

Measuring the Difficulties of Early Adulthood: The Development of the Quarter Life Crisis Scale

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Article history

Received: 20 October 2022

Revised: 4 January 2023

Accepted: 17 January 2023

Keywords

Early adulthood

Quarter life crisis

Psychological assessment

Abstract

This study was conducted to develop a quarter-life crisis scale that can be used to measure the quarter-life crisis of early adulthood in Indonesia. Although it has begun to become a concern for researchers in Indonesia, the development of the quarter-life crisis scale has never been created. Some researchers have adapted the constructs developed by foreign researchers, which are not necessarily suitable for application in Indonesia. The development of this scale goes through 5 stages: conceptualization of the test; test construction; test trial; item analysis; and test revision. The test trial was filled by 181 early adults in Indonesia from Pekanbaru, Malang, Medan, Padang, Batam, Madura, Lombok, Pangkalan Kerinci, Solo, Surabaya, Jakarta, Bogor, and Yogyakarta. The results showed that there are 26 valid and consistent items that can be used to measure the early adult quarter-life crisis in Indonesia, which is indicated by the validity of the r_{count} greater than r_{table} and the Cronbach Alpha value of 0.854.

How to cite: Afandi, M., Afandi, N. H., Afandi, S. A., & Erdayani, R. (2022). Measuring the Difficulties of Early Adulthood: The Development of the Quarter Life Crisis Scale. *Jurnal Kajian Bimbingan dan Konseling*, 8(3), 167–176. doi: 10.17977/um001v8i32023p167-176

1. Introduction

The transition from adolescence to early adulthood is unpleasant (Lindell & Campione-Barr, 2017). For some people, the transition period becomes confusing and sad while also triggering anger or helplessness. The transition that occurs from late adolescence to early adulthood causes helplessness felt by individuals aged 18-25 in their new roles as adult individuals. This reaction or condition is referred to as a quarter-life crisis (Robbins & Wilner, 2001; Syifa'ussurur, Husna, Mustaqim, & Fahmi, 2021). The early adulthood individuals who got a quarter life crisis were signed by seven indicators, including uncertainty in making decisions; hopelessness; having a negative self-assessment; feeling trapped in the life you live; anxiety about the future; feeling pressured by existing demands; and worry about interpersonal relationships (Robbins & Wilner, 2001).

The quarter-life crisis focuses on the crisis experienced by early adulthood individuals. In this case, there are various categories of early adult individuals. Some experts have different opinions regarding the limit of early adulthood. Putri (2018) claimed that early adulthood individuals are those aged 18-40. In Indonesia, early adulthood individuals are those starting from 21 years old (Putri, 2018). Meanwhile, Santrock mentioned that individuals aged 18-25 are those who are categorized as early adulthood individuals (Santrock, 2019). In this research, the category of early adulthood individuals is similar to Santrock (2019).

Moreover, according to Balzarie and Nawangsih (2019), this crisis experienced by early adulthood individuals is so burdensome because the changes that occur in various aspects of early adult life are more than transitions at other ages. In early adulthood, there are several new roles that are very different from the roles at the previous stage of development, namely late adolescence. The new role of this early adult individual is outlined in developmental tasks, which include: determining a life partner; learning to be a wife/husband; building a household; equating understanding with the

family; household management; work; becoming a full citizen; be part of a social group that has the same understanding and values (Putri, 2018).

The quarter-life crisis phenomenon has been researched by many scholars around the world. It has been conducted on early adult individuals in Czech, Ireland, England, Turkey, and other countries (Cirklová, 2021; Duara, Hugh-Jones, & Madill, 2021; Murphy, 2011; Yeler, Berber, Ozdogan, & Cok, 2021). As a psychological construct, one of the researchers has developed a quarter-life crisis scale that contains 165 items and is adapted to the characteristics of Filipino society (James Philip Ray V. Piggolio, 2015). However, the same scale for Indonesian has not yet been constructed. Although some Indonesian researchers had conducted studies related to a quarter-life crisis, the scale they adopted was not deliberately developed as a scale that can be specifically used among early adults in Indonesia (Agustin, 2012). Examining the inclination of crises that emerge among individuals in their early adulthood highlights the necessity of creating a scale specifically designed to gauge the extent of crisis encountered during this life stage. This scale should be tailored to suit the unique characteristics of Indonesian society. Therefore, this develops a quarter life scale crisis that can be used in early adult individuals in Indonesia.

2. Method

The quarter-life crisis is defined as the crisis experienced during early adulthood. Thus, in this study, the sampling was completed using purposive sampling, which focused on individuals aged 18-25 or as early adults, according to the category theory of Santrock (2019). There were 181 participants from several areas in Indonesia, such as Pekanbaru, Malang, Medan, Padang, Batam, Madura, Lombok, Pangkalan Kerinci, Solo, Surabaya, Jakarta, Bogor, and Yogyakarta. Moreover, the research design implemented the development of the Cohen and Swerdilk scale. The two main phases in this design are development and validation and the implementation of the Cohen and Swerdilk process. Additionally, there are five scale development design procedures that will be carried out, namely: test conceptualization; test construction; test trials; grain analysis; and test revisions (Swerdlik, 2009).

The initial procedure in developing this test was conceptualizing the test. In this case, we developed ideas on how to measure the quarter-life crisis construct properly. This process involved the preparation of prospective items, revisions, and deletions, all of which were adjusted through a literature review related to the concept of quarter-life crisis put forward by Robbins and Wilner (2001) with the seven indicators of quarter-life crisis.

After the test was conceptualized, the construction of the test was carried out, involving setting the rules to determine the number of measurements or determining the type of scaling to be used, then developing statement items. The final stage of the construction process was to determine scoring items, whether to use a cumulative, categorical, or ipsative model. In this study, measurements were carried out using the Likert Scale model, and items were arranged. In the end, a total of 28 items were developed based on input from experts in related fields. The scoring provisions used were categorization, similar to other available psychological test instruments.

Furthermore, after the items were constructed, the test was tested. The target of respondents was in accordance with the target of potential users. Therefore, in this case, the trial was carried out involving early adult individuals in various regions in Indonesia. In addition, the results of the trial were analyzed, more precisely, using item analysis. The good item should be reliable and valid. To carry out this analysis, statistical analysis was used using Pearson Correlation Product Moment for validity and Cronbach's Alpha for reliability. Based on the results of the analysis, several items were observed to be not valid, but they were reliable, so revisions or removal of invalid items were needed. If any items were found to be dropped, a re-test was carried out on the revised items.

3. Results

Table 1. Quarter Life Crisis Scale Outline

Variable	Indicator	Descriptor	Number of Statement		Items Total
			Favorable	Unfavorable	
Quarter Life Crisis	Confused about making decisions	1. Individuals have difficulty making choices for their lives as an adult	1. I never imagined how difficult it would be to make choices in life as an adult	20. I feel that I understand what to choose in life when I become an adult	4
		2. Individuals doubt the accuracy of their choices	13. I am afraid that the choice that has been made at this adult age is the wrong decision	2. I feel confident with the path chosen at this time because it has been considered in the best possible way	
	Hopeless	1. Individuals feel they failed to carry out their duties as an adult	19. The difficulty of being an adult makes me want to give up	16. Being left behind by my friends makes me even more passionate about pursuing life goals	4
		2. Individuals feel life is filled with failures	9. Adult life makes me feel like an unlucky individual	28. I feel life is going as expected	
Have self-negative assessment	Have self-negative assessment	1. Individuals see themselves as having bad qualities	7. Some of the most influential people in my life have been disappointed by me	4. Despite breaking some religious rules, I feel that I deserve to be happy	4
		2. Individuals see themselves as incompetent in fulfilling developmental tasks in early adulthood	21. I feel that my life experience is not enough as a provision to struggle in adult life	10. I feel to be a competent person based on the experience I have	
Feeling stuck with life	Feeling stuck with life	1. Individuals have difficulty finding solutions to the obstacles they experience as adults	3. I still have trouble solving problems in life even though I am a grown-up	14. Every solution I choose is right to solve the problem I'm experiencing	4
		2. Individuals feel their lives are not improving in a better direction	25. The physical and psychological sacrifices for a better life only add to my pain	6. Becoming an adult brings me closer to the welfare of life	
Anxious about the future	Anxious about the future	1. Individuals worry about not being able to realize the expected future	27. I worry about my own fate after seeing the success of others	18. My qualifications make me confident that I can achieve my dreams	4

Variable	Indicator	Descriptor	Number of Statement		Items Total
			Favorable	Unfavorable	
		2. Individuals worry that the current struggle is in vain	5. I'm not sure the sacrifices made today are in line with the expected results	22. I deserve success because I have worked hard	

There are two data sets obtained in this study; validity data attained using Pearson Correlation Product Moment and reliability data from Alpha Cronbach. All the tests were done using the SPSS application. The validity test was used to see the accuracy between the instrument of measurement and the object to be measured (Louangrath & Sutanapong, 2018). Meanwhile, the basis for making decisions for each item in this test is as follows:

If $r_{\text{count}} > r_{\text{table}}$ the item is categorized as valid

If $r_{\text{count}} < r_{\text{table}}$ the item is categorized as invalid

The value of r_{table} in this scale was taken from The Level of Significance for 175 respondents (N=175), but because our total number of respondents was 181 (N=181), we selected N of 175 with r_{table} of 0.145 from 5% significance. Therefore, the items with a lower r_{count} of 0.145 were classified as non-valid items. The results of the *Pearson Correlation Product Moment* test are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Validity Test

No. item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
1	.327**	.000	181
2	.605**	.000	181
3	.498**	.000	181
4	.075	.318	181
5	.372**	.000	181
6	.432**	.000	181
7	.498**	.000	181
8	.460**	.000	181
9	.559**	.000	181
10	.503**	.000	181
11	.666**	.000	181
12	.068	.361	181
13	.589**	.000	181
14	.567**	.000	181
15	.449**	.000	181
16	.264**	.000	181
17	.477**	.000	181
18	.406**	.000	181
19	.682**	.000	181
20	.532**	.000	181
21	.428**	.000	181
22	.309**	.000	181
23	.451**	.000	181
24	.450**	.000	181
25	.472**	.000	181
26	.499**	.000	181
27	.596**	.000	181
28	.596**	.000	181

According to the Pearson Correlation Product Moment test results, we identified two items with $r_{\text{count}} < r_{\text{table}}$, namely item no. 4 with r_{count} of 0.075 and item no. 12 with r_{count} 0.068.

In addition, reliability represents the measurement results consistency of a scale (Geourge & Mallery, 2018). In this study, we examined the reliability of the scale using Cronbach's Alpha. The results of the reliability test are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.854	28

The foundation for making the decision on item reliability level is described in the following:

if Cronbach's Alpha > r_{table} , then the scale is classified as reliable;

if Cronbach's Alpha < r_{table} , then the scale is classified as non-reliable.

From our analysis, we obtained a 0.854 Cronbach's Alpha score. Therefore, the constructed quarter-life crisis scale has been reliable and capable of measuring the quarter-life crisis constructs consistently.

4. Discussion

The quarter-life crisis was first introduced by (Robbins & Wilner, 2001) when he was completing his dissertation. He observed helplessness among individuals during the early period of adulthood as they are demanded to complete numerous new roles as adults. Those roles, however, have been specified in the obligatory human developmental tasks. Further, (Robinson, 2019) asserted that individuals are commonly overwhelmed with their roles during their early adulthood stage, resulting in desperation. Besides, the quarter-life issues have been divided into a number of areas, namely dreams, and expectations, academic challenges, religion and spirituality, career and work, friendship, love life, relations, family, as well as self-identity (Chesbrough, 2011).

The established quarter-life crisis scale is expected to measure the quarter-life crisis experienced by Indonesian people during their early adulthood stage. This scale is also anticipated to aid in illustrating an individual's despair in their adulthood. This psychological construct was developed following the absence of reliable and valid scales up to recently. Consequently, many Indonesian researchers adopted the quarter-life crisis instrument proposed by foreign researchers.

The quarter-life crisis was established based on seven indicators of quarter-life crises proposed by (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). The descriptors of those indicators were expanded and used as the groundwork of the favorable and unfavorable items in the developed quarter-life crisis scale.

Table 4. Favorable and Unfavorable Items in Quarter Life Crisis Scale

No	Indicator	Descriptor	Item No.
1	Confused about making decisions	1. Individuals face issues in deciding their life choices as adults 2. Individuals hesitate about the accuracy of their choice	Favo: 1, 13 Unfavo: 20, 2
2	Hopeless	1. Individuals experienced a sense of failure in fulfilling their adult responsibilities 2. Individuals perceived that their life is full of failure	Favo: 19, 9 Unfavo: 16, 4
3	Negative self-assessment	1. Individuals see themselves as having poor quality 2. Individuals see themselves as incompetent in completing the developmental tasks	Favo: 7, 21 Unfavo: 10
4	Feeling stuck with life	1. The individual has issues in resolving their issues as an adult 2. Individuals perceived that they were stuck with no further improvement	Favo: 3, 25 Unfavo: 14, 6
5	Anxious with the future	1. Individuals worry about their inability to realize their dream	Favo: 12, 5 Unfavo: 18, 22

No	Indicator	Descriptor	Item No.
		2. Individuals have concerns that their efforts and struggles may be futile.	
6	Depressed with the available demands	1. Individuals regard the standard in society and family as illogical for them 2. Individuals face issues in fulfilling the demands of adults	Favo: 23, 11 Unfavo: 24
7	Worried about interpersonal relationships	1. Individuals regard their relationship as useless for their future 2. Individuals face difficulties establishing new and meaningful relationships in their age	Favo: 15, 17 Unfavo: 26, 8

Each of the indicators summarized in Table 4 is represented by four items, so we have 28 items in total. The alternatives for each item in the scale are presented in the following.

SA (Strongly agree)	: the statement highly correspond with your situation
A (Agree)	: the statement is less correspond with your situation
DA (Disagree)	: the statement does not correspond with your situation
SDA (Strongly disagree)	: the statement exceedingly does not correspond with your situation

For the scoring, we followed the criteria presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Scoring Criteria

Statement	SA	A	DA	SDA
Favorable	4	3	2	1
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4

The obtained scores from the scale are classified into five categories with interval length measured as the following:

Minimum score	: $28 \times 4 = 112$
Maximum score	: $28 \times 1 = 28$
Range of score	: $112 - 28 = 84$
Number of criteria	: 5 (exceedingly high, high, moderate, low, exceedingly low)
Length of interval	: $84 : 5 = 16.8$

Following that interval length, we formulated the quarter-life crisis categories presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Criteria for Quarter Life Crisis Scores

Score	Measures of Quarter Life Crisis
95.2-112	Exceedingly high
78.4-95.2	High
61.6-78.4	Moderate
44.8-61.6	Low
28-44.8	Exceedingly low

The analysis results on the items constructed using the procedures for psychology construct development proposed by (Swerdlik, 2009) suggested that two items should be terminated as they are not valid with $r_{\text{count}} < r_{\text{table}}$, namely items no 4 and 2. Further, the scale also has acceptable consistent results as indicated by the higher 0.854 Cronbach's Alpha score than the r_{table} 0.145. In the end, we have successfully constructed 26 valid and reliable items for measuring the level of the quarter-life crisis. As for revision, the non-valid item number 4 was replaced by item number 28, while item number 12 was substituted by item number 27.

Table 7. List of Revised Favorable and Unfavorable Items

No	Indicator	Descriptor	Item No.
1	Confused about making decisions	1. Individuals face issues in deciding their life choices as adults 2. Individuals hesitate about the accuracy of their choice	1, 20, 2, 13
2	Hopeless	1. Individuals experienced a sense of failure in fulfilling their adult responsibilities 2. Individuals perceived that their life is full of failure	19, 16, 9, 4
3	Negative self-assessment	1. Individuals see themselves as having poor quality 2. Individuals see themselves as incompetent in completing the developmental tasks	7, 21, 10
4	Feeling stuck with life	1. The individual has issues in resolving their issues as an adult 2. Individuals perceived that they were stuck with no further improvement	3, 14, 25, 6
5	Anxious with the future	1. Individuals worry about their inability to realize their dream 2. Individuals have concerns that their efforts and struggles may be futile	12, 18, 5, 22
6	Depressed with the available demands	1. Individuals regard the standard in society and family as illogical for them 2. Individuals face issues in fulfilling the demands as adults	23, 11, 24
7	Worried about interpersonal relationships	1. Individuals regard their relationship as useless for their future 2. Individuals face difficulties establishing new and meaningful relationships in their age	15, 26, 17, 8

Following the revision results, the items for the quarter-life crisis are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Quarter Life Crisis Scale

No	Statement
1	I have difficulties fulfilling the duties of adults assigned by my family
2	I am confident with my choice as I have made thorough consideration
3	I see a solution to my problems
4	I perceive I have lived my expected life
5	I worry that my struggles will not aid me in attaining the expected results
6	I feel that my qualifications keep improving
7	I frequently disappoint other people
8	I have access to the foremost people who may help my career, study, religion, love, and family life, as well as realizing my life purposes
9	I perceive my career, study, religion, love, and family life, as well as my life purposes, as a failure
10	I enjoy my struggle to attain my life purposes
11	I regard society and my family's standards as unrealistic
12	Seeing the success of other people, I feel anxious about my future
13	I question the accuracy of my life decision
14	I keep struggling in my life, though I face significant pressures
15	I perceive my recent relationship as unfavorable for my career
16	I have met some expectations as adults
17	I experience issues in establishing relationships with other people
18	I feel I have realized my future life goals gradually
19	I perceive that my numerous struggles have not been sufficient to generate the expected results
20	I have specific strategies to determine choices in my career, study, religion, and family life, including in achieving my life purposes

No	Statement
21	I regard my recent competencies are not sufficient to help me realize my dream
22	I am satisfied with my competencies
23	I experience issues in making decisions regarding my career, study, religion, and family life, including in achieving my life purposes
24	I place my family's expectations as motivation to be successful
25	I feel that I am stuck in my life, although I have taken college education
26	I think a life partner can be obtained through my recent relationship

5. Conclusion

Our analysis results suggested that the established quarter-life crisis scale containing 26 items from seven indicators is capable of measuring the quarter-life crisis experienced by Indonesian citizens in the early adult stage as it has gained sufficient validity and reliability. Therefore, this scale can be adopted by various stakeholders in assessing the quarter-life crisis of Indonesian people in early adulthood.

Author Contributions

Muslim Afandi: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, **Syed Agung Afandi:** Software, Data curation, Investigation, **Nail Hidayat Afandi:** Writing- Original draft preparation, Reviewing and Editing, **Rizki Erdayani:** Visualization

Funding

This study has been successfully conducted because of the support from various parties. Therefore, we would like to address our gratitude to the Institute of Research and Community Engagement of Universitas Negeri Malang for the PNPB research grant 2022. Our findings are expected to aid the progression of Guidance and Counseling Science and other related fields.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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Mengukur Kesulitan Masa Dewasa Awal: Pengembangan Skala Quarter Life Crisis

Kata kunci

Dewasa awal
Quarter life crisis
Asesmen psikologi

Abstrak

Saat ini, *quarter life crisis* sudah mulai menjadi perhatian bagi para peneliti di Indonesia, namun pengembangan skala *quarter life crisis* ini belum pernah diciptakan. Beberapa peneliti melakukan adaptasi dari konstruk yang dikembangkan peneliti luar negeri yang tentunya belum sesuai tepat digunakan di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengembangkan skala *quarter life crisis* yang dapat digunakan untuk mengukur *quarter life crisis* dewasa awal di Indonesia. Pengembangan skala ini melalui lima tahap, yaitu: konseptualisasi tes; konstruksi uji; uji coba tes; analisis butir; dan revisi tes. Uji coba dilakukan pada 181 individu dewasa awal di Indonesia yang berasal dari Pekanbaru, Malang, Medan, Padang, Batam, Madura, Lombok, Pangkalan Kerinci, Solo, Surabaya, Jakarta, Bogor dan Yogyakarta. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 26 butir valid dan secara konsisten dapat digunakan untuk mengukur *quarter life crisis* dewasa awal di Indonesia.