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Role of Emotional Maturity and Social Support in Predicting Quarter-Life Crisis in Emerging Adulthood Using Multiple Linear Regression Analysis †

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the role of emotional maturity and social support in predicting the level of quarter-life crisis in emerging adulthood. The employed research method was multiple linear regression analysis. The participants were individuals aged 18 to 29 years. Further, 122 participants were selected using convenience sampling. The data were collected using a questionnaire survey based on the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support to assess social support and the quarter-life crisis scale based on the theory by Robbins and Wilner. To assess emotional maturity, we used the emotional maturity scale based on the theory by Walgito. Emotional maturity and social support were important in predicting the level of quarter-life crisis in emerging adulthood. Higher levels of emotional maturity and social support were associated with lower levels of quarter-life crisis experiences in emerging adulthood.

Keywords: quarter-life crisis; emotional maturity; social support; emerging adulthood

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1. Introduction

Emerging adulthood or early adulthood is a transitional phase from adolescence to adulthood characterized by cognitive and psychological changes [1]. Every individual goes through this phase. The term emerging adulthood was introduced by Arnett [2] as a period or phase between adolescence and adulthood that occurs at around the ages of 18–29 years. According to Hurlock [3], the emerging adulthood period is a stage where individuals become more emotional, full of tension, encounter various issues, experience social isolation, and undergo changes in values and self-adjustment. During this time, individuals begin to explore their identity and the things they can do to prepare and plan for their future lives. In the emerging adulthood phase, individuals are required to become independent, solve their own life problems, determine their own path, and obtain suitable employment and career opportunities.

In a social world, the response of each individual to the demands from their surroundings inevitably varies. Several individuals may respond well to the demands and feel challenged to navigate through their upcoming life, while others may feel unprepared, excessively anxious, and pressured [4]. According to Arnett [5], when individuals are confronted with such situations, they respond seriously and enthusiastically with thorough preparation. However, they also lack sufficient preparation, leading to negative reactions such as feeling ambivalent, fearful, desperate, overwhelmed, powerless, and lacking confidence as they feel as if life is meaningless. These negative feelings cause an emotional crisis known as the quarter-life crisis [6]. Individuals in the emerging adulthood phase often face questions from their social environment that make them feel pressured. Various questions

arise, including when to get married, when to graduate, when to have children, and others that seem to be never-ending [7].

According to Fischer [8], a quarter-life crisis occurs in the early- to mid-20s, caused by various pressures in life, especially concerning future prospects, encompassing issues of relationships, career, and social life. Nelson and Badger [9] stated that those who experience this crisis feel social symptoms such as anxiety about the future, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, physical changes such as decreased energy, and rapid emotional changes such as feeling sad without a clear reason. In this process, an individual goes through a phase of quarter-life crisis triggered by demands from family, friends, or oneself. The pressures easily lead to developing negative thoughts about their capabilities. According to Robbins and Wilner [10], the quarter-life crisis consists of seven aspects. Firstly, individuals experience indecision when faced with numerous life choices. This confusion arises due to the fear of making negative-impact mistakes. Next, individuals worry about interpersonal relationships, especially in the culture of Indonesia, where they are expected to marry and form relationships by their 30s. The problems and pressures in these relationships can disrupt their individual activities. Moreover, anxiety emerges because individuals in the emerging adulthood phase have aspirations and dreams that are difficult to attain, accompanied by feelings of worry and fear of failure. Depressive feelings can also arise when individuals face issues that disturb their minds and hinder their daily activities. Negative self-assessment leads individuals to doubt their abilities in facing life's challenges. Furthermore, such feelings while trapped in challenging situations cause individuals to feel stuck and contribute to them struggling to make the right decisions. Lastly, feelings of despair arise when an individual's hopes are unmet, leading to a sense of failure and self-disappointment.

Seventy percent of individuals in emerging adulthood experience a quarter-life crisis. A survey conducted by Gumtree.com found that 86% of 1000 young people admitted feeling pressured to achieve success in romance, finances, and their careers before the age of 30 years [11]. LinkedIn conducted a survey whose results indicated that 75% of those individuals aged 25–33 years experienced a quarter-life crisis [12]. Artiningsih and Savira [13] found that, among 63 adults in Surabaya, Indonesia, 55.6% had negative emotions related to their current condition, such as feeling empty when seeing photos of their friends with their partners, unworthy, and experiencing low self-esteem when they felt that they were not like their peers.

Two factors influence a quarter-life crisis, namely internal and external factors [14]. Internal factors are triggered from within oneself, one of which is related to emotional maturity. Hurlock [3] stated that individuals with emotional maturity carefully assess situations before taking action so that they do not act without prior thought. In this regard, individuals with emotional maturity do not feel confused when choosing future life paths because they consider the available options thoroughly beforehand. One of the external factors that influences the potential of a quarter-life crisis is social support.

Walgito [15] stated that emotional maturity comprises four important aspects. The first aspect is emotional control. Individuals with emotional maturity regulate their emotions and expressions effectively. They manage their emotions and determine when and how they express them even in situations of unstable emotions. For acceptance by oneself and others, emotionally mature individuals are capable of accepting their own and others' conditions based on reality. They understand their emotions and know the causes of those emotions. Individuals who take responsibility for their own self-control think objectively and have tolerance for various things when experiencing negative emotions. Lastly, individuals with emotional maturity make wiser decisions compared to those who do not possess it. This is because they think with careful consideration before making decisions.

Social support refers to the encouragement provided to others in the form of trust or attention with the intention of assisting them [16]. Social support evokes feelings of emotional closeness, being valued, feeling noticed, being safe, and feeling loved by one's environment [17]. Social support makes individuals feel cared for, loved, boosts their

self-confidence, and improves their sense of competence. Zimet et al. [18] described social support as the assistance individuals receive from close individuals, including family, friends, and other significant individuals in their surroundings. Social support provides additional information and perspectives that help individuals to consider broader options and factors that may not have been considered before. Moreover, social support helps individuals to cope with the pressure and stress that might affect their ability to make rational decisions. Sarafino and Smith [19] proposed four important aspects of social support, including emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

One-hundred-eleven participants were recruited using a non-probability sampling method with a convenience sampling technique. The participants were in emerging adulthood and aged between 18 and 29 years (Table 1).

Table 1. Participants' demographic information.

Categories	n	%
Gender		
Male	33	27%
Female	89	73%
Age		
<20 years old	4	3.3%
20–25 years old	111	91%
>25 years old	7	5.7%
Educationlevel		
High School	65	53.3%
Bachelor's Degree	54	44.3%
Diploma	3	2.5%
Status		
Students/University Students	90	73.8%
Private/Public Employees	23	18.9%
Entrepreneur/Business Owner	2	1.6%
Unemployed	5	4.1%
Others	2	1.6%

2.2. Research Design

Using a predictive regression research design, we determined the role of independent variables in predicting the dependent variable. In this study, emotional maturity and social support variables were regarded as independent variables, while quarter-life crisis was the dependent variable. We employed multiple linear regression analysis with two dependent variables.

2.3. Measuring Tools

We used an adapted measurement tool [20] based on the aspects of quarter-life crisis [10]. The validity of this scale was assessed using content validity based on expert judgment. The reliability score of this scale was 0.856. The measured aspects of quarter-life crisis included decision-making anxiety, concerns about interpersonal relationships, feelings of anxiety, stress, negative self-assessment, feeling trapped in difficult situations, and feelings of hopelessness. The scale comprised 25 items with 13 favorable items and 12 unfavorable items. TA Likert scale with 4 responses was employed: 1 (Strongly Agree), 2 (Agree), 3 (Disagree), and 4 (Strongly Disagree).

An emotional maturity scale was developed by Walgito [15] and adapted by Eringtyas [21]. The emotional maturity scale was used to measure an individual's level of emotional maturity. The validity of this scale was assessed using content validity based on expert judgment. Additionally, the reliability score of this scale was 0.874. The measurement of individual emotional maturity included emotional control, self- and others' acceptance, responsibility, and decision-making. The scale comprises 23 items, with 12 favorable items and 11 unfavorable items. This variable will be measured using a Likert scale with 4 response alternatives: 1 (Strongly Agree), 2 (Agree), 3 (Disagree), and 4 (Strongly Disagree).

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) [18] was used to measure the variable of social support. The validity of this scale was assessed using content validity based on expert judgment. The reliability score of this scale was 0.871. The scale was used to gauge individuals' assessments of the adequacy of social support received from family, friends, and others. The questionnaire items for social support were adapted from the research of Juniastira [22]. With this scale, family support, friend support, and support from others were measured. The scale consisted of 12 items. For the assessment, a four-point Likert scale was used: 1 (Strongly Agree), 2 (Agree), 3 (Disagree), and 4 (Strongly Disagree).

3. Results

The coefficient of determination or adjusted R-square was 0.088 or equal to 8.8%. This Table indicates the contributions of social support and emotional maturity to a quarter-life crisis. Further, 91.2% of the quarter-life crisis was influenced by other variables that were not examined in this study (Table 2). The contributions of social support and emotional maturity to the quarter-life crisis are presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Results of R-square.

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Standard Error of Estimate
1	0.322	0.104	0.088	4.257

Table 3. Results of multiple linear regression.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance
	B	*Std. Error*	Beta		
1 (*Constant*)	79.731	4.126		19.326	0.000
Social Support	−0.204	0.063	−0.285	−3.247	0.002
Emotional Maturity	−0.123	0.055	−0.196	−2.236	0.027

Each independent variable, namely emotional maturity and social support, plays a role in predicting a quarter-life crisis during emerging adulthood as the significance values of both variables were less than 0.05. Furthermore, the regression coefficient of social support is negative, indicating an inverse relationship between social support and a quarter-life crisis. The lower the received social support, the higher the likelihood of experiencing a quarter-life crisis and vice versa. The regression coefficient of the emotional maturity variable was also negative, indicating that lower levels of emotional maturity correlated with higher levels of quarter-life crises and vice versa.

4. Discussion

The results of this study revealed a significant role or influence of the emotional maturity variable in predicting a quarter-life crisis in emerging adulthood. These findings are supported by the research conducted by Johnson et al. [23], which demonstrated that emotional maturity played a crucial role in facing challenges and life conflicts in early adulthood. Individuals with higher levels of emotional maturity are inclined to experience lower levels of quarter-life crisis. Permatasari [24] examined the relationship between emotional maturity and a quarter-life crisis. They found a negative relationship, indicating

that higher levels of emotional maturity correspond to lower levels of the experienced quarter-life crisis. These results align with the developmental theories that emphasize the importance of emotional maturity in achieving well-being and adaptation during early adulthood [2]. Individuals experiencing a quarter-life crisis often grapple with feelings of worry and anxiety, leading to insecurity due to uncertainty about the future [10]. However, individuals with emotional maturity can control and transform their emotions into a more positive outlook. An individual with strong emotional maturity is likely to navigate through crisis periods that encompass feelings of depression, worry, anxiety, and even frustration [4]. Therefore, emotional maturity serves as a protective factor for individuals in early adulthood, enabling them to better cope with the complexities of life's demands.

Social support plays a significant role in predicting a quarter-life crisis in emerging adulthood. Social support can be obtained from family, friends, the community, or someone considered special. The social support received by individuals during this transitional period provides emotional resources to cope with challenges and stresses. This is consistent with the research conducted by Misra and Castellanos [25], who found that social support is related to psychological adjustment and well-being during emerging adulthood. The four aspects of social support [19], namely emotional support, informational support, instrumental support, and appraisal support, are crucial for individuals in the transitional phase to independently face life's challenges. A lack of close interpersonal relationships and a sense of alienation from one's environment increase the likelihood of a quarter-life crisis in young adults [26].

The level of the quarter-life crisis experienced by individuals in emerging adulthood was moderate with 121 individuals (99.2%). This aligns with the majority of individuals' emotional maturity and social support being in the moderate range. Individuals need emotional maturity and sufficient social support to navigate through this crisis. A moderate level of quarter-life crisis indicates that individuals between the ages of 18 and 29 years are experiencing symptoms such as confusion about their life direction, dissatisfaction with their work or social relationships, and difficulty in finding meaning in life [10]. Therefore, it is important for individuals in emerging adulthood to effectively manage their quarter-life crisis. Emotional maturity and social support play a crucial role in addressing the quarter-life crisis. Emotional maturity helps individuals to manage complex and unstable emotions in this crisis [10]. Adequate social support, whether from friends, family, or the community, can provide individuals with the emotional and practical resources needed to overcome the pressures and challenges during the crisis period [27].

5. Conclusions

The results of this study revealed that social support and emotional maturity play a significant role in predicting the level of a quarter-life crisis. The negative regression coefficients in the multiple linear regression indicated that, the higher the levels of social support and emotional maturity an individual possesses, the lower the level of the quarter-life crisis. Conversely, lower levels of social support and emotional maturity correspond to higher levels regarding the quarter-life crisis. These findings highlight the importance of developing emotional maturity and enhancing social support for the psychological well-being of individuals in emerging adulthood. Such results are a basis for developing interventions and programs to strengthen emotional maturity and social support to help individuals cope effectively with quarter-life crises and achieve positive development in early adulthood.

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