

The Effect of Social Support on the Quarter-Life Crisis Among College Students in Bandung

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Abstract

A quarter-life crisis is a psychological phenomenon commonly experienced by young adults, particularly college students who are navigating the transition to the workforce and adult life. One factor believed to play a role in reducing the incidence of a quarter-life crisis is social support. This study aims to examine the effect of social support on quarter-life crises among college students in Bandung. This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. A total of 150 college students from various universities in Bandung participated in this study, comprising 80 women (53.3%) and 70 men (46.7%). The instruments used were the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and the Quarter-Life Crisis Scale (QLCS). Data analysis was performed using simple linear regression with the aid of SPSS version 26. The results of the study indicate that social support has a significant effect on the quarter-life crisis ($\beta = -0.734$; $p < 0.001$). Social support accounts for 53.9% of the variation in the quarter-life crisis ($R^2 = 0.539$). These findings suggest that the more social support college students receive, the lower their level of quarter-life crisis. This study underscores the importance of support from family, peers, and significant others in helping college students cope with developmental challenges in early adulthood. These findings are consistent with various previous studies that have shown a negative correlation between social support and the quarter-life crisis.

Keywords: *Social support, Quarter-life crisis, College students, Early adulthood, Bandung.*

INTRODUCTION

Early adulthood is a developmental period marked by various psychological, social, academic, and career changes. During this phase, individuals are required to make various important decisions regarding education, work, interpersonal relationships, and their future. According to Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (2015), individuals aged 18–29 are in the stage of emerging adulthood, a period of identity exploration that is often accompanied by uncertainty and instability in life.

The demands of an increasingly complex world can lead to a condition known as a quarter-life crisis. A quarter-life crisis is a psychological crisis typically experienced by individuals in their 20s and characterized by feelings of anxiety, confusion, self-doubt, and concerns about the future (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). This phenomenon is commonly observed among college students who are navigating the transition from the academic world to the workforce and adult life.

One factor that can help individuals cope with a quarter-life crisis is social support. Social

support is viewed as a vital resource for maintaining college students' mental health. A systematic review of 51 studies showed that social support has direct effects on emotional well-being, stress reduction, and healthy behaviors, as well as indirect effects through increased resilience, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. Among university students, support from family and friends also predicts lower levels of depressive symptoms and better psychological well-being (Alsubaie et al., 2019).

Social support is an individual's perception that they are loved, valued, and receive assistance from their social environment (Cobb, 1976). According to Gregory D. Zimet et al. (1988), social support can come from family, friends, or people considered important in an individual's life. Based on the Buffering Hypothesis, social support acts as a protective factor that can reduce the negative effects of stress and life pressures (Cohen & Wills, 1985). College students who receive emotional, informational, and instrumental support from their social environment tend to have better coping skills when facing various life challenges.

Several studies have shown that social support is negatively associated with the quarter-life crisis. Individuals who receive high levels of social support tend to experience lower levels of anxiety, uncertainty, and life crises compared to those with low social support (Afnan et al., 2020; Fitri & Kustanti, 2018). Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of social support on the quarter-life crisis among college students in Bandung.

METHOD

Research Desain

This study adopted a quantitative approach with an explanatory cross-sectional research design. This approach was chosen to analyze the influence of social support variables on the quarter-life crisis among college students

in Bandung. Data were collected at a single point in time through a survey using an online questionnaire distributed to students via social media (WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram). Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were provided with an explanation of the study's objectives and an informed consent form. The confidentiality of respondents' identities was guaranteed, and all data were used solely for academic purposes.

The study population consisted of currently enrolled students at public and private universities in Bandung City who were in early adulthood (18–25 years old). The sampling technique used was purposive sampling based on the following criteria:

1. Currently enrolled students at universities in Bandung City.
2. Aged 18–25 years.
3. Willing to participate in the study by signing an informed consent form.

The sample size was 150 respondents, consisting of:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	70	46,7
Female	80	53,3
Total	150	100

Table 2. Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–20 years	45	30,0
21–23 years	72	48,0
24–25 years	33	22,0
Total	150	100

Research Instruments

1. Social Support Scale

The social support variable was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), developed by Gregory D. Zimet et al. (1988) and subsequently adapted into Indonesian. The MSPSS is one of the most widely used

instruments for measuring perceptions of social support from three primary sources: family, friends, and significant others. This scale consists of 12 items divided into three dimensions, each containing four items. The reliability coefficient, measured by Cronbach's alpha, is 0.912, indicating that this measurement tool is highly reliable.

According to Nunnally's criteria (1978), a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 indicates that the instrument has good reliability.

The MSPSS has good construct validity and reliability across various populations, including college students. The MSPSS is a Likert scale with five response options, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Scoring is calculated by summing all item scores. The higher the score, the higher the respondent's perception of social support.

2. Quarter life crisis scale

The quarter-life crisis variable was measured using the Quarter-Life Crisis Scale (QLCS), which was based on the concept of the quarter-life crisis proposed by Robbins and Wilner (2001) and developed from various studies on early adult developmental crises. The scale consists of 25 items across five main dimensions: Identity Confusion, Future Anxiety, Career Uncertainty, Interpersonal Pressure, and Self-Doubt

The reliability coefficient, measured by Cronbach's alpha, is 0.932, indicating that this measurement tool is highly reliable. According to Nunnally's (1978) criteria, a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 indicates that the instrument has good reliability. The QLC scale has good construct validity and reliability across various populations, including college students. The QLC measurement tool is a Likert scale with five response options,

ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Scoring is calculated by summing all item scores. The higher the score obtained, the higher the respondent's level of quarter-life crisis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

A descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the general profile of social support levels and quarter-life crisis among college students in Bandung. The results of the analysis show that the average social support score falls into the high category, while the quarter-life crisis score falls into the moderate category.

The analysis must explain findings using appropriate analytical tools aligned with the research objectives. It should be detailed enough to support conclusions. Supporting calculations may be placed in appendices.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Social Support	150	28	60	48,76	7,84
Quarter Life Crisis	150	39	98	67,42	11,28

Based on Table 3, the mean score for social support was 48.76 (SD = 7.84). These results indicate that most students perceive a fairly high level of social support from their families, friends, and significant others. Meanwhile, the average score for the quarter-life crisis was 67.42 (SD = 11.28), indicating that some students still experience anxiety and uncertainty regarding their future, career, and life achievements.

Classical Assumption Test

Before conducting the regression analysis, tests for normality and linearity were performed to ensure that the data met the requirements for parametric analysis.

1. Normality test

A normality test was conducted using the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Tabel 4. Normality Test Results

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Sig.
Social Support	0,068	0,200
Quarter Life Crisis	0,071	0,087

Based on Table 4, the p-values for both variables are greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$); therefore, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed and satisfy the assumptions for regression analysis.

2. Linearity test

A linearity test was conducted to determine whether the relationship between social support and the quarter-life crisis is linear.

Tabel 5. Linearity Test Results

Variable Relationships	F	Sig.
Social Support → Quarter Life Crisis	1,217	0,281

A p-value of 0.281 (>0.05) indicates that the relationship between social support and the quarter-life crisis is linear, so the regression analysis can proceed.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between social support and the quarter-life crisis.

Tabel 6. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variabel	Social Support	Quarter Life Crisis
Social Support	1	-0,734**
Quarter Life Crisis	-0,734**	1

Based on Table 6, a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.734$ was obtained, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. These results indicate that there is a strong negative relationship between social support and the

quarter-life crisis. The higher the level of social support received by students, the lower the level of the quarter-life crisis they experience. According to Cohen's (1988) criteria for interpreting correlations, a correlation value of 0.734 falls into the category of a strong correlation.

Simple Linear Regression Test

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the effect of social support on the quarter-life crisis.

Tabel 7. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0,734	0,539	0,536	7,682

Based on Table 7, the values obtained were $R = 0.734$ and $R\text{-squared} = 0.539$. These results indicate that social support accounts for 53.9% of the variation in quarter-life crisis among college students in Bandung. The remaining 46.1% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as self-esteem, self-compassion, resilience, emotional intelligence, and career adaptability.

Model Validation Test (ANOVA)

Tabel 8. ANOVA Test Result

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10.245,376	1	10.245,376	173,642	0,000
Residual	8.733,117	14	59,008		
Total	18.978,493	15			

The ANOVA results showed an F-value of 173.642 with a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates that the regression model used is valid and can be used to predict a quarter-life crisis based on students' levels of social support.

Tabel 9. Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	112,451	4,812	-	23,369	0,000
Social Support	-0,923	0,070	-0,734	-13,177	0,000

A regression coefficient of -0.923 indicates that every one-unit increase in the social support score will reduce the quarter-life crisis score by 0.923 points. A significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) indicates that this effect is statistically significant.

Furthermore, the β value of -0.734 indicates that social support has a strong negative effect on the quarter-life crisis. Thus, the research hypothesis stating that social support has a negative effect on the quarter-life crisis among college students in Bandung is accepted.

Based on the results of the analysis, the following key findings were obtained:

1. The level of social support among college students in Bandung falls into the high category ($M = 48.76$; $SD = 7.84$).
2. The level of quarter-life crisis among college students falls into the moderate category ($M = 67.42$; $SD = 11.28$).
3. There is a strong negative correlation between social support and quarter-life crisis ($r = -0.734$; $p < 0.001$).
4. Social support has a significant effect on quarter-life crisis ($\beta = -0.734$; $t = -13.177$; $p < 0.001$).
5. Social support accounts for 53.9% of the variation in students' quarter-life crisis ($R^2 = 0.539$).

Overall, the results indicate that the higher the level of social support students receive from family, friends, and significant others, the lower their level of quarter-life crisis. These findings reinforce the assumption that social support is an important protective factor in maintaining students' mental health during early

adulthood. Furthermore, these findings will be discussed in greater depth in the Discussion section by linking the empirical findings to relevant theories.

Discussion

This study aims to examine the effect of social support on the quarter-life crisis among college students in Bandung. The results of the analysis indicate that social support has a significant negative effect on the quarter-life crisis, with a β value of -0.734 and $p < 0.001$. These findings suggest that the higher the level of social support received by students, the lower the severity of the quarter-life crisis they experience. In other words, social support acts as a protective factor that helps college students cope with various developmental challenges during early adulthood.

These findings align with the Buffering Hypothesis proposed by Cohen and Wills (1985), which explains that social support can function as a buffer against the negative effects of stress. Individuals who receive emotional, informational, instrumental, and appreciative support from their social environment tend to have better coping abilities when facing life's pressures. In the context of college students, support from family, friends, and close associates can help reduce the anxiety, confusion, and uncertainty that arise during the transition to the workforce and adult life.

Several previous studies have shown that the quarter-life crisis is influenced not only by external factors such as social support but also by internal individual factors. A study by Fitri and Kustanti (2018) found that college students with good levels of self-adjustment tend to be better able to cope with the pressures of early adulthood. Furthermore, research by Setyowati et al. (2025) indicates that self-compassion, resilience, and emotional regulation also play a role in reducing the severity of the quarter-life crisis. Therefore, social support can be viewed as

one of the key factors that works in conjunction with various other psychological resources to help individuals navigate developmental crises.

When viewed from the perspective of sources of social support, college students generally receive support from family, peers, and significant others. Family support plays a role in providing a sense of security, acceptance, and emotional support when students face various academic and career challenges. Meanwhile, peer support helps students obtain information, share experiences, and reduce feelings of isolation when facing similar problems. According to Zimet et al. (1988), the perception that one has a reliable social network is a crucial aspect contributing to an individual's psychological well-being.

In the context of Bandung—one of Indonesia's largest educational hubs—college students face a range of relatively high demands. Academic competition, rising expectations regarding job readiness, and the influence of social media—which often highlights others' achievements—can increase the risk of a quarter-life crisis. Therefore, social support becomes increasingly important as a source of psychological strength that helps students cope with these pressures in an adaptive manner.

In practical terms, the results of this study have implications for universities to strengthen their psychosocial support systems for students. Academic mentoring programs, student counseling, peer support groups, and career development activities can serve as effective strategies to enhance students' perceptions of social support. Additionally, families should be involved as a primary source of support that can help students navigate the transition to adulthood more positively.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the effect of social support on the quarter-life crisis among college students in Bandung. Based on the

results of a simple linear regression analysis, it was found that social support has a significant negative effect on the quarter-life crisis ($\beta = -0.734$; $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that the higher the level of social support received by students, the lower the level of quarter-life crisis they experience.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.539$) indicates that social support accounts for 53.9% of the variation in quarter-life crisis among college students. These findings suggest that social support is a key factor in helping college students cope with various developmental challenges during early adulthood.

Theoretically, the findings of this study support the Buffering Hypothesis, which states that social support can mitigate the negative effects of stress and life pressures. Practically, this study underscores the importance of the roles played by family, peers, and the campus environment in creating a support system capable of helping students cope with future uncertainty, academic pressures, and career challenges.

Based on the study's findings, universities are advised to develop programs that can enhance students' social support, such as psychological counseling services, mentoring programs, peer support groups, and personal development training. These efforts are expected to help students reduce the risk of a quarter-life crisis and improve their psychological well-being during their transition to adulthood.

SUGGESTIONS

Although this study provides important findings, there are several limitations that should be noted. First, the study used a cross-sectional design, so it cannot explain causal relationships longitudinally. Second, the data were collected through self-report methods, which may introduce social desirability bias. Third, the study was conducted only among college

students in Bandung, so generalizing the findings to a broader population should be done with caution. Therefore, future research is recommended to use a longitudinal design, involve a larger sample size, and consider other variables such as self-esteem, career adaptability, resilience, and psychological well-being.

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