

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION AND QUARTER LIFE CRISIS AMONG MEMBERS OF THE DUKUH TANJUNG YOUTH ORGANIZATION

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Abstract

Early adulthood is often accompanied by emotional instability and psychological distress known as a quarter life crisis. During this period, individuals may experience anxiety, confusion, and pressure related to life decisions. Self-compassion, which involves treating oneself with kindness, acceptance, and understanding in difficult situations, is considered a protective factor against psychological distress. This study aimed to examine the relationship between self-compassion and quarter life crisis among members of the Dukuh Tanjung Youth Organization (Karang Taruna). This study employed a quantitative correlational design. The sample consisted of 103 active members of the Dukuh Tanjung Youth Organization, selected using a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected using self-compassion and quarter life crisis scales and analyzed using Pearson's correlation analysis. The results showed a strong and statistically significant negative correlation between self-compassion and quarter life crisis ($r = -0.735$, $p < 0.001$). Self-compassion explained 54% of the variance in quarter life crisis. Higher self-compassion is associated with lower levels of quarter life crisis. Enhancing self-compassion may help young adults cope with challenges during early adulthood.

Keywords: Self-Compassion; Quarter Life Crisis; Dukuh Tanjung Youth Organization

INTRODUCTION

Quarter Life Crisis (QLC) has emerged as a psychological phenomenon commonly experienced by individuals in early adulthood, characterized by existential anxiety, uncertainty about the future, confusion regarding life direction, and dissatisfaction with personal achievements. Preliminary observations and informal interviews with members of *Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung* indicate that many young adults experience significant anxiety related to life prospects, feelings of inadequacy compared to peers, and difficulties in making major life decisions such as career and social relationships.

Initial interviews with three early adults from diverse backgrounds (student-worker, temporary worker, and factory laborer) revealed symptoms aligned with the core aspects of Quarter Life Crisis, including decision-making confusion, negative self-evaluation, feelings of stagnation, psychological pressure, and concerns about social and marital expectations. Participants frequently compared themselves with peers perceived as more successful, leading to heightened self-criticism, hopelessness, and reduced self-confidence.

In addition, a preliminary survey conducted among 21 members (20.4%) of the Karang Taruna community showed that a substantial proportion experienced persistent doubts about major life decisions, feelings of life stagnation, pressure to meet parental expectations,

psychological burden, and fear of negative social judgment. These findings indicate that Quarter Life Crisis is a prevalent and tangible experience within this community.

Self-Compassion is considered a protective psychological factor that may help individuals cope with the distress associated with Quarter Life Crisis. According to Neff (2003), individuals with higher levels of self-compassion tend to demonstrate greater resilience, reduced self-criticism, and enhanced psychological well-being. However, observations suggest that many participants exhibit low levels of self-compassion, characterized by harsh self-judgment and difficulty accepting personal limitations, which may exacerbate their crisis experience.

Given the strategic role of *Karang Taruna* members as young agents of community development, understanding their mental health is essential. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between Self-Compassion and Quarter Life Crisis among members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung, in order to contribute to the development of community-based psychological interventions that promote mental well-being in early adulthood.

METHODS

Sample or Population

The population of this study consisted of all active members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung, totaling 103 individuals. This study employed a total sampling technique (census sampling), in which the entire population was included as the research sample. This technique was chosen because the population size was relatively small and accessible, allowing all members to be involved in the study.

Data Measurement

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire in the form of psychological scales. According to Azwar (2012), psychological scales are measurement instruments designed to assess psychological attributes such as attitudes, values, and personality traits that cannot be directly observed. This method enables the researcher to obtain quantitative data based on individuals' perceptions or responses to systematically constructed items.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study employed correlation matrix analysis to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Statistical analysis was conducted using Jamovi software version 2.6.4.4, which facilitated the calculation and interpretation of correlation coefficients.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Research Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 103 active members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung, located in Pomah Village, Tulung District, Klaten Regency, Central Java. Gender. The majority of participants were male, totaling 66 individuals (64.1%), while female participants numbered 37 individuals (35.9%).

Tabel 1. Distribution of Participants by Gender

Category	FFrequency	%
Male	66	64,1
Female	37	35,9
Total	103	100

The mean level of Quarter Life Crisis based on gender indicates that female participants experienced higher levels of Quarter Life Crisis than male participants. Female participants obtained a mean score of 122, representing 53% of the theoretical maximum score, based on 37 participants. In contrast, male participants obtained a mean score of **112**, corresponding to **48.7% of the theoretical maximum score**, based on 66 participants.

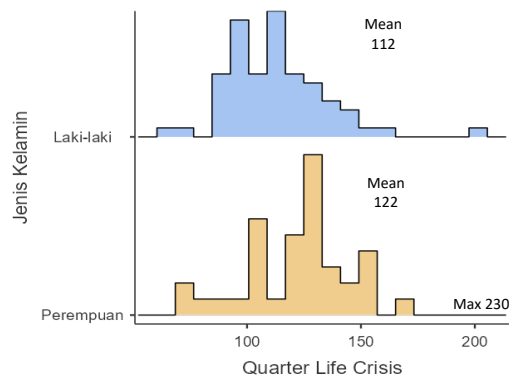


Figure 1 Histogram of the Mean Quarter Life Crisis Scores

The mean level of Self-Compassion based on gender shows that male participants demonstrated higher levels of Self-Compassion than female participants. Male participants achieved a mean score of 42.3, equivalent to 70.5% of the theoretical maximum score, based on 66 participants. Meanwhile, female participants obtained a mean score of 37.7, representing 62.8% of the theoretical maximum score, based on 37 participants.

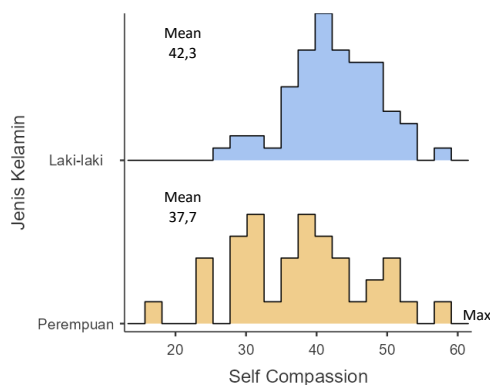


Figure 2. Histogram of the Mean Self-Compassion Scores

Age

The participants in this study were active members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung aged between 16 and 45 years, totaling 103 individuals.

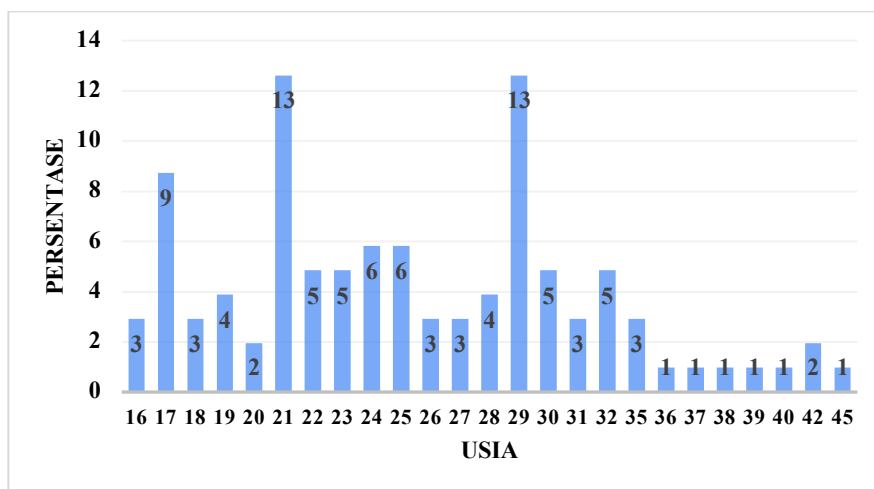


Figure 3 Histogram of Participants' Age Distribution

Descriptive Statistics of Research Data

The researcher conducted data tabulation based on the participants' responses to the items contained in the research scales. The tabulated data produced the following descriptive statistical results.

Tabel 2. Data Deskriptif Statistik Variabel *Quarter Life Crisis & Self-Compassion*

	<i>Quarter Life Crisis</i>		<i>Self-Compassion</i>	
	Hypothetical Score	Empirical Score	Hypothetical Score	Empirical Score
N	46	46	12	12
Minimum	46	67	12	16
Maximum	230	204	60	57
Mean	138	135,5	36	36,5
St Deviasi	30,7	22,8	8	6,8

Categorization of Research Data

Based on the descriptive statistical data obtained, the researcher established categorization criteria to classify the research participants. The categorization criteria consisted of **five levels**, namely **very high**, **high**, **moderate**, **low**, and **very low**. The categorization formula used in this study is presented in the following table.

Tabel 3. Rumus Kategorisasi

Category	Formula
Very High	$X \geq (\bar{x} + 1,8 \times \sigma)$
High	$(\bar{x} + 0,6 \times \sigma) \leq X < (\bar{x} + 1,8 \times \sigma)$
Moderate	$(\bar{x} - 0,6 \times \sigma) \leq X < (\bar{x} + 0,6 \times \sigma)$
Low	$(\bar{x} - 1,8 \times \sigma) \leq X < (\bar{x} - 0,6 \times \sigma)$
Very Low	$X < (\bar{x} - 1,8 \times \sigma)$

Based on the categorization formula presented above, the researcher classified the participants into five categories for each research variable. The results of the categorization are presented in the following table.

Tabel 4. Kategorisasi Variabel *Quarter Life Crisis & Self-Compassion*

Category	Variabel					
Very High	<i>Quarter Life Crisis</i>			<i>Self-Compassion</i>		
	Formula	F	%	Formula	F	%
Moderate	$X \geq 156,84$	3	2,9	$X \geq 45,26$	4	3,9
Low	$129,48 \leq X < 156,84$	21	20,4	$35,92 \leq X < 45,26$	19	18,4
	$102,12 \leq X < 129,48$	51	49,5	$26,68 \leq X < 35,92$	53	51,5
Very Low	$74,76 \leq X < 102,12$	24	23,3	$17,44 \leq X < 26,68$	25	24,3
Category	$X < 74,76$	4	3,9	$X < 17,44$	2	1,9
Jumlah		103	100		103	100

The categorization results indicate that the majority of members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung were classified in the moderate category for Quarter Life Crisis (49.5%) and in the moderate category for Self-Compassion (51.5%).

Assumption Testing

a. Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the research data were normally distributed. The normality test was performed using descriptive analysis with the assistance of Jamovi software version 2.6.4.4. The criterion used to assess normality was the Shapiro–Wilk test, where data are considered normally distributed if the significance value (p) is greater than 0.05. Conversely, if the significance value (p) is less than 0.05, the data are considered not normally distributed. The results of the normality test are presented in the following table.

Table 5. Normality Test Result

Variabel	Shapiro Wilk (p)	Interpretation
<i>Quarter Life Crisis</i>	0,063	Normally distributed
<i>Self-Compassion</i>	0,189	Normally distributed

Based on the analysis results, the Shapiro–Wilk significance value for the Self-Compassion variable was 0.189, while the Quarter Life Crisis variable showed a value of 0.063. Both significance values exceeded 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the data for both variables were normally distributed.

b. Linearity Test

The linearity test was conducted to ensure that the relationship between Quarter Life Crisis and Self-Compassion met the assumption of linearity.

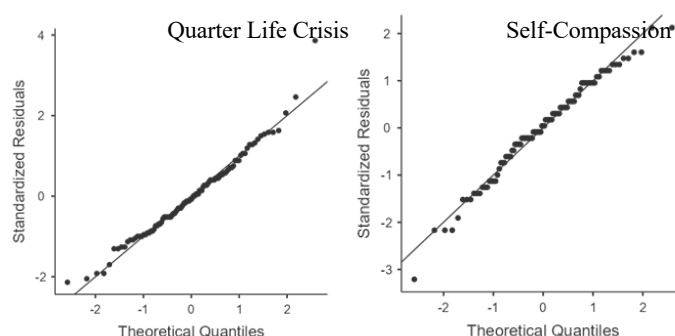


Figure 4 Q-Q Plot of Linearity Test Results

Based on the results of the linearity test using the Q-Q Plot, the residual points were observed to follow the diagonal line and did not display any curvature or extreme deviations. This pattern indicates that the relationship between the two variables is linear, thus satisfying the linearity assumption. Furthermore, the distribution of points closely aligned with the diagonal line also suggests that the residuals were normally distributed, indicating no significant violation of the normality assumption.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using Pearson Correlation Matrix analysis to examine the relationship between Self-Compassion and Quarter Life Crisis. The hypothesis proposed in this study stated that there is a negative relationship between Self-Compassion and Quarter Life Crisis, meaning that lower levels of Self-Compassion are associated with higher levels of Quarter Life Crisis, and conversely, higher levels of Self-Compassion are associated with lower levels of Quarter Life Crisis.

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, the correlation coefficient was $r = -0.735$ with a significance value of $p < 0.001$. This correlation coefficient indicates a strong negative relationship between Self-Compassion and Quarter Life Crisis. In other words, individuals with higher levels of Self-Compassion tend to experience lower levels of Quarter Life Crisis. The significance value of $p < 0.001$ indicates that the relationship between the two variables is statistically highly significant, thus supporting the research hypothesis.

Additionally, the analysis revealed an R^2 value of 0.540, indicating that Self-Compassion accounts for 54% of the variance in Quarter Life Crisis, while the remaining 46% is influenced by other factors. The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.536 suggests that this contribution remains stable after adjustment for sample size. The 95% confidence interval ranged from -0.8133 to -0.6311 , entirely within the negative range and not crossing zero. This finding indicates that the direction of the relationship is consistent, strong, and reliable.

Discussion

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate a strong and statistically significant negative relationship between Self-Compassion and Quarter Life Crisis among members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung. This relationship is evidenced by a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.735$ with $p < 0.001$. These findings suggest that higher levels of Self-Compassion are associated with lower levels of Quarter Life Crisis. Furthermore, the analysis revealed an R^2 value of 0.540, indicating that Self-Compassion accounts for 54% of the variance in Quarter Life Crisis, while the remaining 46% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. The 95% confidence interval, ranging from -0.8133 to -0.6311 and not crossing zero, further confirms that the direction and strength of this relationship are consistent and reliable.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings are consistent with the concept of Self-Compassion proposed by Neff (2003), which conceptualizes Self-Compassion as an emotional regulation mechanism that enables individuals to respond to negative experiences in a more adaptive manner. During the Quarter Life Crisis period, which is characterized by identity confusion, uncertainty about the future, social pressure, and role ambiguity, individuals with higher levels of Self-Compassion tend to demonstrate greater self-acceptance, reduced self-criticism, and a broader understanding of personal difficulties as part of shared human experiences. Consequently, such individuals are less likely to experience intense Quarter Life Crisis.

The correlational findings are further supported by empirical data regarding gender differences. In this study, female participants exhibited higher mean scores of Quarter Life Crisis (122 or 53% of the theoretical maximum score) compared to male participants (112 or 48.7%). This suggests that women may be more vulnerable to experiencing Quarter Life Crisis. Previous research by Hasyim et al. (2024) indicates that women generally demonstrate higher emotional sensitivity and are more frequently exposed to social pressures and gender-based expectations related to family roles, interpersonal relationships, and future readiness.

In contrast, the mean level of Self-Compassion was higher among male participants (42.3 or 70.5%) than among female participants (37.7 or 62.8%). This difference supports the observed negative relationship between the two variables, in which the group with higher Self-Compassion (males) also exhibited lower levels of Quarter Life Crisis, while the opposite pattern was observed among females. These findings further strengthen the conclusion that Self-Compassion functions as a protective factor in coping with Quarter Life Crisis.

Additionally, the categorization results indicate that the majority of Karang Taruna members were classified within the moderate category for both variables: 49.5% for Quarter Life Crisis and 51.5% for Self-Compassion. This distribution suggests that most participants were not experiencing extreme psychological conditions, either in terms of severe crisis or very low Self-Compassion, but rather were situated at a moderate psychological level. This pattern is reasonable, as early adulthood is commonly marked by developmental transitions, uncertainty, and role exploration, while many individuals still possess sufficient adaptive capacity to manage these challenges.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research. Mulyadi, Rohayati, and Maulidia (2024) reported that Self-Compassion significantly influenced psychological well-being among early adults experiencing Quarter Life Crisis. Their study demonstrated that Self-

Compassion contributed 45.9% to psychological well-being, suggesting that higher Self-Compassion indirectly reduces the intensity of crisis experienced during transitional periods. This supports the notion that Self-Compassion plays a crucial role in maintaining emotional stability during early adulthood.

Similarly, Legi (2023) reported a correlation coefficient of -0.787 between Self-Compassion and Quarter Life Crisis among fresh graduates. This value closely aligns with the findings of the present study, indicating that the negative and significant relationship between the two variables is consistently observed across different early adult populations. In both studies, individuals with lower levels of Self-Compassion tended to experience greater uncertainty, anxiety, and frustration regarding life achievements and future prospects.

Further empirical support is provided by the study conducted by Saragih and Prasetyo (2025), which found that Self-Compassion and social support jointly play an important role in helping Generation Z cope with Quarter Life Crisis. Self-Compassion enables individuals to accept their current circumstances, reduce self-criticism, and enhance emotional regulation when facing psychological pressure. These findings suggest that Self-Compassion not only has a direct relationship with Quarter Life Crisis but also interacts with other protective factors to reduce the risk of psychological distress during the transition to adulthood.

This study offers novelty by examining the relationship between Self-Compassion and Quarter Life Crisis among rural youth, specifically members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung, a population that has received limited attention in previous research compared to university students or urban young workers. The unique socio-economic and cultural conditions of rural communities, such as expectations to support family members, pressure to secure employment or marry at an early age, and strong social evaluation norms, provide a distinct context for understanding early adult crisis dynamics. This study is also strengthened by preliminary qualitative data obtained through interviews and surveys, which capture participants' lived experiences and enhance contextual understanding. Compared to previous studies, the findings demonstrate consistency, as indicated by the strong correlation coefficient of -0.735 , which closely approximates the results reported by Legi (-0.787). This further reinforces the conclusion that Self-Compassion is a critical protective variable in reducing the intensity of Quarter Life Crisis and supporting individuals in navigating developmental demands and uncertainties during early adulthood.

Overall, the findings of this study support the proposed hypothesis, indicating a negative relationship between Self-Compassion and Quarter Life Crisis among members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung. Individuals with higher levels of Self-Compassion tend to experience lower levels of Quarter Life Crisis, whereas lower levels of Self-Compassion are associated with higher levels of Quarter Life Crisis.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study conducted among members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung, it can be concluded that Self-Compassion has a significant and negative relationship with Quarter Life Crisis. Individuals who are able to practice Self-Compassion such as accepting themselves in a more realistic manner, treating themselves with kindness, and perceiving difficult

experiences as a universal part of human life tend to experience lower levels of Quarter Life Crisis. Conversely, when Self-Compassion is at a low level, individuals are more vulnerable to identity confusion, future-related pressures, and anxiety concerning personal achievements and social roles.

These findings indicate that an individual's capacity to understand, accept, and emotionally soothe oneself plays an important role in reducing the intensity of Quarter Life Crisis. Therefore, it can be affirmed that the research hypothesis proposing a negative relationship between Self-Compassion and Quarter Life Crisis is supported. This study successfully addresses the research problem and achieves its objective by empirically examining the relationship between these two variables among members of Karang Taruna Dukuh Tanjung.

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