

# Dynamics of Quarter Life Crisis (QLC) of Yogyakarta Students

Lailatul Nur Aini, Titik Muti'ah\*

Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa Yogyakarta, Indonesia

\*Email: [titik@ustjogja.ac.id](mailto:titik@ustjogja.ac.id)

## ABSTRACT

QLC is a crisis of emotional confusion or feelings at the age of a quarter of life, the transition from adolescence to adulthood. QLC is the period that determines the success next development. This study aims to describe the dynamics of the Quarter Life Crisis (QLC) and the factors that influence it university students (emerging adulthood) in Yogyakarta. A phenomenological qualitative approach is used in this study. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observation and documentation on 3 subjects (18-25 years old) and informants as data source validation. The results showed that in their ages of 20s the three subjects had different QLC dynamics. This is proven to appear indecisive when making decisions, feeling hopeless, negative self-assessment, trapped in difficult situations, anxious, depressed and also worried about interpersonal relationships. Factors that influence were the existence of hopes and dreams, religion and spirituality, love relationships, family and friends, academic and career challenges.

**Keywords:** *Quarter Life Crisis, Student, Yogyakarta*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The period of human development from late adolescence to late twenties is categorized by Arnett (2000) as emerging adulthood. This is characterized by independence, where individuals have left their dependence of childhood and adolescence but on the other hand have not been able to have the responsibilities carried out in adulthood (Atwood & Scholtz, 2008; Wood et.al., 2018; Ikhsani, 2020; Arini, 2021). The developmental phase of emerging adulthood is a transitional period that is vulnerable to life crises because individuals want to feel free but are accompanied by anxiety. Riyanto & Diana (2021) explained that this condition is currently experiencing a Quarter Life Crisis (QLC).

First Direct Bank (in Fitri, 2019) its survey showed 2,000 millennials in the UK, 56% of whom were in the QLC phase. In the meantime, a survey from LinkedIn Corporate Communications (LCC) (2017) to thousands of people aged 25-33 years from various countries around the world, showed that 75% of the targets have experienced QLC. Research from Riyanto & Diana (2021) found that 86% of students experienced QLC, in addition to the results of interviews, students experienced career-related anxiety. This statement was strengthened by Mutiara (2018) from the results of statistical calculations in his research that 82% of final-level Islamic Guidance Counseling (BKI) students experienced moderate QLC. Then research conducted by Walshe (2018) was found that stress and dissatisfaction with work as well as the existence of relationships and problems regarding mental health could be significant factors in QLC.

In a pre-liminary study of two (2) respondents via WhatsApp on November 6, 2021, the following information was obtained: "After graduating, it's not really clear. The choices are many but the purpose is not clear. I really don't know whether to work or continue my studies or get married or something like that and many of my friends have experienced the same thing. What is the name of QLC? (W1.S1.L.b39-45)." "When I feel a lot of pressure (W1.S2.P.b22-23). The pressure is in the form of questions from people around me, questioning when is the trial, when is graduation, etc. (W1.S2.P.b27-31)."

Robbins and Wilner (2001) described QLC as a period of emotional turmoil (feelings) of distrust of one's own abilities after a major change from adolescence to adulthood. Robinson (2015) asserted that QLC occurs when individuals have goals or try hard to get out of the emerging adulthood age period. Individuals switched

or processed changes from a less stable life pattern, to be open minded and explore a more established, more predictable life pattern and have a deep productive role.

There are seven aspects that can be a sign of individuals experiencing QLC including indecision in decision making, hopelessness, negative self-assessment, trapped in difficult situations, anxiety, depression and worry about interpersonal relationships (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). And the factors that cause QLC (Nash and Murray, 2010) are hopes and dreams, religion and spirituality (Habibie, Syakarofath & Anwar, 2019), love relationships, family and friendships, academic and career challenges.

Sujudi (2020) explained that the QLC phenomenon was a discussion about humans individuality in their lives. If the individual is able to get through it well, the quality of his life will increase because he/she was able to make peace with him/herself and is able to overcome the QLC situation he is experiencing. Later the individual will become a resilient individu and be able to overcome the problems that come to him in the future

Indirianie (2021) further explained that someone who is in the QLC phase will avoid or reject the situation, so the body produces the hormone cortisol or stress hormone. The hormone cortisol, which is produced by the body, will make someone feel restless, worried, tense and anxious. This also has an impact on deteriorating physical health, experiencing a series of psychosomatic or physical disorders that are present due to psychological tension starting to appear and the impact will be different for each individual depending on which part of the individual's body is at risk of experiencing the disorder (Indrianie, 2021). She added that psychosomatic disorders that often appear in the stomach and surroundings, can be stomach pain, diarrhea, increased stomach acid. Disorders of the skin also sometimes appear acne, allergies, eczema, high blood pressure and often experience dizziness or migraines.

This research on the dynamics of QLC and the factors that affect students in emerging adulthood is interesting to study. The purpose is to describe the dynamics and factors that influence QLC of students at the age of emerging adulthood. While the theoretical benefit of this research is that it is expected to be able to add insight into the science of psychology, especially developmental psychology. While the practical benefits are expected to be able to provide information to the subject and students as a whole who are experiencing QLC. Studens have the knowledge to manage and deal with the QLC period so that they (subject) can become an individual who succeeds well in going through the crisis period. The findings can also be used as a reference or next source of literature. The research question that will be answered later is what is the dynamics of QLC and the factors that influence the students at the age of emerging adulthood.

## 2. METHODS

This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach (Johnson & Chirstensen, 2004; Jailani, 2013; Sugiyono. 2016; Gumilang, 2016; Yusanto, 2019) in describing the dynamics of QLC in students at the age of emerging adulthood, aged 18-25 years (Arnett, 2000). The subjects were 3 students, domiciled in Yogyakarta and willing to be research subjects. 3 informants or significant others who know well the subject quite closely and or the subject's family or friends are also asked to clarify the data.

Data collection methods used semi-structured interviews (Herdiansyah, 2015), unstructured (Gumilang 2016) and unstructured observations (Holloway & Wheeler in Rachmawati, 2007; Rosaliza, 2015). Interviews and observations were carried out for 3 meetings, as long as the required data were sufficient. The data analysis method refered to the analysis technique of Miles and Huberman (in Wandu & & Raharjo, 2013) with data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. Research reliability or triangulation is carried out to check whether the research data is valid or not (Bachri, 2010). The triangulation used in this research is source triangulation and method triangulation.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptions of the three subjects showed that S<sub>1</sub> was 22-year-old male PTN undergraduate students (fresh graduates), already dating, from an established family, currently hunting for work, open personality, responsive, easy going, determined and friendly; the S<sub>2</sub> was 23-year-old female PTN graduate student, not yet in a relationship, from a middle-class family, works side-jobs, seemed reluctant to be interviewed, was less open, and hiding something; S<sub>3</sub> was female PTS student aged 22 years, from an established family, already

dating and not allowed to work by her parents, her personality is less focused and less enthusiastic.

Findings Aspects of QLC that appeared in each subject are shown as the following: 1) S1 is fresh-graduate from Agricultural Industrial Technology (TIP), during the pandemic, he was confused about his future. Faced with a variety of choices but undecided in deciding. The decision to get married, continue studies or something else. S1 develops an attitude of self-confidence and sees his minimal achievements and feels that he had no achievements. In the end, S1 decided to resign with consideration from his friends, parents and girlfriend.

The despair of S1 was indicated by dissatisfaction with his achievements of life and feeling like a failure in studies, feeling inexperienced and unable to compete in the career world. Negative self-assessment S1 believed that his abilities were minimum, felt unqualified and refused when given the opportunity to develop himself as a member of an organization at the Asian Continent level. At the time S1 had to make a decision, the people around him would influence such as his wish to participate in KKN in Papua but from a large family not giving their permission so the subject withdrew from his wish. By the time the graduation period had passed, the subject felt lost, it caused him feeling undeveloped and was still in the phase of looking for a job. S1 developed many doubts about not being able to get a better job after deciding to resign. In addition, S1 had low self-esteem in terms of appearance and bad management.

The fourth aspect was being stuck in a difficult situation. Meanwhile, in the fifth aspect, S1's anxiety was often overshadowed by worry about what would happen next after the pandemic. Many of the plans that had been drawn up failed and resulted in her worrying about getting a better job. In the sixth aspect, S1 was rather depressed while still working, making it burdensome so he felt that his job drains his energy to exhaustion, stress, and affects his physical health. In the seventh aspect, namely worrying about establishing interpersonal relationships, S1 felt unclose to their parents because of differences in thinking and generations gaps. He described that his mother was also insensitive and unconcern to him so he often felt isolated/alone from his family and friends.

In S2 is a student at the end of the 10th semester majoring in Arabic Language and Literature (BSA) and currently struggled with her thesis. She had a lot of doubts in making decisions, at the beginning of the meeting she said he just wanted to focus on working her thesis so that could finish it quickly because it was already the umpteenth year of college. However, at the next meeting, she decided to return her job with argument of being bored if she only worked on her thesis. S2 on the other hand showed a fear of the consequences of her decision unmeet her expectations. S2 often thought about her ability to do thesis translation that makes her ungraduate on time, compared her achievements with friends who had graduated. S2 liked to compare herself with friends who had a lot of knowledges and experiences so that she saw a low achievements. S2 assessed herself negatively because she didn't know about her strengths and had not been able to explore her potentiality, made her doubts that overshadow her. Her unfinished translation of the thesis arise her fears that she would not succeed in completing her thesis. These things made her self-deprecating judgments. S2 felt lost when she was supposed to be working on her thesis in Jogja, but because her father was sick, she didn't know what to do.

In the fourth aspect, S2 was stuck in a difficult situation, overshadowed by worries about her study which is already in his 10th semester and how she would get a suitable job later and made her confused. S2 had doubts about his mate because he felt his appearance was unattractive. She was more worried about the response of parents when decided to return to a side job while working on a thesis which makes her dishonest with her parents. S2 also felt stress being able to finish her thesis and was bored, tired, sad, dizzy and overthinking.

For S3 is currently taking a thesis in the 8th semester of Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) she had doubts about her thesis and career as being an elementary school teacher. S2 felt insecure and inferior when taught as a teacher later. S3 looked desperate to compare with her friends who have had a thesis exam. She was often overshadowed by a sense of doubt about her ability to face thesis exam and often doubts about making decisions so that she asked other people to convince her. The subject also felt low self-esteem and full of doubts because her shyness and self-doubt when talking to other people. S3 was still working and worried unbeing able to give the best in her job (preksu employees) and makes her stressed.

S3 was Anxiety and worry about her future, being able to finish her thesis, losing and being abandoned by friends, parents and the decision to re-establish his love with his ex-lover secretly for years even though his parents had unapproved it. The fear of S3 was dominated by disappointing parents because of the decisions she have been made. S3's narrow friendship relations also made her often lost friends, have no placed, restless, confused and had a lot of thoughts that made her sad and crying.

The picture of QLC in S1 was hard to make decisions, some times despair, negative self-assessment, stuck in difficult situations, likes to be anxious, depressed, feels burdened by the situation and worries in interpersonal relationships with parents and does not feel comfortable. QLC S1 was very influenced by factors such as weak religious beliefs and spirituality, romantic relationships when conflicts arise, discomfort with parents/family and friendships, academic and career challenges.

The description of QLC's S2 also showed hard for making decision, hopelessness, negative self-assessment, being stuck in difficult situations, anxious, depressed and worried about interpersonal relationships. This is influenced by factors from QLC such as the loss of hopes and dreams, weak religion and spirituality, not having romantic relationships, unclosed to her family and friends, high academic and career challenges.

While in S3, six of the seven aspects of QLC appeared like hard tomaking decision, hopelessness, negative self-assessment, anxiety, depression and worry about interpersonal relationships. This is influenced by QLC's factors such as less hopes and dreams, weak religion and spirituality, dishonest love relationships, family and friendships as well as academic challenges.

The despair of the three subjects was indicated by dissatisfaction with their life achievements and felt failed in studies, felt inexperienced and could not compete in the career world. This is in line with research from Walshe (2018) that stress and job dissatisfaction can make individuals in the QLC phase. Research findings on the QLC dynamics of the three subjects were exacerbated by the presence of PPKM due to the COVID-19 pandemic, where everything was limited and regulated. The QLC dynamics of the three subjects showed the more frequently QLC aspects appear, along with the factors, the three subjects will experience a situation, atmosphere to the level of moderate to high QLC dynamics.

QLC in all subjects is in line with Indriani's (2021) explanation that this crisis usually arises during the transition from adolescence to new adulthood, where this period is filled with many variations in making choices and accompanied by responsibility and consequences for each choice made.

The results of this study support the statement of Robbins & Wilner (2001) that QLC is a period of emotional upheaval as well as feelings of distrust of one's own abilities after a major change from adolescence to adulthood. What was experienced by the three subjects is in line with Indriani's (2021) statement that QLC is a crisis state that is felt or faced when entering a quarter century of life, which is characterized by confusion and anxiety in dealing with and determining the direction of the next life. The results of this study are also still relevant to research conducted by Frischer (2008) that QLC is a feeling of worry that arises about uncertainty in life in the future, usually around career, social life, and relationships experienced around the age of twenty.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Research on the dynamics of the Quarter Life Crisis (QLC) on three students at the age of emerging adulthood by showing the dynamics of QLC from moderate to high levels. This is supported by the frequent emergence of aspects of QLC, namely indecision in decision making, hopelessness, negative self-assessment, trapped in difficult situations, anxious and depressed as well as worried about interpersonal relationships. This can not be separated from the various triggering factors ranging from the achievement of hopes and dreams, the level of understanding of religion and spirituality, lack of family support, friendships, romantic relationships and the existence of academic and career challenges.

The findings of the QLC dynamics research from the three student subjects were exacerbated by the existence of PPKM due to the COVID-19 pandemic, where social interaction was completely limited and regulated. The QLC dynamics of the three subjects show that QLC aspects often appear, along with the factors, so the three subjects experience situations, atmosphere to the level of moderate to high QLC dynamics.

Research subjects are expected to accept the QLC phase they experience as a challenge that needs to be overcome in emerging adulthood. Starting to make peace with the crisis situation faced in order to achieve resilience. In addition, the subject of starting to enlarge friendships does not feel alone in facing the QLC period. They must be always try positive affirmations by believing that everything that has passed and what has been obtained during the lecture is the best that can be obtained. Students are expected to provide not only knowledge, materials, and practice according to their majors, but also to prepare career skills, by actively participating in life hack seminars and workshops in the world of work and training them with practical life knowledge.

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