



## SELF-ACCEPTANCE AND SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO QUARTER-LIFE CRISIS AMONG EMPLOYEES

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### Abstract

Quarter-life crisis (QLC) is a phase of emotional and psychological crisis commonly experienced by individuals in their 20s to early 30s, especially when facing life pressures, career demands, and the search for identity. This study aims to determine the relationship between self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence with quarter-life crisis among employees. This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The subjects of this study were employees of PT. X aged 20–29 years. Data were collected using three psychological scales: the Quarter Life Crisis Scale to measure the quarter-life crisis, the Berger Self-Accance Scale to measure self-acceptance, and the Spiritual Intelligence Self Report Inventory (SISRI-24) to measure spiritual intelligence. The data were analyzed using correlation techniques. The results of the study indicate a significant negative correlation between self acceptance and quarter-life crisis, as well as between spiritual intelligence and quarter-life crisis. The analysis was conducted using correlation tests with multiple regression. The obtained correlation coefficient was 0.342, which means that the independent variables self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence contribute an influence of 34.2% on quarter life crisis.

**Keywords:** Self Acceptance, Spiritual Intelligence, quarter life crisis, adulthood

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Every individual undergoes developmental stages in life. Each person's growth also carries its own uniqueness. Within the course of life, individuals experience several phases, starting from childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. One of the most significant transitional stages is the shift from adolescence to adulthood. Entering early adulthood, individuals are faced with new experiences and demands that are often more challenging as they navigate life. Human life progresses through various developmental phases, from childhood to old age, and among these, the transition from adolescence to early adulthood is considered the most crucial. In early adulthood, individuals encounter new challenges that require adaptation in social, emotional, and professional aspects (Wijaya & Saprowi, 2022).

During this transitional period, individuals may experience anxiety, confusion, panic, and stress. These challenges can increase vulnerability to crises, particularly when individuals are unable to cope effectively or are socially unprepared to face the external world. Crises may emerge due to changes, instability, or unmet expectations (Rahmah et al., 2023).

A LinkedIn survey conducted in November revealed that 75% of LinkedIn users aged 25 to 30 reported experiencing a quarter-life crisis. The main contributing factors were difficulties in finding jobs aligned with their interests (61%) and pressure from comparing themselves with more successful peers (48%). A study by Agustina et al. (2022) in Indonesia found that 98% of 125 participants experienced a quarter-life crisis, with 82% relating it to unstable financial pressures, 79% feeling undeserving of a better life, and 65.6% feeling burdened by adult responsibilities.

In Indonesia, research on quarter-life crisis within the workplace context remains limited. A preliminary study of five employees at PT. X Jakarta (aged 20–29) showed that most respondents experienced uncertainty regarding their self-identity during this transition. Many felt confused about their future paths, largely due to a lack of clear self-understanding. Moreover, their level of self-acceptance was still low, with some respondents indicating they had not fully understood or accepted themselves.

Research by Wijaya et al. (2024) indicates that individuals aged 18–30 often experience quarter-life crisis due to unclear career and life goals. They frequently feel uncertain about decisions in both professional and personal domains, leading to stress, dissatisfaction, and a sense of being lost. However, individuals with a high level of self-acceptance tend to adjust more quickly, enabling them to face life transitions more calmly. In addition to self-acceptance, spiritual intelligence plays a significant role in helping individuals find meaning in their experiences and cope with challenges (Handayani, 2019; Fikra, 2022). Those with higher spiritual intelligence are



generally better able to understand life's purpose, regulate emotions positively, and thus more effectively manage quarter-life crisis (Danah Zohar & Ian Marshall in Fikra, 2022).

Studies further suggest that spiritual intelligence plays a crucial role in helping individuals manage quarter-life crisis. According to Almalail and Rahmi (2023), individuals with high spiritual intelligence tend to experience lower levels of quarter-life crisis, as they are able to find life's meaning and remain optimistic. Similar findings by Hayati (2019) showed that spiritual intelligence significantly reduces confusion and stress during early adulthood. Moreover, Wicaksono (2022) emphasized that spiritual intelligence serves as a protective factor, fostering patience, sincerity, and greater self-acceptance. Thus, spiritual intelligence not only promotes inner peace but also enhances psychological readiness in facing the challenges of a quarter-life crisis.

Although there have been many studies on quarter-life crisis, research examining the combined role of self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence on quarter-life crisis—particularly among employees—remains scarce. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the field of psychology, especially industrial and organizational psychology, while also offering practical implications for both companies and employees.

## **QUARTER LIFE CRISIS**

Quarter-life crisis, often referred to as a "mid-twenties crisis," was first introduced by Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner (2001), based on Jeffrey Arnett's (2000) theory of emerging adulthood. Robbins and Wilner described this crisis as a "twenty-something" phenomenon, as it occurs during the early stage of transition when individuals begin leaving behind the comfort of adolescence and move toward adulthood. According to Robbins and Wilner (2001) (Sitorus & Rahmatulloh, 2021), quarter-life crisis is an individual's response to an identity crisis that arises from inadequate preparation during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. This typically occurs between the ages of 18 and 30.

Robinson (Cahyasari & Winta, 2022) outlined several characteristics of quarter-life crisis, including: confusion about future life goals, developing negative assumptions when reality does not align with expectations, fear of repeating or experiencing failure, a tendency to idealize and long for school years, difficulty in making decisions, frequently comparing oneself to the achievements or conditions of others.

## **SELF-ACCEPTANCE**

According to Berger (1952), self-acceptance can be defined as a person's self-evaluation that is not influenced by external circumstances. It involves having confidence in one's life, taking responsibility for one's actions, being able to accept criticism and suggestions objectively, not



blaming oneself for feelings toward others, seeing oneself as equal to others, not feeling rejected, not perceiving oneself as different, and not feeling ashamed or inferior (Gamayanti, 2016).

Hurlock (in Gamayanti, 2016) identified the following characteristics of self-acceptance: 1) Individuals who accept themselves have realistic expectations about their circumstances and value themselves. This means their expectations are consistent with their actual abilities. 2) They are confident in their standards and self-knowledge without relying on others' opinions. 3) They are aware of their limitations and do not perceive themselves irrationally. This means they understand their limitations without generalizing them as useless. 4) They recognize their strengths and feel free to pursue or exercise their desires. 5) They acknowledge their weaknesses without self-blame, accepting their flaws while maintaining a balanced self-view.

## **SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE**

Spiritual intelligence was developed through the "God spot" theory. The God spot theory was introduced by Terence Deacon and Viktor Frankl in the late 1990s. The God spot refers to a cluster of nerves located in the temporal lobe of the brain, which functions to raise awareness of fundamental existence, enabling individuals to adopt an idealistic approach in seeking solutions to problems. Spiritual intelligence evokes a longing for something higher (transcendent), which in turn fosters profound love, deep inner peace, a sense of existential unity, and a deep appreciation of beauty (Sakti, 2019).

King and DeCicco (2009) describe spiritual intelligence as a set of mental capacities that contribute to awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the non-material and transcendent aspects of human existence. This leads to profound existential reflection, greater meaning, transcendent self-recognition, and mastery of spiritual states. According to Danah Zohar, individuals with spiritual intelligence are able to adapt spontaneously even when faced with new environments, while also demonstrating a high level of self-awareness.

## **METHOD**

The subjects of this study consisted of 60 employees of PT. X Jakarta, aged 20–29 years. The sampling technique used was saturated sampling, as the total number of employees at the research site was relatively small (Abdullah et al., 2021). Thus, 60 respondents were selected based on the research criteria, namely employees within the age range of 20–30 years. Data collection methods in this study included interviews, observations, and psychological scales.

The research instruments consisted of: the Quarter-Life Crisis Scale with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.928, developed based on the theory of Robbins and Wilner (2001); the Self-Acceptance Questionnaire Scale with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.968; and the Spiritual



Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI-24) with a Cronbach’s alpha value of 1.000. Data analysis was conducted using Spearman’s rank correlation test to examine the relationship between self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence with quarter-life crisis, as well as multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence on quarter-life crisis.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 shows that, for the quarter-life crisis variable, 29 employees (48%) experienced a high level of quarter-life crisis. A total of 27 employees (45%) demonstrated a low level of self-acceptance. Meanwhile, 22 employees (37%) exhibited a high level of spiritual intelligence.

**Table 1. Variable Description**

Variable	Classification					
	Low		Mid		High	
	Total (n)	Percentage (%)	Total (n)	Percentage (%)	Total (n)	Percentage (%)
Quarter life crisis	13	22%	18	30%	29	48%
Self acceptance	27	45%	26	43%	7	12%
Spiritual intelligence	18	30%	20	33%	22	37%

Table 2 presents the results of the correlation test between self-acceptance and quarter-life crisis, which indicate a significant negative correlation. This means that the higher the level of self-acceptance, the lower the quarter-life crisis, and conversely, the lower the level of self-acceptance, the higher the quarter-life crisis. Thus, H01 is rejected and Ha1 is accepted, with a correlation coefficient value of -0.525, which falls into the moderately strong category, and a significance value of 0.000 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Table 2 also shows the results of the correlation test between spiritual intelligence and quarter-life crisis, which likewise reveal a significant negative correlation. This indicates that the higher the level of spiritual intelligence, the lower the quarter-life crisis, and conversely, the lower the spiritual intelligence, the higher the quarter-life crisis. Therefore, H02 is rejected and Ha2 is accepted. The correlation coefficient obtained was -0.476, which is categorized as moderately strong, with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

**Table 2. Spearman Rank Correlation**

Variable	Spearman r	p
Self acceptance - quarter life crisis	-0,525	0,000
Spiritual intelligence - quarter life crisis	-0,476	0,000



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Table 3 shows that the variables of self-acceptance (X1), spiritual intelligence (X2), and quarter-life crisis (Y) indicate that self-acceptance (X1) and spiritual intelligence (X2) simultaneously have a significant effect on quarter-life crisis (Y), with an F value of 14.798. The significance test results show a Sig. value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Self-acceptance was found to reduce quarter-life crisis by -0.661, while spiritual intelligence reduced it by -0.212. Therefore, it can be concluded that H01 is rejected and Ha1 is accepted.

**Tabel 4. Multiple Regression Results**

Variable	$\beta$		$p$
Constant	130,540		0,000
Self-Acceptance (X1)	-0,661		0,001
Spiritual intelligence (X2)	-0,212		0,002
F		14,798	0,000
df regression		2	
df residual		57	
R		0,585	
R <sup>2</sup>		0,342	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		0,319	

**DISCUSSION**

The results of testing the first hypothesis using Spearman’s rank correlation revealed a significant negative relationship between self-acceptance and quarter-life crisis. The correlation coefficient was -0.525, categorized as moderately strong, with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). This means that H01 was rejected and Ha1 was accepted, indicating a significant effect of self-acceptance on quarter-life crisis. The findings suggest that the higher the level of self-acceptance among employees, the lower the quarter-life crisis they experience. Conversely, the lower the level of self-acceptance, the higher the quarter-life crisis.

This result is consistent with the study conducted by Ginting & Argasiam (2022), which found a negative relationship between quarter-life crisis and self-acceptance. The study emphasized that higher self-acceptance was associated with a lower quarter-life crisis, while lower self-acceptance was associated with a higher quarter-life crisis. The present study also found that the majority of employees had a low level of self-acceptance, with 27 employees (45%) categorized as low. This indicates that most employees were not yet able to accept themselves fully. They often lacked self-confidence, felt dissatisfied with themselves, and compared themselves with others. Such conditions may negatively affect both their professional and emotional lives, particularly when facing challenging periods such as a quarter-life crisis.

Based on interview data regarding self-acceptance (X1), most employees had a high school education background, with many originating from rural areas and living as migrants. This background often led them to feel hesitant or uncomfortable when interacting with colleagues from big cities such as Jakarta. Differences in background contributed to low self-confidence in



the workplace. In-depth interviews revealed that feelings of shame frequently emerged when rural employees were in groups with colleagues from urban areas. This was often triggered by lifestyle differences for example, observing city colleagues wearing branded products, while they themselves wore simpler items. These differences also affected communication patterns. Migrant workers often found it difficult to connect emotionally and socially with urban colleagues, as their topics of conversation often related to hobbies or lifestyles were different. Consequently, group communication became less effective, and migrant workers tended to feel isolated. These findings are consistent with the research of Iqomah et al. (2023), which revealed that individuals experiencing quarter-life crisis often compared themselves to others, felt pressured by romantic problems, questioned the consequences of their decisions, felt confused about starting anew, and experienced feelings of burden.

The second hypothesis, tested using Spearman's rank correlation between spiritual intelligence and quarter-life crisis, also showed a significant negative correlation. The correlation coefficient was -0.476, categorized as moderately strong, with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Thus, H02 was rejected and Ha2 was accepted, indicating that spiritual intelligence has a significant effect on quarter-life crisis. Spiritual intelligence enables individuals to address and resolve problems with meaning and values, placing them within a broader and richer existential context, thereby allowing them to view life as more meaningful compared to others. This finding aligns with the research of Almalail & Rahmi (2023), who reported a negative relationship between spiritual intelligence and quarter-life crisis, meaning that higher spiritual intelligence is associated with lower levels of quarter-life crisis, and vice versa.

The results also showed that 22 employees (37%) had high levels of spiritual intelligence. Interview findings revealed that spiritual intelligence among employees at PT. X Jakarta was generally well developed. This was supported by routine activities held every Monday morning, such as Islamic religious study sessions for Muslim employees and worship services for non-Muslim employees. Motivational messages delivered during these sessions often included reminders about the importance of spirituality in daily life. Consequently, the company not only strengthened the professional competencies of its employees but also nurtured spiritual depth as a foundation for workplace attitudes and ethics. This finding is supported by Peberiyanti & Isnaini (2024), whose study showed that spiritual intelligence plays an important role in the workplace by helping employees find meaning and purpose.

The third hypothesis was tested using multiple linear regression between self-acceptance (X1), spiritual intelligence (X2), and quarter-life crisis (Y). The results showed that self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence simultaneously had a significant effect on quarter-life crisis, with an F value of 14.798 and a significance level of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.342, meaning that self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence together contributed 34.2% to



the variance in quarter-life crisis. Based on the beta coefficient, self-acceptance (-0.661) had a stronger effect on quarter-life crisis compared to spiritual intelligence (-0.212).

Individuals with high self-acceptance tend to experience quarter-life crisis at lower levels. They are more capable of accepting their strengths and weaknesses, thus are less likely to feel like failures or be pressured by social expectations. This finding is consistent with the study by Marpaung (2024), who found that individuals with high self-acceptance tend to cope with life's problems more calmly, feel more satisfied with themselves, and are less affected by social pressures. Similarly, Koriah (2022) reported that individuals with high self-acceptance are better able to face uncertainty about the future, feel more optimistic, and have stronger self-confidence. They are less anxious when facing career choices or social demands, resulting in lower levels of quarter-life crisis. These individuals are also quicker to adapt, more forgiving of failures, and more focused on personal growth (Ginting & Argasiam, 2023). Thus, high self-acceptance plays a crucial role in reducing the psychological impact of quarter-life crisis.

Furthermore, spiritual intelligence helps individuals cope with quarter-life crisis by serving as a source of strength during times of difficulty. Individuals with high spiritual intelligence are better able to find meaning behind challenges and more easily accept their circumstances. Almalail & Rahmi (2023) found that higher spiritual intelligence is associated with lower quarter-life crisis. Similarly, Hayati (2019) discovered that strong spiritual intelligence helps individuals remain calm, optimistic, and resilient when facing life's uncertainties. Therefore, spiritual intelligence not only reduces anxiety and stress but also equips individuals to face the challenges of early adulthood with greater readiness and resilience.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the study conducted on employees of PT X Jakarta, it can be concluded that self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence play an important role in reducing the level of quarter-life crisis (QLC). The correlation test showed a significant negative relationship between self-acceptance and quarter-life crisis, with a coefficient value of  $-0.525$  ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). This means that the higher the level of self-acceptance, the lower the quarter-life crisis experienced. Individuals with high self-acceptance tend to be more capable of acknowledging both their strengths and weaknesses, remain optimistic, and are less likely to feel pressured by social demands.

In addition, spiritual intelligence also demonstrated a significant negative relationship with quarter-life crisis, with a coefficient value of  $-0.476$  ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Individuals with high spiritual intelligence are able to find meaning in life, remain calm when facing challenges, and develop a sense of sincerity that helps them deal with life's uncertainties more effectively. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis indicated that self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence



jointly have a significant effect on quarter-life crisis, with a contribution of 34.2%. Among the two variables, self-acceptance emerged as the most dominant factor in reducing quarter-life crisis.

Interview findings also revealed that employees with low self-acceptance often felt inferior and frequently compared themselves with others, whereas employees with high spiritual intelligence were better able to calm themselves and stay motivated. Thus, self-acceptance and spiritual intelligence can serve as important psychological protective factors in helping employees navigate the challenges of early adulthood and reduce the negative impact of quarter-life crisis.

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