Self-Esteem and Attachment as Predictors of Resilience in Early Adults Experiencing Quarter-Life Crisis

Wina Lova Riza*, Nuram Mubina2, Lania Muharsih3, Linda Mora4

1 Department of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang, 41361, Indonesia
2 Department of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang, 41361, Indonesia
3 Department of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang, 41361, Indonesia
4 Department of Psychology, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang, 41361, Indonesia

wina.lova@ubpkarawang.ac.id

Highlights:

- Resilience is the individual’s ability to choose to recover from sad and challenging life events by increasing their knowledge to be adaptive and overcome similar adverse situations in the future
- Self-esteem is a protective factor of resilience. Low self-esteem is one of the factors that can disrupt a person’s resilience
- Attachment is a continuous affective bond that is characterized by a tendency to seek and maintain closeness to a specific figure, especially when under stress

Abstract

Resilience is the individual’s ability to choose to recover from sad and challenging life events by increasing their knowledge to be adaptive and overcome similar adverse situations in the future. In early adulthood, many individuals experience a condition called quarter-life crisis, where they feel a sense of worry caused by uncertainty about their future life. Therefore, resilience is needed to face the existing challenges, in order to be able to adapt and protect individuals from the rigors of stress. Resilience arises as a protective factor that is distinguished internally and externally. Externally, resilience is related to attachment, which is a continuous affective bond characterized by a tendency to seek and maintain closeness to specific figures, especially when under pressure. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to determine the influence of self-esteem and attachment as predictors of resilience in young adults who are experiencing quarter-life crisis simultaneously. The method in this research is quantitative, with a sample of early adults experiencing quarter-life crisis, thus the sampling technique used in this research is incidental sampling. The data collection technique used a questionnaire with a resilience scale, the standardized Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the attachment scale using the Experiences in Close Relationship-Revised-General Short Form (ECR-R-GSF) scale, Additionally, the Developmental Crisis Questionnaire (DQC-12) scale was used to measure quarter-life crisis in early adults. The data analysis technique used in this research is multiple regression analysis. From the research results using SPSS version 27, a significant value was obtained for both independent variables of 0.000 < 0.005, therefore H0 is rejected, indicating that self-esteem and attachment together are predictors of resilience in early adults experiencing quarter-life crisis.

Keywords: Resilience, Self-esteem, Attachment, Quarter-life crisis, Young adults.
1. Introduction

Every human being in their life journey will experience and go through stages of development both physically and psychologically. In their journey, each stage has obligations and demands that will be faced by every individual, and these demands become more numerous and significant as they age [1]. Adulthood is also said to be a difficult time for an individual because at this stage, a person is expected to release their dependence on parents and strive to become independent [2]. Thus, individuals need to adjust to new life patterns and new social expectations. The level of mastery will determine well-being in the future, so individuals in early adulthood feel burdened and worried about the many developmental tasks in adulthood. Many individuals in their twenties start to doubt their competencies, feel stagnant and confused about their life goals, and compare themselves to others who have achieved more than them. In the field of psychology, this particular condition is referred to as the "quarter life crisis" (QLC), which describes the state of anxiety and uncertainty experienced by an individual concerning their future life [3]. The QLC is characterized by a sense of unease and apprehension about the direction of one's life, and the perceived lack of control over it [4]. The feeling of worry experienced by individuals who are going through a quarter life crisis revolves around relationships, career or job, and social life that happen to someone in their twenties [5]. The quarter life crisis arises from the feeling of worry and anxiety about the future life.

The quarter life crisis is generally experienced by young adults who are in a tumultuous search for their identity. The phenomenon of the quarter life crisis can be characterized by confusion about various life choices related to oneself and the surrounding environment [6]. Such situations often result in uncomfortable feelings and life experiences, and some even lead to mental health problems. In Individuals in early adulthood are actually prone to experiencing a quarter life crisis that can be caused by job pressures, interpersonal relationships, as well as various expectations of becoming a successful and accomplished person. A survey conducted by researchers on 31 individuals aged 20-30 years residing in Karawang and Bekasi found that 12 out of 31 people had felt worried about the future, and 17 people responded that they were currently worried about their future, with the most concerning issue being their career and finances. This causes individuals to overthink or become too anxious about the problems or situations they are facing.

Although it may seem distressing, the quarter life crisis can also be a turning point in determining life goals and striving to grow into a resilient and responsible individual. When facing various challenges, good adaptability plays an important role in protecting individuals from vulnerability to stress. In psychology, this is known as resilience. There are at least five main aspects that can be a source of authentic or genuine happiness and can be applied if one wants to enjoy and overcome the quarter life crisis successfully, one of which is to become a resilient individual. all's ability to persevere and not give up easily in difficult situations, and to strive to adapt to those situations, then rise up and become a better person [7]. Resilience is an individual's ability to engage in a positive adaptation process to achieve better outcomes in terms of behavior, achievement, social relationships, and an individual's level of resilience in facing adverse circumstances. This means that resilient individuals have the ability to face and overcome problems and difficulties in their lives. However, being resilient does not mean that one never experiences difficulties or distress, but rather that the individual can recover more quickly from adverse circumstances.

Individuals who view themselves in a negative light tend to doubt their abilities, feel anxious, and become pessimistic in solving problems. This causes them to lack perseverance in adapting to difficult situations. Furthermore, when individuals feel that they are unable to cope with difficulties, they tend to withdraw and avoid the challenges at hand. As a result, feelings of pessimism, a sense of incompetence, and a belief that they lack control over their environment, as well as seeking support from others, can hinder their resilience. Therefore, increasing resilience is an important task because it can provide individuals with experiences in facing challenges.

Resilience arises as a protective factor that is differentiated internally and externally. Internally, resilience is related to self-belief, perseverance [8], and is also influenced by self-esteem. Self-esteem as a personality trait that includes both positive and negative self-evaluations, which are related to a person's feelings about themselves [9]. Self-esteem is a protective factor of resilience. Low self-esteem is one of the factors that can disrupt a person's resilience [10]. Individuals with low self-esteem and a sense of powerlessness will also have low resilience. Having high confidence and conviction can motivate someone to face problems and difficulties.
In addition to internal protective factors, external resilience is related to interpersonal skills and social support [8]. Both of these factors are formed by aspects of a secure relationship [11]. According to attachment theory, a secure relationship is rooted in an individual’s attachment in early childhood [9]. Previous research indicates that secure attachment is a core factor in resilience. Secure attachment facilitates a person to become more resilient through self-efficacy. Individuals with secure attachment tend to evaluate negative situations in a more positive way and are more open to seeking help from others to solve problems [12], it is suggested that secure attachment is a protective factor and can predict resilience in individuals. Individuals with secure attachment tend to evaluate negative situations in a more positive way and are open to seeking help from others to solve problems. A secure attachment can protect individuals from anxiety, depression, or emotional pressure associated with the transition from childhood to adulthood.

On the role of secure attachment and mindfulness in adolescent resilience in the new normal era indicate a significant and positive relationship between secure attachment, mindfulness, and adolescent resilience in the new normal era. Attachment plays an important role in helping individuals fulfill developmental tasks in their lives, which will shape a person to become resilient or enable them to face problems and difficulties in their lives [13]. From the above explanation, it can be concluded that self-esteem and attachment play important roles in helping individuals fulfill developmental tasks in their lives, which will shape a person to become resilient or enable them to face problems and difficulties in their lives.

Resilience is defined as an individual’s ability to choose to recover from sad and challenging life events by increasing knowledge to be adaptive and overcome similar detrimental situations in the future [14]. Resilience is the ability of a person to endure, rise up, and adjust to difficult conditions. Resilience consists of five aspects: a) perseverance and competence, b) self-confidence and tolerance towards negative impacts, c) the ability to accept changes and build safe relationships with others, d) control, and e) spirituality [11].

Self-esteem is a positive or negative evaluation of oneself [15]. Self-esteem is the self-evaluation made by each individual. It is a person’s attitude towards themselves in a range of positive to negative dimensions. Self-esteem is often measured as a rank on a dimension ranging from negative to positive or low to high. Self-esteem theory is a unidimension consisting of positive and negative views of self-esteem [16]. Individuals characterized as having high self-esteem have a sense of self-worth, regard themselves as valuable individuals, value their own strengths, and acknowledge their mistakes. On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem are characterized as having less regard for themselves, considering themselves unworthy, inadequate, or having personal shortcomings.

The term Attachment was first introduced by a British psychologist named John Bowlby in 1958. According to him, attachment is an emotional bond that an individual forms with another person that is specific, binding them in a permanent closeness over time. Attachment is a continuous affective bond that is characterized by a tendency to seek and maintain closeness to a specific figure, especially when under stress [17]. As one matures, the attachment figure has a wider range of variations. This bond can be observed in relationships between siblings, friendships, romantic partners, and even objects that hold personal meaning. Attachment style is an individual’s tendency in relating to others in an effective manner [18]. Bartholomew and Horowitz’s experiment in 1991 attempted to categorize adult attachment styles into four models, which are secure attachment, preoccupied attachment, dismissing attachment, and fearful attachment. An individual’s experience with an attachment figure throughout their life can be described by the conceptualization of attachment based on two orthogonal dimensions, which are avoidant attachment and anxious attachment.

2. Method

2.1. Types of Research

The method used is a quantitative method in the form of causal relationship. Subject selection uses a non-probability sampling technique with an incidental sampling method. This research was conducted from July to September 2022, and the research site was located in the Karawang and Bekasi regions.
2.2. Research Target/Subjects

The subjects in this research were early adults in the cities of Karawang and Bekasi. The characteristics of the subjects in this research are as follows: (a) Male and/or female; (b) Residing in Karawang and Bekasi; (c) Early adulthood (20-30 years old); (d) Experiencing the quarter-life crisis phase measured through the development crisis questionnaire (DQC-12) [19]. Which has been adapted into Indonesian language.

2.3. Data, Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

In this research, the instrument used is a psychological scale. A psychological scale measurement instrument is a list of questions that describe an individual’s personality aspects based on behavioral indicators to obtain answers that do not directly describe the respondent’s self-awareness [20]. Self-esteem was measured using the modified Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) [21], and the Development Crisis Questionnaire (DQC-12) was used to measure quarter-life crisis in young adults. Data analysis using tests for normality, linearity, hypothesis testing using multiple regression analysis, and determination coefficient testing.

3. Result and Discussion

After conducting a normality test using SPSS version 27 on 100 respondents, the residual significance value of the data obtained was 0.171 > 0.05 in the Table 1 Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, indicating that the data is normally distributed. And Table 2 is the results of the linearity test between self-esteem variable and resilience and attachment variable and resilience obtained a deviation from linearity value of 0.110 > 0.05, indicating that the data can be considered linear. Furthermore, the linearity test between attachment and resilience obtained a linearity value of 0.000 < 0.05, indicating that the data can be considered linear.

Table 1. Normality Test Table One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>.000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>15.96540280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Statistic</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Table of Linearity Test of Self-Esteem on Resilience

| RESILIENCE * | Between Groups (Combined) | 7601.442 | 16 | 475.089 | 1.520 | .112 |
| SELF_ESTEEM | Linearity Deviation from Linearity | 381.050 | 1 | 381.050 | 1.219 | .273 |
| | Within Groups | 7220.372 | 15 | 481.358 | 1.540 | .110 |
| Total | 25947.568 | 83 | 312.621 |
| Total | 33548.990 | 99 |

To answer the research hypothesis, a multiple regression test was conducted as it aimed to predict how independent variables affect the dependent variable. Simultaneous test (F-test) was used to see how variables X1 and X2 together have an impact on Y, and the coefficient of
A determination test was used to see the magnitude of variable X on variable Y. All data analysis tests were conducted using SPSS version 27 for Windows. The results of the tests can be seen in the following Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>8314.475</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4157.238</td>
<td>15.980</td>
<td>.000a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>25234.515</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>260.150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33548.990</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent variable: RESILIENCE  
b. Predictors: (Constant), ATTACHMENT, SELF_ESTEEM

Since the Sig. value of 0.000 < 0.05 in the table, it can be concluded that Ha is accepted and H0 is rejected, indicating that self-esteem and attachment together are predictors of resilience in early adulthood experiencing quarter life crisis. As an additional analysis, the researcher conducted a coefficient of determination test in Table 4 to determine how much the independent variables can explain the dependent variable. Based on the R Square value, it can be concluded that there is an influence of 0.248 or 24.8% from self-esteem and attachment on resilience, while the rest is influenced by other variables that were not examined in this research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.498a</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td>.232</td>
<td>16.12915</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), ATTACHMENT, SELF_ESTEEM  
b. Dependent Variable: RESILIENCE

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this research is that self-esteem and attachment together are predictors of resilience in early adulthood experiencing quarter life crisis. Self-esteem and attachment have an influence of 24.8% on resilience. For early adults, specifically those who are experiencing the quarter life crisis phase, it is expected that they should take a proactive approach when facing difficulties. This means that individuals should not doubt their own abilities, have perseverance in facing problems, and be optimistic. On the other hand, individuals also need to be aware of their capacity in facing a problem, so that they know when to seek help from outside when needed. In addition, individuals are expected to be able to maintain the quality of their relationships with loved ones. For future researchers, it is recommended to consider other variables that may affect resilience besides self-esteem and attachment, such as external support, inner strength, grit, and others.

Authors' Declaration

Authors' contributions and responsibilities – The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation, and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.  
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Availability of data and materials – All data are available from the authors.  
Competing interests – The authors declare no competing interest.  
Additional information – No additional information from the authors.

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