

The Relationship Between Emotional Regulation, Resilience And Quarter Life Crisis In Final Year Students

Nurul Afifah Larasati, Suroso, Niken Titi Pratitis

Fakultas Psikologi, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

ABSTRACT

Emerging adulthood is the transition period from adolescence to adulthood, happening between the ages of 18 and 29. During this stage, people face many challenges, such as learning new skills and adapting to changes, especially final-year university students. The emotional struggle experienced in this phase is called the quarter-life crisis. This study aims to understand the relationship between emotion regulation, resilience, and the quarter-life crisis among final-year university students in Pekanbaru. Data were collected through an online questionnaire from 155 students and analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The results show that emotion regulation and resilience are connected to the quarter-life crisis ($F = 51.020$, $p < 0.05$). Individually, emotion regulation ($t = -4.321$, $p < 0.05$) and resilience ($t = -4.129$, $p < 0.05$) have a negative relationship with the quarter-life crisis. This means that the better a person can regulate emotions and be resilient, the lower their chances of experiencing a quarter-life crisis.

Keywords: Final Year Students, Quarter Life Crisis, Emotional Regulation, Resilience

Corresponding author

Name: Nurul Afifah Larasati

Email: nurulafifahlarasati@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The transition from late adolescence to early adulthood, commonly known as emerging adulthood, occurs between the ages of 18 and 25 (Arnett & Tanner, 2006). This phase is marked by exploration and uncertainty as individuals navigate personal identity, career aspirations, relationships, and independent decision making. It is a time of significant change, where young adults move from structured educational settings to the responsibilities of adulthood. For final year university students, this period presents unique challenges, as they must balance academic responsibilities, career planning, and social expectations while preparing for an independent future (Ambarwati & Astuti, 2019). The pressure to complete their studies successfully and transition smoothly into the workforce often leads to anxiety, stress, and self doubt.

One of the most common psychological experiences during this phase is the quarter life crisis, a term introduced by Robbins & Wilner (2001) to describe an emotional struggle marked by uncertainty, self doubt, and anxiety about the future. Young adults feel

pressured to make important life decisions, such as choosing a career, establishing financial independence, and forming stable relationships. This crisis often stems from the gap between personal expectations and reality, especially in a fast changing and competitive world. For final year students, this crisis can feel even more overwhelming as they navigate the stress of completing their thesis or final projects while preparing for their careers (Sujudi & Ginting, 2020). Many experience fear of failure, worrying they might not meet academic expectations or secure a job that aligns with their aspirations. Additionally, uncertainty in the job market, economic instability, and societal pressure to succeed within a short timeframe intensify these feelings. As a result, some students experience procrastination, loss of motivation, and even symptoms of depression.

Beyond academic and career related concerns, this crisis also affects students on a personal and social level. Many young adults struggle with identity formation, questioning their values, beliefs, and long term goals. The transition from the structured university environment to the unpredictability of adulthood can trigger existential anxiety, making them feel lost and unsure about their purpose in life. If not properly addressed, these struggles can significantly impact student's well being and overall life satisfaction. To navigate the quarter life crisis effectively, one key psychological skill is emotional regulation the ability to manage and control emotions in different situations (Gross, 1998). Individuals with strong emotional regulation skills are better equipped to handle academic pressure, career uncertainty, and personal challenges without becoming overwhelmed (Gross, 2006). Research shows that students who use effective emotional regulation strategies tend to approach problems with a solution-focused mindset rather than becoming paralyzed by fear or stress. They are more likely to engage in positive coping mechanisms, such as seeking social support, practicing mindfulness, and setting realistic goals. On the other hand, those who struggle with emotional regulation may resort to avoidance behaviors, such as procrastination or self-isolation, which can worsen feelings of helplessness.

One way to improve emotional regulation is through cognitive reappraisal, which involves reframing negative thoughts into more constructive perspectives. For example, instead of viewing career uncertainty as a failure, students can see it as an opportunity for self discovery and growth. Developing mindfulness techniques, such as meditation and deep breathing exercises, can also help individuals remain present and reduce anxiety about the future. By strengthening their emotional regulation skills, final year students can build resilience against psychological distress associated with the quarter life crisis.

In addition to emotional regulation, resilience plays a crucial role in helping students navigate challenges. Resilience is the ability to adapt positively in the face of adversity, allowing individuals to recover from setbacks and persist despite difficulties (Wagnild & Young, 1993). Resilient individuals do not see failure as the end but as a learning experience that helps them grow personally and professionally. Several key factors contribute to resilience, including self efficacy, social support, a growth mindset, and effective stress management techniques (Reivich & Shatte, 2002). The belief in one's ability to succeed, known as self efficacy, plays a fundamental role, as students who are confident in their capabilities take more proactive steps toward achieving their goals (Wagnild, 2011).

Additionally, having a strong support system, including friends, family, and mentors, provides emotional encouragement and practical guidance, helping individuals feel less isolated and more reassured during uncertain times.

A growth mindset seeing challenges as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles helps foster persistence and adaptability. Meanwhile, engaging in activities such as exercise, journaling, and relaxation techniques helps regulate emotions and enhances resilience (Chong et al., 2014). When students develop resilience, they are better prepared to handle setbacks, make informed decisions about their future, and maintain a sense of optimism even in the face of uncertainty. Resilience fosters a positive outlook on life, allowing students to focus on what they can control rather than being consumed by fear and doubt.

Quarter life crisis is a common psychological challenge faced by final year university students as they transition into adulthood. Feelings of uncertainty, self doubt, and pressure to succeed can contribute to significant emotional distress. However, by developing essential psychological skills such as emotional regulation and resilience, students can navigate this transitional period more effectively. Emotional regulation helps individuals manage stress and anxiety, preventing negative emotions from becoming overwhelming, while resilience equips individuals with the ability to recover from setbacks and maintain motivation. Together, these skills provide a strong foundation for personal growth and successful adaptation to adulthood. Universities and mental health professionals should prioritize programs that cultivate these psychological skills, ensuring that students are not only academically prepared but also emotionally equipped to face the challenges of post graduation life.

METHOD

The subjects of this study were final year student. According to Sugiyono (2017), a population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then concluded. The population used in this study was 260 cases. Sample is a part of the population that serves as a source of data in research, where the sample represents a portion of the characteristics possessed by the population (Sugiyono, 2017). The sampling technique in this study is purposive sampling, where the samples are chosen on purpose based on specific criteria set by the researcher. The criteria for this study are final-year students from the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences, aged 20-25 years. The sample size was calculated using the Krejcie and Morgan table, so that the minimum sample size needed was 155 individuals. For data analysis, the researcher used correlation analysis with the help of the SPSS (*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*) for Windows Release versi 25.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
RESEARCH RESULT

Table 1: Hypothesis Test Result

| NO | Spearman's rho | | Quarter Life Crisis |
|----|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Emotional Regulation | Correlation coefficient | -4,321 |
| | | Sig | 0,000 |
| 2 | Resilience | Correlation coefficient | -4,129 |
| | | Sig | 0,000 |

The results of spearman correlation analysis indicate a significant relationship between emotional regulation, resilience, and quarter life crisis. The correlation between emotional regulation and quarter life crisis has a negative correlation. Hypothesis testing results show a t-score of -4.321 with a significance value of 0.00 ($p < 0.05$). These findings confirm that there is a significant negative relationship between emotional regulation and quarter life crisis. In other words, students with higher emotional regulation tend to experience lower levels of the quarter life crisis, whereas those with lower emotional regulation are more likely to experience higher levels of the crisis.

Meanwhile, the correlation between resilience and quarter life crisis has a negative correlation. The hypothesis test results indicate a t-score of -4.129 with a significance value of 0.00 ($p < 0.05$). These findings confirm that the negative correlation between resilience and the quarter life crisis is supported. The results suggest that the higher a student's resilience, the lower their likelihood of experiencing a quarter life crisis. Conversely, students with lower resilience tend to experience higher levels of the quarter life crisis.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis in this study explains that emotional regulation and resilience have a simultaneous relationship with quarter life crisis. This finding suggests that final year students with good emotional regulation possess the ability to manage their emotions effectively. Furthermore, emotional regulation and resilience are interrelated, supporting each other. Students with strong emotional regulation skills are more capable of maintaining emotional stability under pressure, which in turn strengthens their resilience in facing challenges. Conversely, high resilience allows students to develop effective emotional management strategies more easily, as they tend to perceive challenges as opportunities for learning and growth.

When final year students are supported by resilience, they can face challenges more effectively, withstand pressure, and remain optimistic. This aligns with Santrock's (2014) explanation that emotional regulation is a form of emotional intelligence that influences quarter life crisis. Individuals who can avoid stress during the quarter life crisis phase are those with good emotional intelligence in regulating and expressing their emotions (Santrock, 2014).

Emotional regulation has been proven to be a significant factor influencing the quarter life crisis experienced by final year students. In high pressure situations such as the quarter life crisis, individuals need the ability to control and manage their emotions. When negative emotions like sadness, fear, and anger are well managed amid various life changes, individuals are expected to navigate the quarter life crisis wisely. This period is often characterized by fluctuating emotions, where optimism alternates with despair. Effective emotional regulation enables students to remain calm and focused when facing these changes. For example, when doubting career decisions, students with good emotional regulation can evaluate the situation objectively without being overwhelmed by excessive negative emotions.

Emotional regulation is an individual's ability to manage, control, and express emotions appropriately. According to Gross & John (2003), emotional regulation is a process in which individuals influence when they feel certain emotions and how they express them. Entering early adulthood, the ability to regulate emotions becomes crucial as it supports the development of emotional coping strategies (Nurany et al., 2022). Good emotional regulation skills help final year students cope with academic, social, and future uncertainties. During the quarter life crisis, many students experience confusion regarding career choices, interpersonal relationships, and self identity. With effective emotional regulation, students can mitigate the negative effects of anxiety, uncertainty, or confusion, making it easier to make rational decisions.

To help students manage emotional regulation and build resilience, interventions based on mindfulness training and coping skills can be implemented. For instance, mindfulness training helps students manage stress more consciously, while coping skills training enhances their ability to handle uncertainty and academic pressure. Emotional regulation strategies include reframing thoughts about challenging situations, scheduling time for rest or reflection, and practicing relaxation techniques to reduce stress. Through effective emotional regulation, students can improve their mental well being, maintain focus on long term goals, and manage their self expectations more realistically.

Apart from emotional regulation, this study also confirms that resilience plays a crucial role in reducing the quarter life crisis among final year students. Resilience develops when individuals continuously face challenges and difficulties. Through adaptation and life experiences, individuals cultivate resilient personalities. Therefore, final year students need resilience to achieve life satisfaction, mental health, and overall well being. Resilient students are more capable of accepting that life does not always go as planned, making them more adaptable and proactive in seeking alternative solutions. If their expectations are not met after graduation such as struggling to find a job or feeling dissatisfied with their career choices highly resilient students will not easily give up or feel like failures. Instead, they will view the situation as an opportunity to reassess their goals, try different approaches, or learn from their experiences.

According to Keye & Pigeon (2013), resilience offers multiple positive benefits, including reducing the adverse effects of stress, enhancing adaptability, and developing effective problem solving skills when facing challenges. Emotional regulation plays a crucial

role in helping students manage their emotions when experiencing stress or disappointment, such as feeling stuck in an unfulfilling situation, like difficulty finding a job after graduation. When combined with resilience, students who can regulate their emotions will find it easier to accept that life does not always go according to plan and will be quicker in seeking solutions or alternative approaches to achieving their goals.

The second hypothesis of this study states that emotional regulation has a negative relationship with the quarter life crisis among final year students. This means that the better a student's emotional regulation skills, the lower their quarter life crisis level. Emotional regulation, as the ability to evaluate, manage, and express emotions appropriately, helps individuals achieve emotional balance in various situations (Gross, 1998). For final year students, academic pressure, uncertainty about the future, and the demands of transitioning into the workforce often trigger a quarter life crisis. In such conditions, good emotional regulation allows students to better handle these pressures by responding rationally and managing negative emotions such as anxiety and fear. Conversely, inadequate emotional responses, as explained by Gross (2006), can lead students to make poor decisions, such as giving in to pressure or avoiding responsibilities.

With strong emotional regulation, final year students can face challenges productively, reduce crisis experiences, and enhance their adaptability to the demands of the quarter life crisis phase. Emotional regulation skills also help students stay focused on completing academic tasks and planning their future more effectively. For instance, when faced with failure or uncertainty, emotional regulation enables students to remain calm, objectively assess the situation, and seek constructive solutions. This reduces feelings of being stuck or directionless, which are common in the quarter life crisis.

The third hypothesis of this study states that resilience has a negative relationship with the quarter life crisis among final-year students. This means that the higher a student's resilience, the lower their quarter life crisis level. Resilience is the ability to recover from adversity, face challenges with composure, and adapt to life changes. This ability is particularly crucial for final year students experiencing a quarter life crisis, often marked by feelings of confusion, doubt, and anxiety about the future. During this phase, students face various challenges, such as completing academic requirements, the pressure to secure a job, expectations of rapid success, and uncertainty about their life direction.

Students with high resilience, as described by Wagnild & Young (1993), exhibit perseverance the ability to bounce back and maintain self discipline. This trait reflects determination in overcoming obstacles and difficulties. Perseverance is particularly relevant for final year students facing a quarter life crisis, as this period is often filled with doubts, fears of failure, and pressure to make life changing decisions.

In such circumstances, students encounter challenges like career uncertainty, societal expectations for quick success, and disappointment when plans do not unfold as expected. The ability to recover from failure and persist in striving helps students learn and grow, reinforcing their capacity to view challenges as opportunities for self improvement. Furthermore, self discipline is essential in maintaining consistency and focus on their goals. With strong self-discipline, students remain motivated to follow their daily routines, even

when feeling pressured or lost. This enables them to stay productive and resilient against various pressures, thus effectively managing the quarter life crisis.

The effective contribution of each variable in this study indicates that emotional regulation has a greater contribution (26.3%) to quarter life crisis than resilience (13.9%), with a total contribution of both variables amounting to 40.2%. This suggests that 59.8% of other factors influence the quarter life crisis among final year students beyond the predictors examined in this study. These additional factors include emotional intelligence (Amelia, 2024), self concept (Luluk, 2022), religiosity (Ermita, 2022), self awareness (Afri, 2023), and self compassion (Nabila, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Final year students are in a transitional phase of life, typically aged between 18 and 24, and often experience a quarter life crisis characterized by uncertainty and significant life pressures. One of the main factors triggering a quarter life crisis is stress resulting from major life changes, including academic pressure and the transition to the workforce. Two key factors contributing to the quarter life crisis are emotional regulation and resilience.

This study aims to analyze the role of emotional regulation and resilience as predictors of the quarter life crisis among final year students. Additionally, it examines the correlation between emotional regulation and the quarter life crisis, as well as the correlation between resilience and the quarter life crisis, using multiple linear regression analysis. The study involved 155 final year students from a university in Pekanbaru. The findings indicate that emotional regulation and resilience have a significant relationship with the quarter life crisis experienced by final year students.

The results suggest that emotional regulation and resilience simultaneously influence the quarter life crisis in final year students. Students with good emotional regulation skills are better able to manage their emotions, while resilience helps them recover from difficulties.

Furthermore, the study found that emotional regulation has a negative relationship with the quarter life crisis among final year students. The higher a student's emotional regulation ability, the lower their quarter life crisis level, and vice versa the lower their emotional regulation, the higher their quarter life crisis.

Additionally, the study indicates that resilience also has a negative relationship with the quarter life crisis. Final year students with higher resilience tend to experience a lower quarter life crisis, whereas those with lower resilience are more susceptible to a higher quarter life crisis.

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