

The Role of Psychological Well-Being and Self-Compassion in Mitigating Quarter Life Crisis Among College Students: Implications for Guidance and Counseling

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between psychological well-being, self-compassion, and the experience of quarter life crisis (QLC) among students in the Department of Guidance and Counselling at the State University of Malang (classes of 2020 to 2023). QLC is a period of anxiety and uncertainty commonly faced by individuals transitioning into early adulthood, marked by fear of the future and indecision. The research aims to determine how psychological well-being and self-compassion can reduce the effects of QLC in university students. Using a correlational design, the study sampled 86 students, selected through proportionate stratified random sampling. The Psychological Well-Being Scale, Self-Compassion Scale, and Quarter Life Crisis Scale were used for data collection. Analysis showed that both psychological well-being and self-compassion had a significant negative impact on QLC. Higher levels of psychological well-being and self-compassion were linked to lower QLC levels, with psychological well-being contributing 53.8% and self-compassion contributing 49.1%. Together, these variables explained 59.8% of the variation in QLC. The findings highlight the need to promote psychological well-being and self-compassion in education to help students cope with QLC. Guidance and counselling programmes can focus on these areas to support students' emotional resilience, self-acceptance, and decision-making. This research adds to the understanding of protective factors against QLC, suggesting further exploration of additional variables and different student populations.

Keywords: quarter life crisis, psychological well-being, self-compassion, university students, guidance and counselling



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INTRODUCTION

Every human being experiences stages of development in his or her life. In accordance with age there are developmental tasks at each stage of human development that must be achieved (Jannah, 2016). Human development occurs in eight stages ranging from childhood to late adulthood (Erikson 1968). From these developmental phases there is a period of change from adolescence to early adulthood. This phase is referred to as the transition period. Individuals tend to respond to the transition period in different ways. A person often experiences a crisis phase when they are unable to complete these stages of development (Permana et al., 2017). Uncontrolled crisis conditions can cause a state of emotional crisis in a person which is ultimately called the quarter life crisis phase (Black, 2010).

The book "Quarter life crisis, The Unique Challenge of Life In Your Twenties" by Robbins and Wilner is the first book to discuss quarter life crisis (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). Quarter life crisis is defined as a crisis condition experienced by an individual in their late 20s to early 35s when they experience severe anxiety about their future. Research conducted by Anggraini & Aqila (2022) on 40 students at UIN Jakarta revealed that students in the age range of 20-25 years are in the moderate quarter life crisis category. Students often experience problems, both personal and academic (Bariyyah, 2021). According to university students who are usually between 19 to 25 years old are more likely to experience a quarter life crisis.

Based on the assessment of the level of quarter life crisis among active students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling class of 2020-2023, on average, students experience quarter life crisis. The initial data collection results show that 92,5% of students are currently experiencing a moderate crisis phase. Quarter life crisis is experienced by a number of active students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling class of 2020-2023. Based on the results of interviews with four students from the batches of 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, this crisis manifests in various ways, including uncertainty about career paths after graduation, fear of not being able to complete coursework on time, distrust of one's own abilities, uncertainty about the decision to continue studying in this department, comparing oneself with others, and fear of socialising or building relationships with others. According to Philip & Vasquez (2015) mentioned that the pressure from society to succeed is a catalyst for crisis situations faced by people in early adulthood.

The phenomenon of quarter life crisis cannot be ignored because it will have an impact on the lives of individuals (Arnett, 2014). This is related to the SKKPD (Standard of Achievement of Learner Independence) (Bariyyah & Sari, 2014). SKKPD (Standards for Achievement of Learner Independence) in students who are at the tertiary level should already have emotional maturity in expressing feelings and be able to think positively about their condition, have career knowledge and readiness, and mature relationships with peers (Santoso, 2011). Higher education as an educational institution plays a role in carrying out the provision of guidance and counselling services as assistance for students to develop their ability to achieve SKKPD (Student Independence Achievement Standards). According to Putri (2020) counsellors can provide assistance to students by finding career information that is useful for students in the early adult phase, understanding the early adult phase of students starting from physical, cognitive, and physiological, and maximising the development of problem solving skills and understanding of self ability. Services that can be provided to help deal with student problems are responsive services in the form of counselling services (Rahman, 2015). Through counselling services, students will be helped to find solutions to get out of the crisis experienced.

Quarter life crisis can occur because it is influenced by internal and external factors (Amalia, 2021). Quarter life crisis is influenced by internal factors such as self acceptance, self confidence, psychological well being, and self awareness, as well as external factors such as the environment, especially family and friends. Emotional exhaustion can be suppressed when a person is psychologically healthy. Good psychological well being will prevent emotional exhaustion and insecurity in a person (Ardilla & Hakim, 2020). A psychologically healthy person can be described as having low stress levels, feeling satisfied, physically and mentally healthy, and able to maintain their quality of life (Ryff & Singer, 2008). According to research Safira (2020) people who are unemployed and have low psychological well being are currently experiencing a crisis phase, popularly known as a quarter life crisis.

The condition of quarter life crisis needs to be pushed out using strategies and motivation, one of which is self compassion (Lapian, et al., 2023). Self compassion is a state of mind that involves an increase in self kindness and a decrease in self judgement, an increase in humanity and a decrease in isolation, an increase in vigilance and a decrease in overidentification (Neff, 2003). The results of Husain (2022) research on 243 participants aged 18-25 years found that the level of self compassion can protect individuals in emerging adulthood from quarter life crisis. Self compassion as a variable that contributes to quarter life crisis. Emerging adulthood is a condition when individuals are unstable and experience a quarter life crisis. Self compassion is considered capable of protecting individuals from quarter life crisis. The study was conducted to determine the partial contribution and simultaneous contribution of psychological well being and self compassion to quarter life crisis. In accordance with the science of guidance and counselling which emphasises personal growth in achieving mastery of the SKKPD. The purpose of the study is to show how psychological well being and self compassion can be protective for students to avoid the quarter life crisis phase and successfully complete the SKKPD. The findings of this study can serve as a basic reference for relevant parties to identify appropriate support options for students experiencing quarter life crisis. Active students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling batches 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 will be the research subjects. This research was conducted because currently there are still few studies that look at psychological well being and self compassion in relation to quarter life crisis, especially for active students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling, State University of Malang, Classes 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

METHOD

This study uses a correlational research design to look for patterns in the data and validate the hypotheses previously determined by the researcher. The three variables included in this study are psychological well being and self compassion as independent variables and quarter life crisis as the dependent variable. This research is used to determine the contribution of psychological well being and self compassion to quarter life crisis in university students. There are three hypotheses in this study. The first hypothesis states that psychological well being contributes significantly to students' quarter life crisis, the second hypothesis states that self compassion contributes significantly to students' quarter life crisis, and the third hypothesis states that psychological well being and self compassion together contribute significantly to students' quarter life crisis.

The population was 530 students from the Department of Guidance and Counselling of Malangi State University batches 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The sample of this study amounted to 86 students. The sampling technique used proportionate stratified random sampling. The sampling technique is used because the population has stratified characteristics. The number of samples was calculated using the Slovin formula. The number of samples was 17 students from the class of 2020, 18 from the class of 2021, 23 from the class of 2022, and 28 from the class of 2023, all of which were obtained by calculating the number of stratified sample members or strata.

The research instruments used in this study consisted of a psychological well being scale (Pramitha, 2018), self compassion scale (Sugianto et al., 2020), and quarter life crisis scale (Sumartha, 2020). Based on the number of items, the theory used, the level of validity and reliability, the instruments were selected through analysis (Rahman, 2018). A total of 40

students who were not part of the sample were used for validity and reliability testing. The quarter life crisis scale has a reliability of 0,853 and a validity level of 0,337 to 0,760. The psychological well being scale has a reliability of 0,799 and a validity level of 0,354 to 0,739. The self compassion scale has a reliability of 0,894 and a validity level of 0,324 to 0,810. Data collection was carried out through three steps, namely planning, implementation, and analysis. Data analysis was carried out with descriptive statistical analysis, hypothesis testing using simple linear regression tests to test the first and second hypotheses and multiple linear regression tests to test the third hypothesis. Before conducting hypothesis testing, prerequisite tests or assumption tests using multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, normality, and linearity tests were carried out.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

The categorisation process resulted in the conclusion that students in the Department of Guidance and Counselling at State University of Malang have an average level of moderate quarter life crisis. The percentage of students with moderate and high levels of psychological well being is comparable and the average level of self compassion falls into the moderate range. The following table will explain how the levels of psychological well being, self compassion, and quarter life crisis are categorised.

Table 1. Categorisation of Levels of Psychological Wellbeing, Self-Compassion, and Quarter Life Crisis

No	Variables	Categorisation	Norma	Frequency	Percentage
1	Psychological Well Being	Low	$X < 26$	0	0
		Medium	$26 \leq X \leq 39$	43	50%
		High	$X > 39$	43	50%
2	Self Compassion	Low	$X < 56$	1	1,2%
		Medium	$56 \leq X \leq 88$	68	79,1%
		High	$X > 88$	17	19,8%
3	Quarter Life Crisis	Low	$X < 51,4$	15	17,4%
		Medium	$51,4 \leq X \leq 80,6$	62	72,1%
		High	$X > 80,6$	9	10,5%

Assumption Test

The research data were then tested for assumptions as a prerequisite test for conducting additional linear regression tests. The research data was checked for assumptions using normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. IBM SPSS 25 for Windows was used to conduct the assumption test. The results and justification of the assumption tests that the researcher conducted are listed below.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

N	Significance	Description
86	0,181	Normal

The Kolmogorov Smirnov method was used to conduct the normality test. It is concluded that the data in this study is normally distributed because the data is considered normal if the significance value is $> 0,05$.

Table 3. Linearity Test Results

Score Distribution	Linearity		Description
	F	Sig.	
Psychological Well Being on Quarter Life Crisis	97,571	0,000	Linear
Self Compassion on Quarter Life Crisis	119,260	0,000	Linear

Research data is declared linear if linearity $< 0,05$. Based on the results of the linearity test, the variables of psychological well-being and self-compassion have a linear relationship with the variable quarter life crisis.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variables	ToleranceValue	VIF Value	Description
Psychological Well Being	0,512	1,955	No Multicollinearity
Self Compassion	0,512	1,955	No Multicollinearity

The research data is free from multicollinearity if the tolerance value $> 0,10$ and the VIF value $< 10,00$ it can be concluded that the research data does not experience multicollinearity.

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variables	Significance	Description
Psychological Well Being	0,546	No Heteroscedasticity
Self Compassion	0,777	No Heteroscedasticity

The research data is declared free from heteroscedasticity if the significance value $> 0,05$ it can be concluded that the research data does not experience heteroscedasticity.

Hyphotesis Test

Table 6. Simple Linear Regression Test Results (Psychological Wellbeing)

Variables	Regression Coefficient (B)	T Count	Sig.	Description
Constant	136,518			
Psychological Well Being (X1)	-1,893	-9,900	0,000	Significant
<i>R Square</i>	0,538			

The regression equation from the simple linear regression test results is as follows: $Y = 136,518 + (-1,893)X$. The constant value of 136,518 means that if the value of psychological well being is constant, the value of quarter life crisis is 136,518. The psychological well being regression coefficient of -1,893 indicates a negative contribution between psychological well being and quarter life crisis. This means that if there is a 1% increase in psychological well-being, it will reduce quarter life crisis by 1,893. The significance value of $0,000 < 0,05$ means that the contribution of psychological well being to quarter life crisis is significant. It can be interpreted that psychological well being contributes significantly negative to quarter life crisis. The higher the psychological well being, the lower the quarter life crisis and vice versa. The coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0,538 shows that 53,8% of students' quarter life crisis is the contribution of psychological well-being while 46,2% is the contribution of other variables that are not explained. Based on these results, the first hypothesis which states that psychological well being contributes significantly to students' quarter life crisis is accepted.

Table 7. Simple Linear Regression Test Results (Self-Compassion)

Variables	Coef Regression (B)	T Count	Sig.	Description
Constant	116,288			
Self Compassion (X2)	-0,686	-9,002	0,000	Significant
<i>R Square</i>	0,491			

The regression equation from the simple linear regression test results is as follows: $Y = 116,288 + (-0,686)X$. The value of quarter life crisis is 116,288 assuming self compassion remains constant as indicated by the equation constant of 116,288. Quarter life crisis and self compassion have a negative relationship as shown by the self-compassion regression coefficient of -0,686. This indicates that a 1% increase in self compassion will decrease quarter life crisis by 0,686. Quarter life crisis is significantly influenced by self compassion as indicated by a significance value of $0,000 < 0,05$. It can be concluded that self compassion contributes significantly negatively to quarter life crisis. The higher the self compassion, the lower the quarter life crisis and vice versa. The coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0,491 can be observed that self compassion contributes 49,1% to students' quarter life crisis with other variables contributing 50,9%. This finding supports the second hypothesis which states that self compassion contributes significantly negatively to quarter life crisis.

Table 8. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Variables	Regression Coefficient
Constant	138,898
Psychological Well Being (X1)	-1,231
Self Compassion (X2)	-0,360
<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	0,598
F	64,225
Sig F	0,000

The regression equation from the multiple linear regression test results is as follows: $Y = 138,898 + (-1,231) + (-0,360)$. The constant value of 138,898 means that the variable quarter life crisis is 138,898 if psychological well being and self compassion are considered constant. The variable of psychological well being and quarter life crisis has a negative contribution because the regression coefficient of psychological well being (X1) is -1,231. This indicates that if all other factors remain unchanged then quarter life crisis will decrease by 1,231 for every 1% increase in psychological well being. Quarter life crisis and self compassion have a negative relationship according to the regression coefficient of self compassion (X2) of -0,360. This indicates that if all other factors remain constant then a 1% increase in self compassion will result in a decrease in quarter life crisis by 0,360. With a significance value of $0,000 < 0,05$ psychological well being and self compassion have a significant contribution to quarter life crisis so that quarter life crisis in college students is significantly influenced by psychological well-being and self-compassion simultaneously. The variables of psychological well being and self compassion together contribute 59,8% to the quarter life crisis of college students according to the coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0,598. While other variables not explained in this study contributed 40,2%. This finding supports the third hypothesis which states that psychological well being and self compassion together contribute significantly negatively to students' quarter life crisis.

Contribution of Psychological Well Being to Quarter Life Crisis

This study explains how psychological well being contributes to the quarter life crisis of active students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling class of 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The research findings show that psychological well being has a considerable contribution to the quarter life crisis of active students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling with a significance of $0,000 < 0,05$ for the simple linear regression test results. The regression coefficient value of -1,893 indicates that there is a negative contribution between quarter life crisis in college students and psychological well being. This shows that the level of quarter life crisis in students will decrease with the higher psychological well being owned by students of the Guidance and Counselling Department. On the other hand, students will experience a greater quarter life crisis if their psychological well being is low. Students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling batches 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 have varying levels of psychological well being. Of these, 44,2% were in the high category, 55,8% were in the medium category, and no students were found in the low category. A total of 53,8% of quarter life crisis is caused by the psychological well being of Malang State University students class 2020-2023 majoring in guidance, while 46,2% is caused by other factors. The findings of this study corroborate the findings of previous research by Safira (2020), Amalia (2021), and Hariyadi (2022) who found a substantial inverse relationship between psychological well being and quarter life crisis. Research by Robinson et al. (2020) further supports this idea by stating that psychological well being has a major impact on quarter life crisis and individuals who have low psychological well being will more easily get stuck in a quarter life crisis condition.

According to the results of data analysis regarding the level of quarter life crisis in students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling, 4,7% of students in the 2020-2023 batch are in the high category quarter life crisis phase, 86% are in the medium category quarter life crisis, and 9,3% are in the low category quarter life crisis. Quarter life crisis is a crisis condition experienced by someone when they turn 25 years old. This crisis is caused by a lack of readiness to deal with changes in life, a sense of helplessness and anxiety that develops as a person moves into early adulthood from adolescence, and an inability to know where their life is headed (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). College students are more likely to experience a quarter life crisis when it first arises between the ages of 18 and 29 or at the quarter century milestone. Students who are studying are more likely to experience a quarter life crisis condition because as individuals who are in a situation of life change from adolescence to the beginning of the adult phase they must decide on the direction and purpose of life. However, many people find it difficult and confusing to determine their life goals, especially after graduating from college (Permatasari, 2021). Students approaching adulthood usually experience emotions such as despair, indecision, doubts about life goals, and fear of the future (Martin, 2016). Indecisiveness, hopelessness, low self esteem, being trapped in challenging situations, anxiety, depression, and concern for interpersonal relationships are characteristic of the quarter century crisis (Robbins & Wilner, 2001).

Individuals who are in a state of psychological well being have an optimistic outlook on life. They are aware of their own lives and are able to make decisions about their direction and goals without being depressed. Psychologically healthy people will be able to accept who they are and live life as productively as possible. Emotions that are related to daily life are continuous with psychological well being. Any daily activity that has the potential to change a person's thoughts and emotions, from a depressed to an optimistic state of mind. For example, moving from an uncomfortable emotion to a situation that is acceptable to a person in their life (Ryff, 1989). Maintaining psychological well being is one approach to protect a person from quarter life crisis. Through psychological well being a person will be able to go through life more healthily and avoid the fear and dread that cause quarter life crisis. The six pillars of psychological well being are self acceptance, healthy interpersonal relationships, autonomy, environmental control, life purpose, and personal development (Ryff, 1989). Students who have a good level of psychological well being will not feel pressured by their environment. Individuals who are at a high level of psychological well being will be able to view the circumstances they experience positively, do not struggle to measure their achievements with the achievements of others, do not worry about the future, do not second guess their choices, and do not experience fear of something that has not yet happened. Conversely, students with low psychological well being may experience a quarter life crisis due to feelings of frustration, lack of purpose in life, worry about past experiences, and self doubt.

Contribution of Self Compassion to Quarter Life Crisis

This study explains how self compassion contributes to quarter life crisis in students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling of State University of Malang batches 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The results showed that students in the guidance and counselling

department experienced quarter life crisis with self compassion playing a major role. Quarter life crisis of students in the Department of Guidance and Counselling and self compassion have a negative relationship based on the results of a simple linear regression test with a significance of $0,000 < 0,05$. The negative correlation between self-compassion and quarter life crisis is shown by the regression coefficient of $-0,686$. This indicates that students who have greater self compassion will experience less quarter life crisis. Conversely, students who lack self compassion will experience more quarter life crisis. Students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling batches 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 have varying levels of self compassion with 13,9% in the high group, 84,9% in the medium category, and 1,2% in the low category. Quarter life crisis is caused by 49,1% of self compassion possessed by students of the 2020-2023 batch of the guidance and counselling department and 46,2% is caused by other circumstances. The findings of this study corroborate the results of previous research by Zuhriyah (2021) who found a substantial inverse relationship between self compassion and quarter life crisis.

The percentage of students who are in the quarter life crisis phase in the Guidance and Counselling Department from the class of 2020 to 2023 is 4,7% of students in the high category, 86% in the medium category, and 9,3% in the low category. A stage of life known as "quarter life" arises when a person enters adulthood. Individuals may experience emotional upheaval, worry, and confusion at this point. This consists of fear of failure and a sense of helplessness about life (Atwood & Scholtz, 2008). There are two types of components that define crisis at this point internal forces and external factors. Peace can be achieved by those experiencing a quarter life crisis through self love and compassion. Neff (2003) defines self compassion as treating oneself with kindness and caring when one faces life challenges or personal shortcomings. Self compassion is treating oneself with kindness as opposed to criticising oneself. Ultimately, it boils down to accepting that we all deserve grace because we are human and shortcomings and disappointments are a natural part of life. Someone who has self compassion can be more compassionate and caring towards themselves and they will not see life's challenges as too big.

Contributions of Psychological Wellbeing and Self-Compassion to Quarter Life Crisis

This study describes how psychological well being and self compassion contribute to quarter life crisis in active students in the Department of Guidance and Counselling batch 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Based on the research findings of the simple linear regression test with a significance of $0,000 < 0,05$ it shows that psychological well being and self compassion play a major role in the quarter life crisis experienced by students in the Department of Guidance and Counselling. The level of psychological well being in students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling Class of 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 is 44,2% of students have psychological well being in the high category, 55,8% of students with psychological well being in the medium category, and no students have low psychological well-being while the level of self compassion in students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling Class of 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 is 13,9% of students have self compassion in the high category, 84,9% of students with self compassion in the medium category, and 1,2% of students have low self

compassion. Psychological well being and self compassion owned by students of the Department of Guidance and Counselling Class of 2020 to 2023 contributed 59,8% to quarter life crisis while 40,2% of quarter life crisis was influenced by other factors. The findings of this study corroborate the results of previous research Litasyia (2022) who found a substantial inverse relationship between psychological well-being and self-compassion towards quarter life crisis.

The percentage of students who are in the quarter life crisis phase in the Department of Guidance and Counselling from the class of 2020 to 2023 is 4,7% of students in the high category, 86% in the medium category, and 9,3% in the low category. One of the variables that affect quarter life crisis is psychooogical well being because as said by Ryff & Keyes (1995) in their research, someone with a good psychological profile will be better able to avoid quarter life crisis and achieve self actualisation. The general idea is that individuals with high levels of psychological well being will be able to recognise and appreciate their own abilities. In addition, they can accept unpleasant events and circumstances as a natural part of life and adapt them to their own lives. Quarter life crisis is characterised by low self esteem, worry, and lack of confidence (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). A person who has self compassion is usually better equipped to accept their circumstances and deal with difficult situations. Thus self compassion will influence a person's quarter life crisis experience. Self compassion and psychological health are important in helping a person cope with a quarter life crisis. When people recognise their own shortcomings they can sympathise with themselves, take responsibility for their own mistakes, and grow from them. Individuals can accept themselves as they are, build good relationships with others, and deal independently with the social environment, take responsibility for their surroundings, make goals for their lives, and realise their full potential.

Implications for Guidance and Counseling

The results of this study provide significant implications for guidance and counseling practices within educational institutions, particularly in addressing the challenges of the quarter life crisis (QLC) among university students. The QLC is a critical developmental stage characterized by anxiety, uncertainty, and indecision, which can negatively affect students' personal, academic, and career trajectories (Arnett, 2014; Robinson et al., 2020). In this context, counselors play a pivotal role in guiding students through this transition and mitigating the negative effects of QLC. Counseling services should focus on fostering emotional resilience, psychological well-being, and self-compassion, as these factors have been found to significantly reduce QLC's impact (Husain, 2022; Neff, 2003). The development of supportive counseling programs tailored to these needs is essential. By designing programs that focus on enhancing emotional maturity and self-awareness, counselors can help students manage the pressures associated with their academic and personal lives (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

One key focus for guidance and counseling should be on the development of emotional maturity and independence, aligned with the SKKPD (Student Independence Achievement Standards) (Bariyyah & Sari, 2014). Emotional maturity is crucial in helping students express their feelings positively, build mature relationships with peers, and prepare for future career challenges (Santoso, 2011). Research has shown that emotional competence, which includes

the ability to manage emotions and cope with stress, is vital in helping students navigate life transitions (Jannah, 2016; Permana et al., 2017). Furthermore, career uncertainties have been identified as a major contributor to QLC, with many students facing indecision and anxiety about their post-graduation paths (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). Counselors must provide career guidance that helps students clarify their life goals, recognize their strengths, and make informed decisions regarding their academic and professional futures (Black, 2010; Anggraini & Aqila, 2022). In addition to career guidance, the provision of both preventive and responsive counseling services is crucial. Preventive counseling aims to build students' self-awareness and psychological resilience before they encounter crisis situations (Putri, 2020). This proactive approach can reduce the likelihood of QLC escalating into more severe emotional distress. Conversely, responsive counseling addresses current difficulties and helps students find solutions to immediate problems (Rahman, 2015). These interventions should be tailored to the individual needs of students, taking into account the various internal and external factors that influence their experiences of QLC, such as self-confidence, psychological well-being, and social support (Amalia, 2021; Ardilla & Hakim, 2020).

Self-compassion, as a protective factor against QLC, should also be emphasized in counseling interventions (Lapian et al., 2023). Research has demonstrated that self-compassion reduces self-criticism and promotes emotional well-being, making it an effective strategy for coping with life challenges (Neff, 2003; Husain, 2022). By helping students develop self-compassion, counselors can foster a mindset of self-kindness, self-acceptance, and emotional balance, which are critical for navigating the uncertainties of early adulthood (Arnett, 2014). Moreover, psychological well-being is closely related to an individual's ability to cope with emotional exhaustion and insecurity, which are common in QLC (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Therefore, promoting both psychological well-being and self-compassion can serve as a comprehensive strategy in counseling services to protect students from the detrimental effects of QLC (Safira, 2020; Ardilla & Hakim, 2020). In conclusion, the integration of these strategies into guidance and counseling practices can provide students with the support they need to overcome QLC. By focusing on emotional resilience, self-compassion, and career development, counselors can help students not only manage their current challenges but also prepare for future success (Robinson et al., 2020). This research highlights the importance of a holistic approach to counseling that addresses both the emotional and practical aspects of student development, ensuring their overall well-being throughout their academic journey (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Martin, 2016). Future studies should explore additional variables that may influence QLC, such as social networks and family support, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how students can be supported during this critical life phase (Atwood & Scholtz, 2008).

CONCLUSION

This study found a significant negative relationship between peer social support and career decision-making difficulties among adolescents from broken homes, indicating that higher levels of peer support are associated with reduced difficulties in making career decisions. The majority of participants demonstrated high levels of peer support, with most experiencing low levels of difficulty in their career decision-making processes. This suggests that peer

networks play a crucial role in providing emotional and informational support, compensating for the lack of parental guidance in these adolescents' lives. However, while peer support can act as a protective buffer, over-reliance on peers may lead to suboptimal career decisions if peers lack proper knowledge or experience. The study's findings align with previous research on the importance of social support in adolescent development but highlight the need for broader exploration of family instability beyond divorce. Expanding the scope in future research could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting career decision-making in this vulnerable group.

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