

## The Relationship Between Psychological Well Being and Quarter Life Crisis in Fresh Graduate University of Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to investigate the relationship between psychological well-being and the quarter-life crisis among fresh graduates of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo. **Method:** A quantitative correlational approach was employed with a sample of 279 respondents, selected using the Issac & Michael table. The Psychological Well-Being scale based on Ryff's theory and the quarter-life crisis scale based on Robbins and Wilner's aspects were utilized as instruments. **Results:** The Spearman rho correlation test revealed a very strong inverse correlation between psychological well-being and the quarter-life crisis ( $r = -0.884$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that higher mental well-being is associated with a reduced likelihood of experiencing a quarter-life crisis. Additionally, determination analysis showed that psychological well-being accounts for 78.1% of the variance in the occurrence of a quarter-life crisis. **Novelty:** This research contributes to understanding the significant role of psychological well-being in mitigating the challenges faced during the transition from graduation to the workforce, emphasizing the importance of mental health support during university years to prepare graduates for post-graduation challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

Fresh graduates are people who have just finished their education at the diploma or bachelor's level and are preparing to enter the workforce without any prior professional experience [1]. After graduating from college, fresh graduates generally enter a transitional phase in their lives. This stage aligns with the average age of new graduates, most of whom are in early adulthood [2]. Early adulthood is a new phase of life where individuals face more complex developmental tasks. It is often considered a challenging period as individuals must detach from dependence on their parents and strive to live independently [3]. At this stage, individuals are expected to work as they are required to be independent in various aspects of life, including fulfilling their financial needs. During early adulthood, several developmental tasks must be undertaken, especially those related to career and family life. These tasks are diverse, play an important role, and are often challenging to deal with [4].

One of the crucial aspects of adulthood is the shift in interests often linked to new social roles and responsibilities. Job adjustment becomes critical due to physical and psychological changes and the demand to develop a new outlook on life [5]. According to data who released by BPS (Central Statistics Agency), the count of labor force participants in August 2024 was 152.11 million, with an open unemployment rate of 4.91%. This creates challenges in the developmental stage of early adulthood, where individuals may struggle to respond effectively to these pressures. Consequently, they

are at risk of experiencing psychological issues, uncertainty, and emotional crises known as the quarter life crisis [6].

The quarter-life phenomenon today shows that individuals often feel stuck with their choices or decisions due to the need to break free from parental dependence and move toward financial and psychological independence (Robinson, 2018). Between the ages of 18–30, individuals face various dynamics and challenges during this transition, including difficulties in education, career, and marriage. Fresh graduates often feel confused and uncertain about the career path they want to pursue. They may feel pressured to secure a job that meets their expectations but struggle to find the right opportunities. They also worry about falling behind their peers who seem more successful. These issues can trigger developmental challenges in young adults who fail to respond well, potentially leading to psychological issues, uncertainty, and emotional crises — known as quarterlife crisis [7].

Quarter life crisis is a state of panic triggered by feelings of loss and uncertainty faced by individuals when making decisions about careers, finances, living arrangements, and relationships [8]. It is considered a difficult period for people aged 20–30 [9]. During this phase, individuals are more vulnerable to mental health issues due to numerous adaptations and changes in emotional, psychological, and economic aspects. They also begin to explore themselves, solve their own problems, and build new bonds with others. Failure to establish meaningful relationships may result in isolation [10].

Robbin and Wilner (2001) stated that quarter life crisis consists of seven aspects: anxiety, indecisiveness, hopelessness, feeling trapped, low self-esteem, pressure, and concerns about interpersonal relationships [11]. People experiencing quarter life crisis may show signs such as: 1) Frequent worries about the future, 2) Questioning the meaning of life, 3) Regular conflicts with family members, 4) Experiencing self-doubt and lacking personal drive 5) Feeling outpaced by people in the same age group, leading to self-doubt [12].

Quarter life crisis is also influenced by various factors. Arnet (2004) classifies These components are divided into two main groups, specifically personal influences and environmental influences. Personal influences are triggered by the individual themselves, including 1) Identity exploration: identity exploration, 2) Instability: instability, 3) Being self-focused, 4) Feeling in between, 5) The age possibilities. In addition to the internal factors that cause individuals to experience the quarter life crisis phase, there are external factors that can affect individuals as well. External factors are Factors originating from outside the person including 1) friends, romance and relationships with family, 2) Work life and career, 3) Academic challenges [13].

Quarter life crisis can be seen from previous research conducted by Mellyana S, et al, entitled Overview of quarter life crisis in Fresh Graduate Bachelor Malikussaleh University to 314 respondents. Shows that it is in the high categorization, namely 211 respondents with a percentage result of 67.2% being in the high categorization. Based on the results of the interpretation, it can be inferred that people experience the emotional upheaval of individuals who are going through a transition period from the adolescent

phase to adulthood and start worrying about the future, career and the path they will take in the future [6].

Researchers conducted an initial survey of 19 respondents of undergraduate graduates of Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo aged 21-25 years experiencing quarter life crisis. In accordance with the aspects of the "quarter life crisis" according to Robbin and Wilner, namely 13 respondents (68.4%) experienced confusion in making decisions, 10 respondents (52.6%) experienced despair, 10 respondents (52.6%) felt negative self-assessment, 10 respondents (52.6%) felt trapped in difficult situations, 9 respondents (47.4%) felt anxious after graduating from college, 8 respondents (42.1%) felt depressed after graduating from college, 8 respondents (42.1%) experienced worry about interpersonal relationships. From the survey results, it can be concluded that at the age of 21-25 years Muhammadiyah University undergraduates graduating in 2024 experience quarter life crisis problems, especially in the difficulty in making choices, discouragement, and low self-esteem, feeling trapped in difficult situations. In accordance with research conducted by Novianti, M (2024) it was found that 52% of the quarter life crisis category was high. So every individual needs high psychological well being while in the quarter life crisis phase otherwise it will have a fatal impact on the individual in undergoing and completing the next stage of development [7].

According to the study carried out by Robinson (2021), it is suggested that the failure felt Throughout the quarter life crisis affect self-esteem, positive affect, and psychological well-being. In the early adult stage, the pressure to become more independent can cause individuals to experience a quarter life crisis if they are unable to manage it properly [14]. Psychological well-being is needed to face the challenges of life and to fulfill psychological functioning related to a person's physical, mental, and social [15].

Psychological well being is proven to be One of the elements that can impact the quarter life crisis. Put simply, individuals who possess high psychological well-being are less likely to experience a quarter life crisis. Those with strong psychological health can help individuals deal with every problem in life which can make individuals avoid the tendency of quarter life crisis [16]. Psychological well-being is a condition in which a person is able to accept himself and his life experiences, develop personally, establish healthy relationships with others, find meaning and purpose in life, make decisions independently, and manage his environment and life effectively [17]. Psychological well-being in each individual has aspects that make up the overall psychological condition, these aspects include 1) Self-love, 2) Strong social bonds, 3) autonomy, 4) Ability to manage external factors, 5) Aspirations for the future, 6) Self-improvement[18].

The characteristics of individuals with low psychological well-being categories are having insecurity, depending on others, having difficulty establishing good relationships with others, not having life goals, and having difficulty being open to new experiences. Meanwhile, individuals with high psychological well-being categories have behavioral characteristics of self-acceptance, independence, being able to establish positive

relationships with others, having good mastery of the environment, already having life goals, and being able to develop themselves in a better direction [19].

During the quarter life crisis, when individuals live their lives, they must have a healthy and good psychological condition, as well as the ability to adapt, learn, and process. Based on previous experiences and living conditions, a person must be able to have the ability to organize his life so that he can solve existing problems, so that individuals can feel happy and have a good quality of life or psychological well-being. Psychological well-being that a person has to help them overcome various types of problems [7].

Research on quarter life crisis has been done by several previous researchers. Other research conducted by Mellyana on quarter life crisis in Fresh Graduate Psychology Study Program at Malikussaleh University" [6]. Another study conducted by Purnama and Nastiti on "The Relationship between Social Support and Self Disclosure on quarter life crisis in Fresh Graduate in Sidoarjo" [9]. Research conducted by Oktaviani and Christina "Social Support and "quarter life crisis" in Fresh Graduates" [20]. Research conducted by Fauzia, et al "The Relationship between Psychological Well Being and quarter life crisis" [21]. Research conducted by Siswanti, et al "The Relationship Between Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy and quarter life crisis" in Students Who Are Working on Thesis" [11].

This research explores the connection between mental well-being with the quarter-life crisis among fresh graduates from Umsida. The motivation behind this research stems from the fact that most existing studies have concentrated on populations such as experienced workers or broader demographics. Consequently, the goal of this study is to provide more insights into how psychological well-being influences the quarter-life crisis in recent graduates, who are a relatively new group entering the workforce and have unique needs and challenges. By understanding this relationship, this study is expected to contribute to the development of strategies to improve psychological well-being and quality of work life in fresh graduates.

Based on the explanation above, the question arises whether there is a relationship between Psychological Well Being and quarter life crisis in Fresh Graduates Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo. This study aims to improve psychological well being and reduce the negative consequence of quarter life crisis. This research is expected to provide insight and support for individuals who are facing a quarter life crisis, by emphasizing the importance of psychological well-being in the process.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a correlational quantitative research method approach, which aims to determine the relationship between variables and other variables [22]. In this study, there is an independent variable (X1), namely psychological well-being, and the dependent variable (Y), namely quarter life crisis. The research population is fresh graduate undergraduates in 2024 Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo University, totaling 1,445 people. Determination of the number of samples using the Issac & Michael table with a

significance level of 5% of 279 participants. The method of sampling employed was accidental sampling. Data collection is done online via google form.

In this study using data collection techniques using 2 psychological scales Psychological Well-being and “quarter life crisis” are arranged with a Likert scale model, where each item is responded to by determining one of the answer options, the classifications used are Very Suitable (SS), Suitable (S), Unsuitable (TS), and Very Unsuitable (STS). This study will assess the Psychological Well-being variable using the Psychological well-being scale, which is an adopted scale from Fithrotul's research which refers to the aspects put forward by Ryff, namely: self-acceptance, positive realtion with others, autonomy, enviromental mastery, purpose in life, personal growth. The scale consists of 36 items with a reliability of 0.916 [23]. The results of the try out that the researchers have done using the scale from fithrotul show a reliability result of 0.978.

While quarter life crisis is measured by a psychological scale adapted from a scale compiled by Dela which refers to the aspects proposed by Robbins and Wilner, namely: indecision in making decisions, despair, unfavorable self-assessment, a sense of being caught in difficult situations, anxiety, depression, and concerns about interpersonal relationships. The scale contains 26 items with a reliability of 0.881 [24]. The results of the try out that the researcher has done using the scale from Dela show a reliability result of 0.972. Researchers are interested in using the aitem scale from Fithrotul and Dela because it has a high level of reliability.

In this study using the correlation test in analyzing data, the correlation test is a statistical technique used to find the relationship or correlation between 2 or more variables. In this study, the variables to be examined are Pschologycal Well-being as the independent variable (variable X) quarter life crisis as the dependent variable (Y). Researchers used the statistical calculation of Spearman rho correlation with the help of the JASP for window statistical program application [25].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Results*

**Table 1.** Overview of Subjects Based on Age and Gender

| Age   | Gender |        | Distribution | Precentage |
|-------|--------|--------|--------------|------------|
|       | Male   | Female |              |            |
| 22    | 29     | 41     | 70           | 25,09%     |
| 23    | 28     | 43     | 71           | 25,45%     |
| 24    | 22     | 42     | 64           | 22,94%     |
| 25    | 32     | 42     | 74           | 26,52%     |
| Total | 111    | 168    | 279          | 100%       |

Table 1 shows the percentage of participants based on age range. According to the results in Table 1, there are 111 male subjects aged 22–25 years and 168 female subjects aged 22–25 years, with the total percentage in the table being below 100%.

**Table 2.** Categorization of Psychological Well-Being

| Category | Interval       | F   | Percentage |
|----------|----------------|-----|------------|
| Low      | $X < 84$       | 50  | 17,92%     |
| Medium   | $84 < X < 120$ | 189 | 67,74%     |
| High     | $X > 120$      | 40  | 14,34%     |
| Total    |                |     | 100%       |

Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis results of psychological well-being, which is categorized into three levels: low, moderate, and high. In the low category, 50 respondents were identified, representing 17.92%. In the moderate category, there were 189 respondents, accounting for 67.74%. Lastly, in the high category, 40 respondents were identified, making up 14.34%. In light of these outcomes, it can be inferred that the psychological well-being of bachelor's degree graduates from Umsida falls into the moderate category.

**Table 3.** Categorization of Quarter Life Crisis

| Category | Interval      | F   | Percentage |
|----------|---------------|-----|------------|
| Low      | $X < 47$      | 38  | 13,62%     |
| Medium   | $46 < X < 66$ | 189 | 67,74%     |
| High     | $X > 66$      | 52  | 18,64%     |
| Total    |               |     | 100%       |

Table 3 presents the descriptive analysis results of the quarter life crisis, which is categorized into three levels: low, moderate, and high. In the low category, 38 respondents were identified, representing 13.62%. In the moderate category, 189 respondents were identified, accounting for 67.74%. Lastly, in the high category, 52 respondents were identified, comprising 18.64%. In light of these findings, it can be inferred that recent graduates at University of Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo undergo a quarter-life crisis at an intermediate level.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Analysis

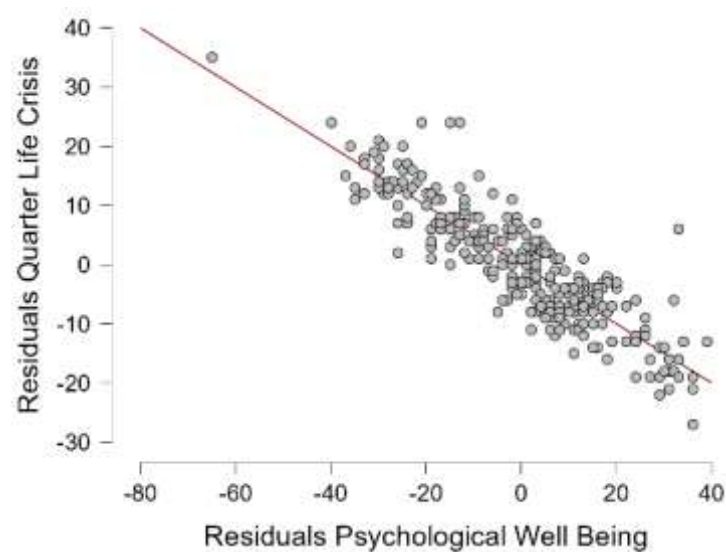
| Descriptive Statistics |                          |                     |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
|                        | Psychological Well Being | Quarter life crisis |
| Valid                  | 279                      | 279                 |
| Missing                | 0                        | 0                   |
| Mean                   | 101.892                  | 56.022              |
| Std. Deviation         | 17.876                   | 10.103              |
| Minimum                | 37.000                   | 29.000              |
| Maximum                | 141.000                  | 91.000              |

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, the minimum value of psychological well-being was 37, and the maximum value was 141, with a mean score of 101.892 and a standard deviation of 17.876. For the quarter life crisis variable, the minimum value was 29 and the maximum value was 91, with a mean score of 56.022 and a standard deviation of 10.103.

**Table 5. Normality Test  
Fit Statistics**

| Test               | Statistic | p     |
|--------------------|-----------|-------|
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov | 0.074     | 0.091 |

Based on the results of the normality assumption test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method from both tables, a value of 0.074 was obtained with a p-value of 0.091. The normality test aims to determine whether the data are normally distributed or not. Using a significance level of  $p > 0.05$ , the p-value exceeds 0.05, indicating that the data are normally distributed. These results show that the assumption of normality is met.

**Figure 1. Linearity Test**

Next, the linearity test results indicate a linear Connection between psychological well-being and quarter life crisis. The data shows a downward-sloping scatter that approaches the linear line, with data points forming an ellipse if a circular line is drawn. Thus, it can be inferred that the information in this research meets the linearity assumption.

**Table 6. Hypothesis test  
Pearson's Correlations**

| Variable                    | Psychological Well Being Quarter life crisis |        |   |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------|---|
| 1. Psychological Well Being | Pearson's r                                  | —      |   |
|                             | p-value                                      | —      |   |
| 2. Quarter Life Crisis      | Pearson's r                                  | -0.884 | — |
|                             | p-value                                      | < .001 | — |

The hypothesis test results using Pearson correlation or product moment analysis obtained  $r = -0.884$  and  $p < 0.001$  ( $< 0.05$ ). This indicates a substantial negative correlation between Psychological Well-Being and Quarter life crisis among fresh graduates

University of Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, meaning that the higher the Psychological Well-Being, the lower the level of quarter life crisis. Since the p-value is  $< 0.05$ , this relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study can be accepted.

**Table 7. Determination test**  
**Model Summary - Quarter life crisis**

| Model          | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | RMSE   |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|--------|
| H <sub>0</sub> | 0.000 | 0.000          | 0.000                   | 10.103 |
| H <sub>1</sub> | 0.884 | 0.781          | 0.780                   | 4.740  |

From the analysis results, an R value of 0.884 was obtained, indicating a strong relationship between psychological well-being and quarter-life crisis. Additionally, an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.781 was obtained, showing that psychological well-being has an influence of 78.1% on quarter life crisis, while the remaining 21.9% is influenced by other factors.

### Discussion

The aims of the descriptive analysis indicate that 67.74% of fresh graduates are experiencing a quarter life crisis at a moderate level. This study was conducted to examine the negative relationship between psychological well-being and the quarter-life crisis among fresh graduates of University of Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (Umsida). The participants in this study were 2024 graduates aged between 22 and 25 years. In this research, the phenomenon of the quarter life crisis was found to influence psychological well-being.

The outcomes of the correlation test indicate that mental well-being has an extremely strong negative association with the quarter-life crisis ( $r = -0.884$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), showing a significant inverse correlation: the higher the mental well-being, the less intense the quarter-life crisis experienced. In contrast, the lower the psychological well-being, the more severe the quarter-life crisis. These findings align with previous research that also uncovered a negative connection between psychological well-being and the quarter life crisis [21]. This is because psychological well-being refers to a state in which individuals live meaningful and purposeful lives, function optimally, and maintain a positive evaluation of their lives[26].

Psychological well-being plays a crucial role for fresh graduates, as it can influence various other psychological issues. When psychological well-being is low, individuals tend to struggle to appreciate the positive aspects of their lives. As a result, they become more vulnerable to experiencing negative emotions such as frustration, mental fatigue, and other related conditions. This can have serious implications for the overall quality of life of a fresh graduate. In line with Ryff, a low level of psychological well-being can contribute to a decline in an individual's mental health [27].

In this context, the quarterlife crisis can be understood as a consequence of the misalignment between expectations and reality experienced by fresh graduates. They are at a life stage that demands major decisions, such as those related to career paths, social

relationships, and long-term life goals. Without sufficient psychological resilience, the internal and external pressures they face may feel overwhelming, thereby increasing the risk of experiencing a quarter life crisis.

Robbins and Wilner describe the quarter-life crisis as a phase in which individuals experience persistent uncertainty about the direction of their future, influenced by past experiences. This phase also reflects the transition from academic life to the professional world [28]. Typically, after completing their studies, fresh graduates either seek employment or pursue further education. However, at the same time, they often feel confused about what steps to take next – whether to build a career, continue their studies, or commit to a serious relationship – which may trigger anxiety and emotional instability. This condition can lead to feelings of fear, pressure, worry, and restlessness [29].

This study found that psychological well-being accounts for 77.1% of the factors influencing an individual's quarter life crisis, while the remaining 22.9% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. For instance, research by Cut Nazirra (2022) on *“The Relationship Between Social Support and quarter-life crisis Among Final-Year Students at the Faculty of Psychology, UIN Ar-Raniry”* revealed a negative relationship between social support and the quarter-life crisis. This means that the higher the social support, the lower the quarter-life crisis experienced, and vice versa – the lower the social support, the higher the level of quarter-life crisis [30].

Another example is a study by Fathur et al. (2025) on *“The Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and quarter life crisis Among Final-Year Students”*, which revealed a substantial negative correlation between self-confidence and the quarter-life crisis. This suggests that the higher the self-efficacy, the less severe the quarter-life crisis, and conversely, the lower the self-efficacy, the more intense the quarter-life crisis. [31].

This study also acknowledges several limitations, including the presence of other factors influencing the quarter-life crisis that were not thoroughly investigated. Future research is encouraged to explore additional contributing factors to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the quarter-life crisis phenomenon.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding** : This study reveals that psychological well-being significantly reduces the likelihood of experiencing a quarter-life crisis among recent graduates, with individuals exhibiting higher levels of self-acceptance, clear life goals, and healthy social relationships being better equipped to manage post-graduation stress and uncertainty. **Implication** : The findings underscore the importance of integrating psychological well-being initiatives within higher education curricula to better prepare students for the challenges they may face during the transition to adulthood. **Limitation** : This research is limited by its focus on a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. **Future Research** : Future studies should investigate additional factors influencing the quarter-life crisis, such as self-efficacy, social support, and family dynamics, to gain a more comprehensive

understanding of the post-graduation transition process and to develop more targeted interventions.

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