

THE IMPACT OF THE QUARTER LIFE CRISIS ON TURNOVER INTENTION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the impact of the quarter-life crisis on turnover intention in the digital era, as well as to identify strategies for reducing turnover intention caused by the quarter-life crisis. The population of this research consisted of young adults holding strategic positions in companies in Denpasar City. A qualitative research method with in-depth interviews with 10 informants was used to explore the effects of the quarter-life crisis on turnover intention in the digital era occurring in Denpasar City. The results of the study showed that young adults viewed self-branding behavior on social media as a positive thing as long as it was not overdone. The desire to resign from a company was more likely to arise when individuals felt they were unsuccessful in leading a team, did not align with the company's leadership, or faced excessive work pressure in terms of workload and working hours. The effects of feeling pressured or other factors within the quarter-life crisis dimensions that drive young adults to want to leave the company must immediately be addressed to find solutions to mitigate them.

KEYWORDS quarter life crisis, turnover intention, personal branding, work life balance



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INTRODUCTION

Early adulthood is a transition phase from adolescence to adulthood, which is characterized by efforts to reduce dependence on others, especially parents, both economically, socially, and psychologically (Putri, 2019). At this stage, the pressure to achieve life stability, dissatisfaction with a current job that may not be in line with your dreams, as well as worries about your future career often trigger what is known as a quarter life crisis. This condition often encourages a person to consider changing jobs in order to get a position that is considered more suitable.

Advances in technology and information, especially in the field of social media, can worsen the quarter life crisis phase experienced by individuals in early adulthood (Wood et al., 2018). Social media such as Instagram is widely used to build self-branding according to user wishes (Wong, 2024). Examples of self-branding on social media include sharing moments related to work, self-development, and career achievements (Kapidzic, 2018). Some individuals feel

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motivated by this, while others experience the opposite. Many people feel inferior because they compare the best side of others they see on social media with the worst side of themselves (Derbaix et al., 2025).

Fierce job competition, coupled with the rise of self-branding on social media, can exacerbate the quarter life crisis for many individuals in early adulthood (Jacobson, 2017). Indecision, despair, and negative self-judgment are some of the possible effects when a person constantly compares himself to others. These negative feelings can trigger a desire to find a better job (turnover intention) as an effort to catch up on the lag they feel compared to the individuals they see on social media.

Employee turnover can have an impact on the level of productivity and effectiveness of the company (De Winne et al., 2019; Ugoani, 2016). Time and resources that should be spent on innovating and making the company more competitive and sustainable are being diverted for training and adjustment to new human resources. Companies are also at risk of losing human and social capital and experiencing disruptions in the workflow (Perdanaputra & Putra, 2022).

Previous research has discussed a lot related to turnover intention and quarter life crisis, but there are still very few studies that examine in depth the impact of the quarter life crisis on turnover intention, especially in the current digital era. The young generation is expected to contribute new ideas and expertise to the company's progress in the long term, but in reality very few of them are able to survive in a company for a long time. On this basis, this research is important to find out the impact of the quarter life crisis on turnover intention in the digital era and how the best strategy is to overcome it.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method, which is useful for exploring deep meanings and providing a strong understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The data collected in this study is qualitative data in the form of words, explanations, or descriptions obtained from the results of in-depth interviews with 10 research informants. These informants are early adult individuals who currently hold strategic positions and come from various work backgrounds in the city of Denpasar. The stages of data analysis include: data preparation and organization, initial understanding, coding, grouping in categories and themes, interpretation of results, and verification to ensure the validity of research findings (Leavy, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The identity of the informant in this study was not raised as an effort to maintain the confidentiality of the informant. This is also related to research ethics and the credibility of research data. According to (Hosseini & Haukås, 2025), research ethics is related to how we formulate and clarify research topics, design studies, collect and process data, and includes analyzing and writing research results in an ethical and responsible way. Carrying out research ethics by maintaining the confidentiality of the informant's identity will lead to credible or trustworthy data.

Thus, throughout this study, only a code with a summary of the informant's identity was displayed as follows.

Table 1. Summary of Identity of Research Informants

Informant Code	Industry	Work	Age	Gender
I1	SOEs	Command Center Supervisor	24 Years	Woman
I2	Construction	MEP Supervisor	24 Years	Man
I3	Construction	Operations Manager	25 Years	Woman
I4	Education	Counselor	26 Years	Woman
I5	Agricultural Food Products	Supervisor Accounting & Tax	26 Years	Man
I6	Banking	Junior Relationship Manager	23 Years	Man
I7	Health	Assistant Manager	25 Years	Man
I8	Hospitality	Cluster Engineering Administrator	25 Years	Woman
I9	Transportation	Pool Operations Supervisor	27 Years	Man
I10	Retail	Supervisor Accounting	28 Years	Woman

The average informant is 25 years old and has the most basic similarity, which is that they are individuals classified as early adulthood. Individuals in early adulthood generally face a phenomenon where they begin to feel hopeless, helpless, ignorant, doubtful, and afraid of various life choices. This phenomenon is what we often call the quarter life crisis. There are various dimensions that explain the quarter life crisis, including feelings of indecision, hopelessness, negative self-assessment, difficult situations, feelings of anxiety, depression, and worry about existing interpersonal relationships. In order to make it easier for readers to see and understand the research results, the following is a summary table of research results that contains the most representative interview excerpts in each research sub-theme.

Table 2. Summary of Research Results

Theme	Sub Theme	Research Code	Interview Results Excerpt
Quarte Life Crisis		Career Plan	<i>"When I was in S1 college, I was still afraid, what would I be? Where will you work? Those things before I work always cross my mind" (I4)</i>
		Concerns	<i>"... I was undecided and thought, should I participate in an interview in a position that is not in line with my major? But on the other hand, there is pressure from outside parties (family and friends) and ourselves to get a job immediately." (I5).</i>
	Difficult Decision	Failing to Lead Subordinates	<i>"I'm still young but have the authority to control them. So sometimes there are conflicts because of differences of opinion so that I am considered inappropriate to be in that position" (I7).</i>
	Negative Self-Assessment	Response to Self-Branding	<i>"I think it's legal. Moreover, social media can now be used as a consideration for HRD in employee acceptance" (I10).</i>
		Comparing Yourself	<i>"In a difficult situation and very stressed by work, I instead watched Instagram posts featuring a friend with his job that seemed fun" (I5)</i>
	Difficult Situations	Difficult Situations	<i>"... I will try to change the shift to a male shift, so that I can participate in the mebraya during the day. Yes, even though it was really tiring and made me not sleep" (I9)</i>

Theme	Sub Theme	Research Code	Interview Results Excerpt
	Anxious	Anxious	<i>"... I usually think 'something is missing' even though my team and I have prepared everything, but I still feel anxious if for example it doesn't go smoothly" (I7).</i>
	Depressed	Bosses Make It Difficult	<i>"... The current boss is very anti-criticism, so whatever he wants must be carried out" (I7).</i>
		Overwork	<i>"... I take a lot of actual work outside of my jobdesk. Since it's a new company, I have to take care of everything from A-Z" (I3).</i>
		Business Hours	<i>"I actually have time flexibility (free working hours), but my working hours are messy, sometimes I have to work on Saturdays or Sundays" (I3).</i>
	Interpersonal Relationships	Interpersonal Relationships	<i>"... I became non-meddling in the personal lives of my co-workers. I also don't get upset if there is an attitude of my colleagues who offend me, because I have made a boundary with them" (I10)</i>
Turnover Intention	Thinking of Resigning	Thinking of Resigning	<i>"I once (thought about resigning), because I felt that I could no longer do this, because the demands were too many, I felt like I was not competent to complete all this" (I7).</i>

Theme	Sub Theme	Research Code	Interview Results Excerpt
	Intention to Find Another Job	Intention to Find Another Job	<i>"I've reached the stage of looking for (jobs) and asking friends also (related to job vacancies), but not yet to the stage of submitting a CV and interviews" (I7).</i>
	Quitting the Company	Reasons to Stay in the Company	<i>"At my current workplace, my position is already good, now if I want to join another company, I have to start from scratch and I am not ready to start (position) from scratch" (I3).</i>

Most informants have a positive view regarding self-branding behavior carried out on social media, because it has a positive impact on their career development. They emphasized that sharing career or educational achievements on Instagram and LinkedIn social media is legal as long as it is not done excessively. Personnel of a company often also use LinkedIn social media to find out the background and work experience of their prospective employees. Therefore, individuals are currently competing to showcase their achievements on social media as an effort to build a positive self-image and lead to career improvement in the future. The results of the study show that the quarter life crisis dimension in terms of feeling depressed is the dimension that has the most impact on the desire of individuals in early adulthood to quit their company.

In psychology, stress is defined as feelings of distress and mental tension. Stress is an unwanted reaction by individuals when faced with great pressure or various other types of demands. Various literatures show that stress can be caused by several factors such as the work environment, support from management, workload, and so on (Hidayati & Harsono, 2021). The problems experienced by individuals as they get older will become more and more numerous and complex, which is more or less felt in individuals in early adulthood. The workplace is one of the most stressful contributors in their lives, such as difficult bosses, excessive work, work demands, and excessive working hours.

Each boss has their own leadership style, but sometimes there are some leadership styles that are inflexible and are not liked by the organization, especially organizations whose members are mostly from early adulthood. One example of a leadership style that is less preferred by members of an organization is the autocratic leadership style. Autocratic leaders are usually selfish, highlight their egos, and ignore the role of subordinates in the decision-making process. He also does not want to accept advice or views from his subordinates. (Kamal et al., 2019)). Individuals who feel neglected and their views are not considered will feel

depressed and reduce their work productivity. It will also boil down to their desire to leave their company and look for another better workplace.

The feeling of pressure experienced by individuals in early adulthood does not only come from the figure of the leader where they work, but also related to excessive work. Workload is a task or work that a company gives to employees with a limited time limit, so employees may find it difficult to complete it. The workload provided must be in accordance with the employee's abilities and competencies. If the workload is not balanced with the employee's capacity, this can lead to various problems, including work stress (ROHMAN & ICHSAN, 2021).

In addition to leadership and workload, it turns out that working hours are an important factor that must also be considered for leaders and employees. Working hours certainly affect employee productivity, which will ultimately affect the achievement of the company's targets (Afilia et al., 2023). According to Tulhusnah & Puryantoro in Afilia et al (2023), working hours are the time spent by the workforce to carry out tasks in accordance with the company's regulations. Optimal working hours are well-organized working hours. Companies with irregular working hours and not having a work-life balance are what often foster employees' thoughts to quit their current positions or companies.

CONCLUSION

Quarter life crisis refers to the feeling of uncertainty that is naturally experienced by individuals who have just transitioned from life as students to the real world. The cultural and environmental differences that arise in this process are often accompanied by rapid developments in technology and social media, which can exacerbate the quarter life crisis phase. The results of the study show that most individuals in early adulthood have a positive view regarding the self-branding behavior carried out by the community on social media in the current digital era. This shows that self-branding behavior on social media in the digital era does not have a significant impact on the desire of early adult individuals to quit their jobs. The desire to quit the company (resign) is more likely to arise when individuals feel that they are not successful in leading the team, do not fit in with the company's leadership, and face excessive work pressure in terms of workload and working hours.

The impact of feelings of pressure or other things in the quarter life crisis dimension that encourage the desire of early adult individuals to quit the company must of course be immediately found a solution to overcome it. There are several strategies to reduce turnover intention caused by the quarter life crisis, namely: knowing yourself and setting life goals, being confident in your abilities, not comparing yourself to others, applying work-life balance, and creating boundaries with colleagues.

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