults in Parepare.

Human life progresses through various stages, each with unique challenges and demands. As individuals transition from adolescence to adulthood, they often face significant pressures related to career choices, financial independence, and personal relationships. This transitional phase, commonly known as emerging adulthood, spans from ages 18 to 30 (Arini, 2021). During this period, many young



adults experience the quarter-life crisis, characterized by feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and confusion about the future (Agarwal et al., 2020). This phenomenon has become increasingly prevalent, particularly in the face of rapid technological advancements, globalization, and heightened individual competition (Putri, 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the challenges associated with emerging adulthood. Lockdown measures, economic disruptions, and social isolation have contributed to a rise in mental health issues among young adults (Schlichtiger et al., 2020). Research indicates that young adults have experienced higher levels of depressive symptoms and psychological distress during the pandemic, with significant impacts on their mental well-being (Hertz-Palmor et al., 2021). The increased prevalence of QLC during this period underscores the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms to address the unique stressors faced by this demographic.

The primary research problem addressed in this study is the impact of QLC on the mental health of young adults in Parepare, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding this impact is crucial for developing effective mental health interventions and support systems tailored to the needs of this population. The study seeks to answer three key questions: How does QLC affect individuals in early adulthood before and after the pandemic? What is the impact of QLC on mental health in early adulthood? How effective are workshops in helping individuals experiencing QLC?

To address these questions, the study employs a quantitative approach with an ex-post facto design, focusing on young adults in Parepare who do not have permanent employment. This approach allows for the examination of pre-existing conditions and the assessment of the pandemic's impact on QLC and mental health. The study also explores the effectiveness of workshops designed to support individuals experiencing QLC, providing a potential solution to mitigate the negative effects of this phenomenon on mental health.

The quarter-life crisis, as a developmental crisis episode, is well-documented in the literature. It is characterized by emotional upheaval during the transition from adolescence to early adulthood, often manifesting as anxiety, worry, and uncertainty about future life aspects such as career, relationships, and social life (Setiawan & Milati, 2022; Anggraini et al., 2022). Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood, which identifies this phase as extending from 18 to 29 years of age, provides a framework for understanding the unique challenges faced by young adults during this period (Arini, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted young adults, exacerbating the prevalence and severity of QLC. Studies have shown that young adults are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues following COVID-19 infection, with factors such as job loss, financial instability, and social isolation contributing to increased psychological distress (Badinlou, 2024; Graupensperger et al., 2022). The lockdown measures and ongoing restrictions have led to higher levels of depressive symptoms and mental health issues among young adults,



underscoring the need for targeted interventions (Schlichtiger et al., 2020; Hertz-Palmor et al., 2021).

Research has highlighted the importance of resilience and social support in mitigating the impact of COVID-19-related stress on mental health among young adults. Studies have demonstrated that young adults with greater resilience and access to social support networks are better able to cope with the psychological stressors associated with the pandemic (Noh & Park, 2022). Furthermore, gender disparities in mental health outcomes have been observed, with females experiencing more pronounced mental health effects during the pandemic (Madden, 2024). These findings emphasize the need for tailored interventions that address the specific needs of different demographic groups within the young adult population.

Previous studies have extensively documented the mental health challenges faced by young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research has shown that young adults experienced higher levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation during the pandemic, particularly due to factors such as social isolation, disruption of routines, and financial stress (Villanti et al., 2022; Mayorga et al., 2021). The pandemic's impact on mental health has been more pronounced among vulnerable populations, including females, young adults with pre-existing mental health conditions, and minority groups (Sauceda et al., 2023; Junior et al., 2020).

Despite the extensive research on the mental health impacts of the pandemic, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the specific phenomenon of QLC and its intersection with post-pandemic mental health. Most studies have focused on general mental health outcomes without examining the unique stressors and psychological impacts associated with QLC. Additionally, there is limited research on the effectiveness of interventions, such as workshops, in supporting young adults experiencing QLC in the post-pandemic context. This study aims to fill these gaps by focusing on the specific context of Parepare and examining the impact of QLC on mental health among young adults in this community.

The primary objective of this study is to understand the impact of QLC on early adulthood before and after the pandemic, examine the effect of QLC on mental health, and assess the impact of workshops on individuals experiencing QLC. The study hypothesizes that QLC significantly affects mental health in early adulthood and that workshops have a positive influence on individuals experiencing QLC.

The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of the quarter-life crisis phenomenon within the specific context of post-COVID-19 mental health among young adults in Parepare City. By examining the unique stressors and psychological impacts experienced by this demographic, this research provides new insights into the challenges faced by young adults in the aftermath of the pandemic. The study's focus on Parepare, a community with specific socio-economic characteristics, adds to the understanding of how QLC manifests in different cultural and economic contexts.

The scope of the study is limited to young adults in Parepare, South Sulawesi, who do not have permanent employment. The study employs quantitative methods with an ex-post facto approach to explore the effects of QLC on mental health post-pandemic. The findings of this study are expected to inform the



development of targeted interventions and support mechanisms to address the mental health needs of young adults experiencing QLC in the post-pandemic era.

The mental health of young adults in the post-COVID-19 era has been significantly impacted by various stressors and challenges. Studies have shown that young adults experienced higher levels of depressive symptoms during the pandemic, particularly due to income loss and financial strain (Hertz-Palmor et al., 2021). The lockdown measures and ongoing restrictions have led to economic losses and social distress, contributing to increased psychological stress and mental health issues among young adults (Schlichtiger et al., 2020). Additionally, non-compliance with COVID-19 public health measures has been associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms among young adults (Coulaud et al., 2023).

Research has indicated that the mental health effects of the pandemic were more pronounced among females in Ireland, highlighting gender disparities in mental health outcomes (Madden, 2024). Furthermore, the pandemic has had a substantial impact on the mental health of Black and Latinx young people with HIV in the United States, emphasizing the need for targeted support for vulnerable populations (Sauceda et al., 2023). Studies have also shown that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a higher prevalence and severity of psychological symptoms among young people and adults, underscoring the widespread mental health implications of the crisis (Junior et al., 2020).

The pandemic has exacerbated mental health challenges among young adults, with increased levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation reported in this population (Villanti et al., 2022). Young adults have faced unique stressors during the pandemic, such as social isolation, disruption of routines, and financial stress, which have contributed to negative mental health outcomes (Mayorga et al., 2021). Moreover, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of resilience and social support in mitigating the impact of COVID-19-related stress on mental health among young adults (Noh & Park, 2022).

One of the most prevalent features of the quarter-life crisis includes relationship breakups, debt, conflict with parents, feeling trapped in a dissatisfying job, unemployment, and job pressure (Robinson, 2018). This quarter-life crisis is also an emotional change that occurs during the developmental period from early adolescence to adulthood, causing feelings of anxiety, worry, and uncertainty about future life such as career, relationships, and social life (Anggraini et al., 2022).

Entering the phase of emerging adulthood, a person will experience various psychological problems, feel uncertain in life, and have an emotional crisis commonly known as a quarter-life crisis (Ihsani & Utami, 2022). The quarter-life crisis is a phenomenon that is common in individuals aged 20-30 years old (Herawati & Hidayat, 2020). Quarter-life crisis (QLC) is a popular term for developmental crisis episodes that occur during early adulthood (18-30) (Agarwal et al., 2020). It is an emotional crisis experienced by individuals who are in the transition phase from adolescence to early adulthood (emerging adulthood) (Setiawan & Milati, 2022).

Arnett proposed a new developmental stage, namely emerging adulthood, an extended adolescent transitional phase, ranging from 18-29 years of age. Arnett's



theory is further expanded by Robbins and Wilner (2001) to identify the phenomenon of the quarter-life crisis, a phenomenon of anxiety about the future by 20-year-old adolescents who form independence both financially and in romantic relationships (Arini, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health of young adults, leading to what is now being recognized as a quarter-life crisis phenomenon. Research indicates that young adults are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues following COVID-19 infection (Badinlou, 2024). Factors such as life disruptions, including loss of employment, financial instability, and limited social interactions, have disproportionately affected young adults (Graupensperger et al., 2022). Studies have shown a considerable increase in depression among young adults, raising concerns about their mental well-being (Daly et al., 2021; Pratiwi et al., 2021).

During the pandemic, young adults experienced considerable stress and symptoms of mental health problems, especially among females (Mohler-Kuo et al., 2021). The negative influence of the pandemic on the mental health of adolescents and young adults has been well-documented (Ahn-Horst, 2024). Young adults reporting greater COVID-19 stressful experiences demonstrated poorer emotional adjustment, with higher levels of negative mood and lower levels of positive mood (Xie et al., 2022).

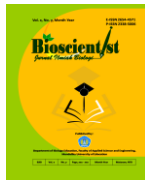
Furthermore, young adult carers reported poorer mental health outcomes compared to non-carers, indicating the additional challenges faced by this group (Landi et al., 2022). Studies have also highlighted the impact of COVID-induced confinement and restrictions on the mental well-being of young LGBTQ+ students, emphasizing the need for support in this population (Cleofas & Alibudbud, 2023). Research has consistently shown that young adults were more vulnerable to mental health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ehsanifar & Jameie, 2022).

The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of the quarter-life crisis phenomenon within the specific context of post-COVID-19 mental health among young adults in Parepare City. This research aims to fill the gap by focusing on the unique stressors and psychological impacts experienced by this demographic in the aftermath of the pandemic. By examining the intersection of quarter-life crisis and post-pandemic mental health, this study provides new insights into the challenges faced by young adults and the potential interventions that can support their mental well-being.

METHOD

This study is a quantitative research using an ex-post facto approach, which involves processes or steps to refine previously conducted research and ensure its reliability. Generally, this research aims to formulate, develop, and implement scientific programs to improve mental health among young adults in Parepare City. The study involves two variables: an independent variable (Quarter Life Crisis among Young Adults) and a dependent variable (Post-COVID-19 Mental Health).

The research was conducted in Parepare City, South Sulawesi. The population consists of young adults who do not have permanent employment and



will serve as respondents for the quantitative data collection. The study was conducted from March to October 2023.

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, considering the limitations of time, effort, and cost. Due to the large and widespread population, it is challenging and impractical to collect data from the entire population. Following Malhotra's suggestion in Jogiyanto (2013), the sample size is determined to be five to ten times the number of indicators, resulting in a sample size of 56 indicators x 5=300 respondents. The respondents were selected disproportionately from five community health centers in Parepare.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The data analysis techniques used in this study include descriptive and inferential statistics. The data from the questionnaires were measured using a Likert scale with the categories: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Disagree (TS), Less Agree (KS), and Strongly Disagree (STS).

Inferential Statistical Analysis

Several tests were conducted in the inferential statistical analysis, including prerequisite tests for normality, linearity, and hypothesis testing. The hypothesis test in this study is a simple linear regression test since only two variables are used. Simple linear regression will provide results regarding significance and correlation coefficients.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted in Parepare City, South Sulawesi. The population consists of young adults who do not have permanent employment and served as respondents for the quantitative data collection. The study took place from March to October 2023. The results of this research address the previously established problem formulation and aim to understand how the Quarter Life Crisis affects early adulthood post-pandemic, its impact on mental health, and the influence of workshops on individuals experiencing the Quarter Life Crisis. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires, interviews, and observations.

Prerequisite Tests

Model 1 Regression (Impact of Quarter Life Crisis on COVID-19 Prevention).

Normality Test

	N	Sig. (2Tailed)	Interpretation
Unstandardized Residual	100	.311	Normally Distributed

The normality test aims to find out whether the residual value has a normal distribution or not. A good regression model will provide residual values that are normally distributed. The basis for making decisions on the Kolmogorov Smirnov normality test is that if the significance value is > 0.05 then the data is normally distributed. If the significance value is < 0.05 then the data is not normally distributed. Based on the basis of this decision making, the data is normally distributed because the Sig value. $(0.311) > 0.05$.



Uji Heteroskedastisitas

Variable	Sig.	Interpretation
Quarter Life Crisis	.536	No Heteroscedasticity

Based on the Heteroscedasticity test table above, the Sig value is obtained. 0.536 on the Quarter Life Crisis variable. Because the Sig value. > 0.05 so that heteroscedasticity does not occur.

Linearity Test

	Sig. Linearity	Interpretation
Post-COVID-19 * Quarter Life Crisis	.002	Linear

The basis for making decisions for the linearity test is if the Sig. linearity < 0.05 then there is a linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, and if the Sig. linearity > 0.05 , then there is no linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on the table above, it is known that the Sig. linearity < 0.05 so there is a linear relationship.

Model II Regression (Impact of Quarter Life Crisis on Mental Health)

Normality Test

	N	Sig. (2Tailed)	Interpretation
Unstandardized Residual	100	.065	Normally Distributed

The normality test aims to find out whether the distribution residual value is normal or not. A good regression model will provide residual values that are normally distributed. The basis for decision making for the Kolmogorov Smirnov normality test is that if the significance value is > 0.05 then the data is normally distributed and if the significance value is < 0.05 then it is not normally distributed based on the basis for decision making then the data is normally distributed because the Sig value. $(0.065) > 0.05$.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Variable	Sig.	Interpretation
Quarter Life Crisis	.764	Heteroscedasticity does not occur

Based on the Heteroscedasticity test table above, the Sig value is obtained. 0.764 on the Quarter Life Crisis variable. Because the probability value is > 0.05 , heteroscedasticity does not occur.

Linearity Test

	Sig. Linearity	Interpretation
Mental Health*Quarter Life Crisis	.005	Linear

The basis for making decisions for the linearity test is if the Sig. linearity < 0.05 then there is a linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, and if the Sig. linearity > 0.05 , then there is no linear relationship between the independent variable data and the dependent variable.



Based on the table above, it is known that the Sig. < 0.05 so there is a linear relationship.

1. Hypothesis Testing

Regresi Model I

a. Persamaan Regresi Linear Sederhana

Model	B	Std. Error
Constanta	29.962	9,586
X	0,287	0,092

B Based on the output results of the SPSS 26 test, the coefficient obtained in the regression calculation above, the regression equation becomes:

$$Y_1 = 29,6 + 0,287 X$$

Based on the equation above, it is known that the constant value is 29.6 mathematically. This constant value states that when the Quarter Life Crisis has a value of 0, then after Covid-19 it has a value of 29.6. Furthermore, the value of 0.28 contained in the regression coefficient for the Quarter Life Crisis variable illustrates that the direction of the relationship between the independent variable

b. Partial Test

Model	Sig.	t Count	Interpretation
<i>Quarter Life Crisis</i>	.002	3,112	Influential

The significance value for the Quarter Life Crisis (X) variable is $0.002 < \alpha$ (0.05). This means that the Quarter Life Crisis has an influence on Post-covid19. Apart from that, the calculated t value (3.112) > t table (1.984) means that it is concluded that H0 is rejected so that there is an influence of the Quarter Life Crisis on post-covid 19.

Regression Model II

1. Simple Linear Regression Equation

Model	B	Std. Error
Constanta	60,227	11,815
X	0,283	0,114

Based on the results of the SPSS 22 print out, the coefficients obtained in the regression calculation above are obtained, so the regression equation becomes:

$$Y_2 = 60,227 + 0,283 X$$

Based on the equation above, it is known that the constant value is 60.227 mathematically. This constant value states that when the Quarter Life Crisis has a value of 0, mental health has a value of 60.227. Furthermore, the value of 0.283 contained in the regression coefficient for the Quarter Life Crisis variable illustrates that the direction of the relationship between the independent variable X and the dependent variable Y2 (mental health) is positive, where every one unit increase in the Quarter Life Crisis variable will cause an increase of 0.283.

2. Partial Test

Model	Sig.	t Count	Interpretation
<i>Quarter Life Crisis</i>	.014	2,490	Influential



The significance value for the Quarter Life Crisis (X) variable is $0.014 < \alpha$ (0.05). This means that the Quarter Life Crisis has an influence on mental health. Apart from that, the calculated t value (2.490) > t table (1.984) means that it is concluded that H_0 is rejected so that there is an influence of the Quarter Life Crisis on mental health.

Coefficient of Determination Test

Regresi Model I

Model	R	R Square
1	0,300	0,090

The coefficient of determination or R square value is 0.090, which means that the Quarter Life Crisis variable has an influence on Post-Covid19 of 9% while the rest is influenced by other variables not included in this research.

Regression Model II

Model	R	R Square
1	.224	.060

The coefficient of determination, or R square, is 0.060, indicating that the Quarter Life Crisis variable has an impact on mental health by 6%, while the remaining 94% is influenced by other variables not included in this study.

Based on the research results, it is shown that there is an influence of the Quarter Life Crisis on post-COVID-19 outcomes, as indicated by a Sig. value of $0.002 < 0.005$. This is likely because the community is still affected by the pandemic atmosphere, where individuals experiencing anxiety find it increasingly difficult to manage other problems. Karpika and Ni Wayan (2021) further explain that characteristics of someone undergoing a Quarter Life Crisis include confusion between their expectations and reality. When individuals face such confusion, compounded by the recent global situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, they become more stressed and fail to engage in activities that could reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Inferential analysis results show that there is an influence of the Quarter Life Crisis on mental health, with a Sig. value of $0.014 < 0.05$. This is because the Quarter Life Crisis is caused by new challenges in education and employment. When these crises are not addressed, mental health can suffer significantly, with up to 86% of individuals in this phase potentially experiencing loneliness and depression (Mahmud et al., 2021).

Herawati and Ahmad (2020) further elucidate that individuals aged 20-30 years face numerous stress factors, causing them to feel trapped in thoughts about the future. During this phase, it is difficult for them to regulate their emotions, making it challenging to navigate life, which ultimately impacts their mental health.

The mental health of the Parepare community is still deeply traumatized since the spread of the COVID-19 virus in Indonesia. The pandemic has brought unprecedented impacts on human life, affecting physical and mental health. Brooks et al. (2020) state that the psychological impacts experienced since the emergence of COVID-19 include post-traumatic stress disorder, confusion, anxiety, frustration, fear of infection, difficulty sleeping, and a lack of motivation, even



leading to xenophobia and suicide. Rizki et al. (2021) agree that the COVID-19 pandemic is significantly related to declining mental health, largely due to reduced outdoor activities, which can trigger boredom and depression. Even those with healthy mental states are not immune to mental health issues because they can still experience anxiety and guilt.

Given the severe impacts experienced by individuals undergoing a Quarter Life Crisis, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, solutions are urgently needed to address these issues. According to Azania and Naan (2021), mental health can be improved through several methods:

1. Mindfulness: This is a state where an individual is not tied to past thoughts and does not plan for the future.
2. Guided Imagery: This involves creating happy images in one's mind.
3. Self-Talk: Speaking positively to oneself can influence one's thoughts.
4. Expressive Writing: Calming the mind by engaging in other activities, such as writing down problems.

These efforts can be implemented through mental health education, such as mental health workshops conducted in collaboration with partners. Through these workshops, the levels of Quarter Life Crisis or mental health can be assessed using interviews and questionnaires directed at young adults. The purpose of the workshop is to describe the Quarter Life Crisis and its impact on mental health.

The study's findings indicate that addressing the Quarter Life Crisis among young adults, particularly in the context of post-pandemic recovery, is crucial. The significant impact of the Quarter Life Crisis on post-COVID-19 outcomes suggests that individuals experiencing higher levels of Quarter Life Crisis are more likely to struggle with COVID-19 preventive measures. This aligns with the findings of Karpika and Ni Wayan (2021), who noted that individuals experiencing Quarter Life Crisis often face heightened anxiety and confusion, exacerbated by the pandemic's challenges.

Similarly, the significant effect of the Quarter Life Crisis on mental health demonstrates that higher levels of Quarter Life Crisis are associated with poorer mental health outcomes. This supports the findings of Mahmud et al. (2021), who observed that individuals in the age range of 20-30 years are particularly susceptible to mental health issues during this developmental stage, especially under the added pressures of the pandemic. Herawati and Ahmad (2020) also highlighted that individuals experiencing a Quarter Life Crisis often struggle with emotional regulation and future uncertainties, impacting their mental well-being.

The findings underscore the importance of addressing the Quarter Life Crisis in young adults, particularly in the context of post-pandemic recovery, through targeted interventions such as mental health workshops. These workshops can provide essential support and education, helping young adults to manage the unique stressors and psychological impacts associated with this critical developmental phase. By implementing mindfulness, guided imagery, positive self-talk, and expressive writing, these workshops can equip individuals with the tools to navigate their Quarter Life Crisis effectively and improve their mental health outcomes.



The study highlights the significant role of the Quarter Life Crisis in affecting the mental health of young adults, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasizes the need for comprehensive mental health strategies and interventions to support this vulnerable population during their transition from adolescence to adulthood.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there is a significant influence of Quarter Life Crisis on Covid-19 prevention among young adults in Parepare City. Individuals experiencing a Quarter Life Crisis tend to struggle with maintaining Covid-19 prevention measures. Additionally, there is a significant impact of Quarter Life Crisis on the mental health of young adults in Parepare City, leading to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. The mental health workshop has been proven effective in mitigating the adverse effects of Quarter Life Crisis on individuals' mental health.

It is recommended to regularly implement mental health workshops in Parepare City to support individuals experiencing a Quarter Life Crisis. These workshops should include techniques such as mindfulness, self-talk, guided imagery, and expressive writing. Furthermore, the local government and health institutions should enhance access to mental health services for the community, particularly for young adults facing a Quarter Life Crisis. Raising public awareness about the Quarter Life Crisis and its impact on mental health through educational campaigns and social programs is crucial. Lastly, further research is needed to explore other factors influencing the Quarter Life Crisis and to develop more effective interventions to address this issue.

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