



Psychological Well-Being, Curiosity and Perfectionism among Filipino Young Professionals with Quarter Life Crisis: Basis for Existential Positive Psychology Wellness Plan

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Abstract

Quarter Life Crisis is a difficult encounter in the life transition from adolescence to early adulthood. This crisis revolves around social comparison, work satisfaction, intimate relationships, career consolidation, preoccupations and fears, struggle from transition, social isolation, and frustration and disappointments. This study examined the psychological well-being, curiosity, and perfectionism among young professionals with a quarter-life crisis. There were 318 participants in this study from two different cities in one province of Region IV-A in the Philippines. The study used a sequential explanatory mixed method design that combines qualitative and quantitative research. Based on the result, the research found that young professionals with quarter-life crises have low psychological well-being, low curiosity, and high perfectionism. The themes, low disposition, poor mindset, and weak personality were extracted from the texts to fully support the respective variables. Furthermore, the research proposed a psychological intervention plan for young professionals experiencing the crisis: the existential positive psychology wellness plan.

Keywords: Low Disposition, Poor Mindset, and Weak Personality, Sequential Explanatory Design

1. Introduction

Young professionals entering the workforce, are at a vital stage in their career growth. The shift from youth to early adulthood can be very challenging. Insecurities and social comparison on social media sites can be especially harmful. Young professionals who are bombarded with pictures of friend's vacations, work promotions, and large incomes may define success based on these external indicators, leading to emotions of inferiority and jealousy.

"Quarter-life crisis" (QLC) is often used to characterize a developmental milestone that normally occurs between the mid-20s and early 30s, but the timing might vary (Agarwal, 2020; Rosen, 2019; Robinson, 2019). QLC presents as extreme stress and ambiguity about one's life orientation. Individuals with QLC may doubt their identity, purpose, and choices. They are imprisoned, uninspired, and irritated, and they urgently seek answers to become their ideal selves. This frequently results in a period of uncertainty, deep self-reflection, and questioning everything in their life. To understand QLC, one must examine one's psychological well-being, curiosity, and perfectionism, since these constructs have a big impact on how they overcome this life crisis.

Psychological well-being (PWB) is a key component of mental health. It includes both emotions of enjoyment and fulfillment which is the eudaimonic well-being, and the ability to deal with difficulties and operate efficiently which is the hedonic well-being (Tang et al., 2019). High PWB is frequently related with a positive attitude and ability to operate in life. To measure one's PWB, Ryff's PWB Scales describe six fundamental PWB dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, good relationships, life purpose, and self-acceptance (Garcia et al., 2023). Gulota and Fuller (2022) emphasize the many symptoms of QLC that might have a detrimental impact on PWB. These include emotions of impulsivity, isolation, and loneliness, as well as a sense of loss or directionlessness, anxiety, and sadness. Individuals with QLC may also deal with feelings of inadequacy when compared to others, time constraints, and feeling imprisoned in an unhappy work. Difficulties with relationships, commitment, and decision-making may occur. In addition, Herdian and Wijaya (2022) found a substantial negative association between QLC and PWB, adding to the evidence for the relationship. In layman's terms, lower PWB scores tend to indicate a higher possibility of suffering a QLC, whereas higher PWB values indicate a reduced likelihood of QLC. As a result, studying PWB can be a useful technique for determining whether someone is experiencing difficulties with a QLC.

Curiosity, the desire to explore and discover new things, has a multifaceted impact on one's psychological well-being. The American Psychological Association (2020) defines curiosity as the drive to investigate and comprehend anything unique or fascinating. It emerges as a need for knowledge and information, which drives us to actively seek out new experiences (Szumowska & Kruglanski, 2020). Standardized assessments, such as Todd Kashdan's Five-Dimensional Curiosity Scale Revised (5DCR), highlight five major characteristics of curiosity: happy exploration, sensitivity to lack of stimulation, stress tolerance, thrill-seeking, and both overt and covert social curiosity.

Curiosity is highly associated with positive characteristics of psychological well-being, such as life satisfaction and finding purpose in life. Being interested fosters creativity by fostering investigation and concept connections (Kashdan, 2018). However, the link between curiosity and well-being is not always clear. Periods of emotional hardship and low well-being can also result in increased curiosity, particularly about oneself and one's role in the world. As individuals begin on new undertakings, they frequently experience feelings of guilt or uncertainty that prompt them to reflect on themselves. Ironically, self-doubt can feed a desire for perfection, since those suffering QLC may become too interested about the achievement of others on comparable pathways. This might lead to high expectations and an unwavering quest of perfection.

When the relationship between curiosity and a quarter-life crisis (QLC) is investigated, an interesting twist emerges. While heightened self-reflection and comparison to others during a QLC might cause pain and uncertainty, Robinson (2013) found a silver lining. The upheaval of a crisis can foster a receptivity to new ideas and perspectives. This increased interest may serve

as a catalyst for personal development and innovative problem-solving, moving people ahead (Agarwal, 2020). QLC, then, is more than just a period of difficulty. It may also be a period for experimentation and discovery. As the British Psychological Society points out, conventional coping methods may no longer be sufficient, pushing us to seek new techniques and activities for dealing with life's obstacles. A QLC might thus provide an opportunity for good transformation, allowing you to explore new routes and take charge of your life's direction.

Perfectionism is typically defined as a personality trait characterized by setting excessively high standards for oneself and others (Smith, 2016; Curan, 2019). While society frequently considers it as a desirable attribute connected with achievement, it may also have a negative aspect (Scott, 2022). Perfectionists have impossible expectations for themselves and engage in severe self-criticism (Curran, 2019; Etherson et al., 2022). Their demand for control and faultless outcomes presents itself in self-criticism and other-criticism, which is frequently accompanied by a fear of failure, procrastination, and an obsessive concentration on results (Fabio et al., 2022). The continuous quest of perfection can result in sadness, melancholy, anxiety, and even self-harm (Nelsen et al. 2023). It can even immobilize people, leading them to forsake their aims entirely (Doyle et al., 2022). In addition, Hougaard and Carter (2020) found that perfectionism can intensify a crisis scenario. The fear of not being good enough generates anxiety and hesitation, limiting an individual's capacity to make decisions and seize chances. Interestingly, whereas the links between psychological well-being and curiosity, as well as well-being and perfectionism, have been extensively studied, the link between curiosity and perfectionism has received less attention.

This study looks at the experiences of young Filipino professionals dealing with a quarter-life crisis (QLC) through the perspective of Existential Positive Psychology (EPP). EPP highlights the human desire for meaning and purpose in life, which can be interrupted during a QLC. The study investigates how a QLC influences psychological well-being (PWB), which includes happiness, contentment, and coping abilities. It delves more into the function of curiosity, which EPP sees as a good factor that drives the search for meaning. Perfectionism, defined by a constant quest of flawlessness, may stifle inquiry and self-discovery. By analyzing these interrelated aspects, the study hopes to create a wellness strategy based on EPP principles. This strategy might include activities that encourage meaning-making, growth mindset development, exploration, and the formation of a support network. Young professionals can emerge from a QLC stronger and more fulfilled by cultivating a sense of purpose, facing difficulties, and exploring new opportunities.

2. Methods

Recognizing the need for a more nuanced understanding of young professionals' experiences with a quarter-life crisis, the researcher used a mixed methods approach. This technique combines the benefits of quantitative and qualitative data collecting and analysis (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017, cited by Dawadi, 2021). Specifically, the study used an explanatory sequential mixed techniques approach. The study conducted had a sample size of 550 respondents but only 318 remained after screening in which they were selected through purposive and convenience sampling for both quantitative and quality data.

The investigation began with a quantitative phase, which involved obtaining and evaluating numerical data to lay the groundwork. Firstly, the researcher sought out standardized tests to be utilized such as the Quarter Life Crisis Scale, Psychological well-being Scale, Five-Dimensional Curiosity Scale, and Big Three Perfectionism Scale. It is then transformed into an answerable online form for easier dissemination and access to respondents. Data is then recorded from the online form, organized, then analyzed to gain results. The qualitative phase

next delves deeper, employing interviews or focus groups to investigate and expand on the original results with more context and extensive explanations. For the interview, the researcher created set of questions that's further validated into areas that needs to be tackled to gain more substance and insights on a personal level. The explanatory sequential pattern is very common in sectors that rely heavily on quantitative methodologies. However, it does offer obstacles. One problem is determining whether specific quantitative results justify additional qualitative investigation. Furthermore, obtaining balanced sample numbers across all stages might be challenging (Creswell & Clark, 2017, as quoted by Dawadi, 2021).

2.1. Participants

This study looked at the experiences of young Filipino professionals (ages 21–35) dealing with a quarter-life crisis (QLC) in their early careers. Participants represented a variety of occupations from two cities within a single province in the Region IV-A of the Philippines.

The study's quantitative part focused on recent bachelor's degree graduates who were already employed. The Quarter Life Crisis Scale (QLCS) was used by the researchers to determine whether participants were experiencing QLC. Out of 550 individuals, only 318 scored 94 or above, suggesting the presence of a QLC. The analysis focused on people with intermediate (94-125), high (126-156), and very high (157-205) QLCS scores, which indicate probable difficulty adapting to life and impairments in everyday functioning. Because QLC cases are rather uncommon, participants for the quantitative phase were recruited using purposeful and snowball sampling strategies.

The qualitative section of the study was conducted using purposive and convenience sampling. They wanted individuals who scored high on the QLCS and had significant expertise or experience with QLC. Mweshi and Sakyi (2020) examined availability and willingness to participate. Five participants from the quantitative phase were initially asked to in-depth interviews. When theoretical saturation was reached, indicating that no new insights occurred, the researchers chose three participants for the final qualitative analysis (Hennick & Kaizer, 2022).

2.2. Instrument/Measurement

Quarter Life Crisis Scale (QLCS) is a 41 item, 5-point Likert scale developed by James Philip Ray V. Pinggolio (2015). A total of 165 items, initially categorized to four (4) factors were generated and were trimmed down to 134 after the content validation of subject matter experts. The instrument was pilot tested, and 41 items were retained after the initial validation. The remaining items were used for the field testing and were again tested its validity, reliability as well as used for establishing the norms. A total of 835 respondents participated in this study. Participants were graduates of at least four-year course, ages 21-30, male and female, single and presently working in related or non-related career and rendered at least six months of professional service. The data from the 328 respondents were collected for the initial validation. Item-Total Correlation, Cronbach's Alpha, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) were used as statistical measures after the pilot testing for initial validation. Furthermore, Afandi (2023) noted on their study that the scale has 0.85 Cronbach's alpha and is appropriate to use on South East Asian population as well.

Psychological Well-Being (PWB) Scale is an 18-item, 7-point Likert scale developed by a psychologist Carol D. Ryff. This tool measures six aspects of well-being and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff et. al., 2007; adapted from Ryff, 1989). The PWB was utilized in the study on a Romanian convenience sample of 664 participants from the general population.

The results showed that the correlated six-factor model presented a relatively good fit, compared to single-factor and independent six-factor models. results indicate that well-being can be conceptualized as a second-order factor encompassing six dimensions, represented by autonomy, positive relations, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The value of the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the six sub-scales as well as the whole instrument was above 0.70.

Five-Dimensional Curiosity Scale Revised (5DCR) is a 7-point Likert scale developed by Todd Kashdan. Using data from a survey of 483 working adults (Study 1) and 460 adults (Study 2), evidence found to support the preexisting four dimensions of curiosity (Joyous Exploration, Deprivation Sensitivity, Stress Tolerance, and Thrill Seeking) along with the separation of the fifth dimension into General Overt Social Curiosity and Covert Social Curiosity. Each factor of the 5DCR had substantive relations with a battery of personality (e.g., Big Five, intellectual humility) and well-being (e.g., psychological need satisfaction) measures. With greater bandwidth and predictive power, the 5DCR offers new opportunities for basic research and the evaluation of curiosity enhancing interventions. All omega coefficients across both samples were greater than 0.80, indicating strong internal consistency of the items within each sub-scale. The reliability of the 5DCR unit-weighted observed sub-scale scores in Sample 1 was also assessed via test-retest correlations. The test-retest correlations across 2 month and 8-month intervals ranged from 0.61 to 0.79, indicating strong reliability of trait-like measures.

Big Three Perfectionism Scale (BTPS) is a 45-item self-report questionnaire with 5-point rating scale designed to measure three global perfectionism factors (rigid perfectionism, self-critical perfectionism, and narcissistic perfectionism) composed of 10 core perfectionism facets. Scales constructed using facets assuage theoretical confusion, reduce the possibility of omitting core content, and afford greater reliability and precision in assessment. The present investigation examined the structure of the BTPS using exploratory factor analysis in Study 1 (288 undergraduates) and confirmatory factor analyses in Study 2 (352 community adults) and Study 3 (290 undergraduates). Internal consistency measured by Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.79 to 0.89 for the 10 facets and from 0.92 to 0.93 for the three global factors.

Interview Guide Questionnaire utilized to gather qualitative data from the perspectives and experiences of the participants. This interview guide provided questions to elicit additional information that can support the study's assumptions. The interview guide questions served as a guide for the researchers which provide the direction of the interview, and which also allowed the researcher to check and validate the result of the quantitative data. The formulation of the guide questions was based on the respective standardized scales.

2.3. Data Analysis

For the quantitative data analysis, researchers utilized the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet for quantitative computation, by Excel, the answers of the respondents were manually encoded and tallied. After data gathering, the researchers already proceeded with their statistician. With the help of the statistician and the use of SPSS version 29, the researcher was able to achieve broader and clearer results and findings by utilizing descriptive statistics, ANOVA and POST HOC. Through those platforms, the researcher was able to attain significant results.

Descriptive statistics is used to determine the frequency, and the percentage distribution of the research participant's demographic profile, T-test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to utilize if there is a significant difference between psychological well-being, curiosity, and perfectionism when grouped according to demographic profile. Shapiro-Wilk test of normality employed to identify whether a parametric test or non-parametric test was

used. The data appeared to be parametric in nature, thus, Pearson r was utilized as the appropriate statistical tool for the data.

In analyzing the qualitative data, the researcher transcribed the audio-taped interviews of five (5) participants and label as documented transcriptions. To analyze the data, the researcher utilized codes for more streamline analysis. The responses gathered from participants were organized which further generated sub-categories, categories, emerging concepts, then eventually, a theme that encloses the whole narrative of responses. As a result, the raw data was transformed and made available for evaluation, synthesis, and analysis. For a more thorough evaluation of results, the findings were applied to contextual data, noting the researcher's insights and reflections on observations and interviews, identifying connections between themes and developing interpretations, and verifying findings through peer reviews and member checks. A triangulation inference was also made to verify the results to consider empirical and literature, the researcher's inferences, and actual observations and interview as mentioned by Miles & Huberman (1984). At the end process, the researcher chose only three (3) best respondents for qualitative presentation due to saturation of data that support the quantitative part.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

This study assured the ethical treatment of participants going through a quarter-life crisis. The research was ethically reviewed in accordance with RA 10532 and the Philippine Psychological Association's Code of Ethics, and participants were informed of their rights and the study's objectives. Participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous, with pseudonyms used to conceal identity. Demographic data was acquired in a secret manner and utilized only when necessary to protect anonymity. Participants were given written information regarding the data collecting techniques, as well as written transcripts and data interpretations. The researcher put participants' well-being first and honored their freedom to withdraw at any moment.

3. Results and Discussions

Table 1: Respondent's Psychological Well-being

Six Scales	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Verbal Interpretation
Autonomy	25.2296	3.92768	5	Low
Environmental Mastery	24.7264	3.72526	6	Low
Personal Growth	28.5000	5.07592	2	Low
Positive Relations with Others	28.8239	5.19042	1	Low
Purpose in Life	26.7516	4.08790	3	Low
Self-Acceptance	25.7044	4.33248	4	Low
TOTAL PWB	159.7358	18.55946		Low

Legend: Autonomy: 30 or higher, environmental mastery: 35 or higher, personal growth: 35 or higher, positive relations with others: 35 or higher, purpose in life: 40 or higher, self-acceptance: 35 or higher

Table 1 illustrates the respondent's psychological well-being. The data showed the attained 159.7358 weighted mean with 18.55946 standard deviation for overall PWB indicates young professionals with QLC have low PWB. The six areas of psychological well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance are also all low.

Young Filipino professionals experiencing a quarter-life crisis scored lowest in positive relations with others, indicating difficulties building intimate bonds and social isolation. This is consistent with research demonstrating social isolation's harmful influence on overall well-being. The studies conducted by Clair et. al (2021), Pietrabissa and Simpson (2020), and Hwang et. al. (2020) provide evidence that being socially isolated can significantly affect one's well-being, mental health, and physical health.

Young professionals experiencing a quarter-life crisis also scored poorly on personal growth, reflecting sentiments of stagnation and a lack of advancement in life. This is consistent with Erikson's psychosocial theory of generativity against stagnation at this period of development (Hasyim et al., 2024).

Young professionals experiencing a quarter-life crisis have a low sense of purpose in life, doubting the significance of their past and future. This can cause emotions of discontent and emptiness in many areas of life (Betterup, 2023; Emotion Matters, 2023).

Young professionals with a quarter-life crisis also scored low in self-acceptance, struggling with self-dissatisfaction and a desire to be different. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy, self-criticism, and identity confusion (Campbell, 2023; Ahantke, 2018).

Young professionals experiencing a quarter-life crisis displayed low autonomy, indicating that they were unduly preoccupied with others' expectations and readily persuaded by social pressure (Levine, 2020). This emphasizes the need of understanding conformity reasons to assist people gain independence.

Young professionals experiencing a quarter-life crisis also scored poorly on environmental mastery, feeling powerless over their surroundings and unable to better their situation. This can cause emotions of powerlessness, worry, and overwhelm (Henriques, 2018).

Young professionals experiencing a quarter life crisis often have lower levels of psychological well-being due to the wide array of negative emotions they may be feeling, such as uncertainty, fear, anxiety, dread, hopelessness, helplessness, denial, and panic (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). In addition, being low in all areas of PWB predicts some areas of QLC: experienced decline of self-esteem (Robinsons, 2019), a period of active exploration of self and the world and a time instability in roles and relationships (Argawal et. al., 2020), feel completely alone (Miles, 2022), work related demands (Putri, 2022), and feeling unmotivated and lonely (Flynn, 2023). The pandemic also had a big impact of having a QLC (Putri et. al., 2022).

The qualitative data gathered from interviews also shows respondents exhibiting low disposition such as comparing oneself to others, feeling inferior, insecure, jealous, and confused. Hence, "Low disposition" was the theme emerged from the aspect of psychological well-being among young professionals with QLC which is characterized as manifestation of unpleasant attitude. This manifestation of unpleasant attitudes can be categorized in negative emotion, and negative behavior.

Disposition is a person's mood or attitude about life. It also means the positive or negative way a person views the world (Yildirim, 2020). The development of a positive attitude is vital to lead a satisfying life. This encompasses maintaining an optimistic mindset and demeanor, regardless of the difficulties encountered. Possessing a positive attitude can be advantageous, particularly when it comes to staying driven and attaining personal and professional objectives. However, individuals undergoing a quarter-life crisis often experience a diminished disposition, characterized by an unfavorable attitude towards their own lives.

Attitude can be described as a cultivated predisposition to consistently react to an entity in a favorable or unfavorable manner. Conversely, an unpleasant attitude refers to a negative disposition, emotion, or behavior that lacks constructive, cooperative, or optimistic qualities (Woods, 2019). It can be challenging for an individual to overcome a negative and critical mindset, despite being aware of its detrimental effects on their physical and emotional well-being, relationships, productivity at work, and overall happiness. Additionally, self-blame may further exacerbate the situation. All of this can lead to a sense of hopelessness. Manifestations of unpleasant attitudes experienced by young professionals with QLC can be categorized in negative emotion, and negative behavior. The above-mentioned sub-categories were supported by the raw answers of the participants during the interview and were stated in the succeeding paragraphs.

Negative emotions refer to unpleasant or disruptive emotional responses that include feelings of unhappiness or sadness. These emotions lead to self-dislike and a negative perception of others, which in turn lowers confidence, self-esteem, and overall life fulfillment. Apart from being unpleasant, these emotions also create obstacles in daily functioning and impede progress towards achieving personal goals (Scott, 2022).

Feeling confused, feeling insecure, feeling disappointed, feeling jealous/ envious, feeling demotivated, feeling useless/unworthy, feeling embarrassed, feeling lost, feeling tired and stress at work, feeling afraid to be left behind and ridiculed, feeling outcasted, feeling unwanted were the emerging concepts manifested under negative emotion and supported the quantitative data of low PWB.

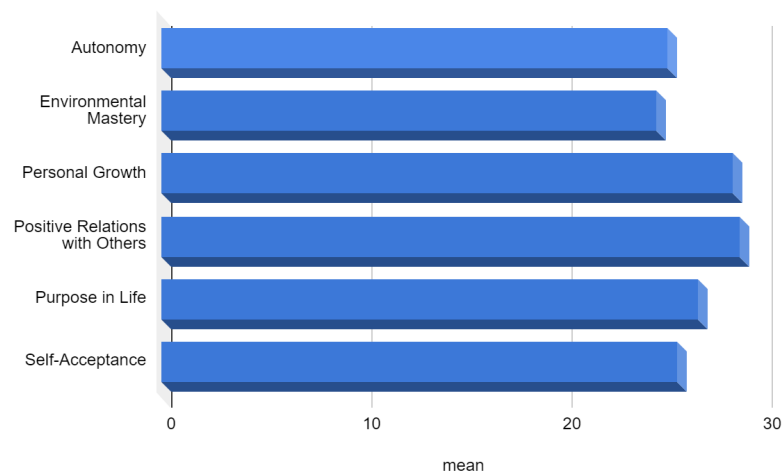


Figure 1. Illustration of Respondent's Psychological Well-being ranked based on Computed Mean

Table 2: Respondent's Curiosity

Sub-scales	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Verbal Interpretation
Joyous Exploration	20.5	4.43	1	Low
Deprivation Sensitivity	19.5	4.47	3	Low
Stress Tolerance	15	4.58	6	Low
Thrill Seeking	18.3	4.77	4	Low
General Social Curiosity	20.2	4.8	2	Low
Covert Social Curiosity	16.5	5.3	5	Low

Legend: Joyous Exploration: 35 or higher, Deprivation Sensitivity: 30 or higher, Stress Tolerance: 35 or higher, Social Curiosity: 25 or higher, Thrill Seeking: 35 or higher

Table 2 illustrates the respondent's curiosity. The data showed the attained Curiosity indicates that young professionals with QLC have low curiosity. The six subscales of curiosity: joyous exploration, deprivation sensitivity, stress tolerance, thrill seeking, general social curiosity and covert social curiosity are all low.

Young professionals experiencing a quarter-life crisis show a troubling trend of decreasing psychological qualities. They lack the zest for new experiences ("joyous exploration"), which Kashdan et al. (2020) argue is essential for well-being. This leads to a rise in negativity, emotional reactivity, and difficulties dealing with life's inherent uncertainties. Furthermore, their social curiosity wanes, leading to a potential disconnect from others. They also exhibit less "deprivation sensitivity," which means they feel less inclined to keep informed or active, perhaps leading to isolation. Interestingly, they are not motivated by a craving for excitement ("thrill seeking"), which implies a lack of satisfaction in life but is not always a hedonistic quest. Perhaps more troubling is their poor "covert social behavior," which suggests a difficulty to establish a feeling of community and belonging. Finally, their poor stress tolerance indicates a reliance on others and a lack of healthy coping methods for the worry, grit, and uncertainty that accompany early adulthood. This combination of decreased capabilities makes individuals prone to maladaptive consequences, emphasizing the significance of establishing psychological flexibility and resilience to traverse this difficult time.

The concept of a "poor mindset" was identified as a prevalent theme among young professionals experiencing QLC, where it is seen as a reflection of personal responses. These responses are often rooted in a negative outlook on life. Which coincides with the quantitative results showing the decrease in such qualities of young adults experiencing QLC.

A mindset of poverty is defined by a limited view of wealth and the belief that circumstances are fixed. Individuals with this mindset may hesitate to take risks or pursue opportunities due to a fear of making mistakes or facing rejection. They often focus on protecting their reputation and are concerned about external perceptions. (Saniya, 2023). Young professionals experiencing QLC had personal responses to various life situations.

Personal reactions represent a natural and emotional reply to a specific scenario. They tend to be impulsive and can be influenced by previous experiences or fears. Conversely, personal responses involve a deliberate and calculated approach. This includes analyzing the situation, considering various options, and making a well-informed choice (Noel, 2023). These personal reactions/responses have contributed to a negative perspective on life.

A negative attitude refers to a difficult or pessimistic outlook on one's surroundings. It can be directed at others or toward oneself (Psych Central, 2019). Young professionals with QLC created unrealistic expectations or attempt to change too much at once. Then, when they face

an obstacle, they overreact and may abandon their plan, reinforcing a negative attitude. They believe that any uncomfortable feeling is unjustified and a sign of weakness on their part. Consequently, they give up on themselves.

Indications of negative attitudes towards life included feelings of being lost, incomplete, and unwanted, along with regrets over past mistakes, self-criticism, fear of being left behind, comparison with others, belief in illogical assumptions, projecting misfortune onto one's life, overthinking worst-case scenarios, and assuming past events will recur in the future. The findings of the qualitative data support fully the findings of the of the quantitative data.

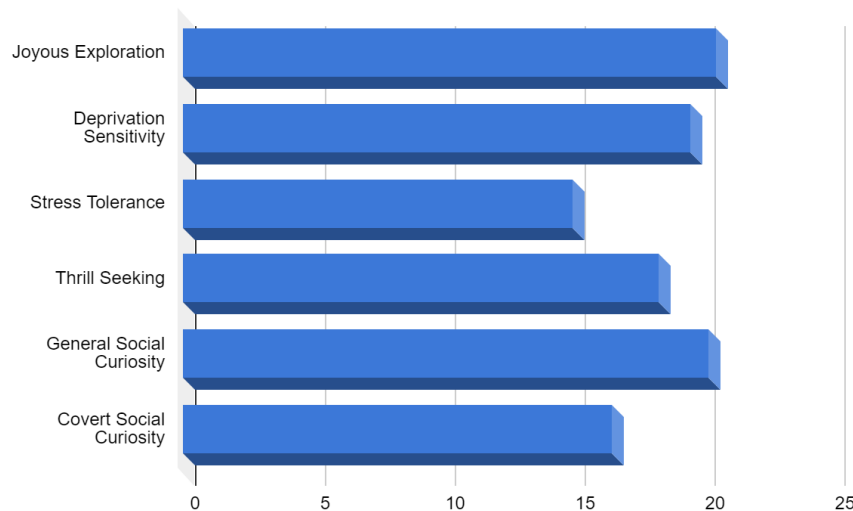


Figure 2. Illustration of Respondent's Curiosity ranked based on Computed Mean.

Table 3: Respondent's Perfectionism

Sub-Scales	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
BIG THREE				
Rigid Perfectionism	29.0692	8.54723	Low	3
Self-Critical Perfectionism	58.2704	12.33685	High	1
Narcissistic Perfectionism	46.0912	14.30761	High	2

Legend: Rigid Perfectionism: 30 or higher, Self-Critical Perfectionism: 25 or higher, Narcissistic Perfectionism: 20 or higher

Table 3 illustrates the respondent's perfectionism. The data showed the attained Perfectionism indicates that young professionals with QLC have high level of perfectionism. The self-critical perfectionism and narcissistic perfectionism are both high while rigid perfectionism is low.

Young professionals going through a quarter-life crisis (QLC) are most impacted by self-critical perfectionism (SP). Setting unrealistic standards for oneself and others (Stoeber, 2019) has been linked to depression (Smith et al., 2019), fragile mental health (Levine, 2020), and increased sensitivity to criticism (Flett et al., 2019), all of which can lead to psychiatric behaviors and psychological distress (Johann et al., 2022).

Young professionals with a quarter-life crisis (QLC) also show significant narcissistic perfectionism (NP). This means they expect perfection from others in an entitled and critical way (Smith, 2019). This unique type of perfectionism combines past ideas of criticizing others and narcissistic traits (Saklofske et al., 2016 as cited by Smith, 2019).

Young professionals experiencing a quarter-life crisis (QLC) exhibit significant self-critical perfectionism (setting unreasonable standards for themselves and others) and narcissistic perfectionism (expecting perfection from others in an entitled manner). However, they have a low level of rigorous perfectionism. This means that they may put less emphasis on themselves to be flawless but hold others to a far higher standard.

In summary, young professionals with a quarter-life crisis (QLC) and strong self-critical perfectionism are more likely to have high neuroticism (anxiety, depression). Their narcissistic perfectionism indicates lesser agreeableness (less willing to consider others' needs). Interestingly, they also have low inflexible perfectionism, which may be related to lesser conscientiousness (dependability, organization).

Based on the qualitative data, "Weak personality" was the theme emerged from the aspect of perfectionism among young professionals with QLC which is characterized as manifestation of unpleasant character. These unpleasant characters are based from an individual negative trait. Similar with the quantitative results, respondents exhibited negative attitudes and even narcissistic traits as a result of unhealthy perfectionism.

A weak personality is described as lacking strength, resilience, and assertiveness in one's character. Individuals with a weak personality may encounter difficulties in making decisions, setting boundaries, and advocating for themselves (Pradeepa, 2023). Moreover, those with a weak personality often experience inner insecurity and doubt, particularly regarding their self-esteem. They tend to have a negative mindset and struggle with maintaining a positive self-worth (Believe in Mind, 2023). This condition can be influenced by various factors, including possessing an unpleasant character.

Unpleasant characters are nearly identical to character flaws like shyness, lack of confidence, self-criticism, or arrogance. These unpleasant qualities prevent a person from achieving their goals and realizing their full potential in social relationships or the workplace (Psych Central, 2022).

The personality of an individual comprises both negative and positive qualities, which are essential components. As per the American Psychological Association (APA), personality is characterized by a consistent combination of distinct personal characteristics and inclinations that organize and influence an individual's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. It is typical for people to possess a complex array of negative character traits. Some of person negative personality traits are revealed in social relationships, while others prevent us from developing our personalities or achieving our career goals. Negative character traits reflect undesirable aspects of a person's personality or behavior.

The young professional with QLC exhibited negative traits that revealed unpleasant characteristics. These sub-categories were validated by the participants' candid responses during the interview and elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

Young professionals who experience QLC often find themselves dissatisfied, envious, and consumed by the need to set unattainable standards. They frequently feel let down, insecure, and tend to blame themselves for any shortcomings. They have an intense fear of making mistakes and are quick to give up after facing failure. This mindset leads them to become chronic complainers, constantly afraid of being blamed by others. They have a pessimistic outlook and tend to overthink, which can result in fatigue and exhaustion. Additionally, they

exhibit an ungrateful attitude, possess a perfectionistic mindset, and constantly compare themselves to others. They fear being left behind and becoming frustrated and may even find solace in the misfortune of others. Taking risks and the possibility of undesirable outcomes are also sources of fear for them, as they are preoccupied with setting unrealistic standards.

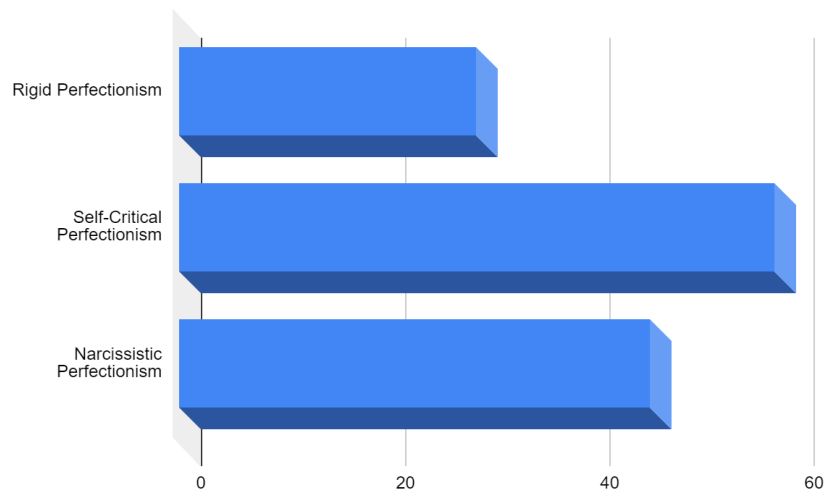


Figure 3. Illustration of Respondent's Perfectionism ranked based on Computed Mean

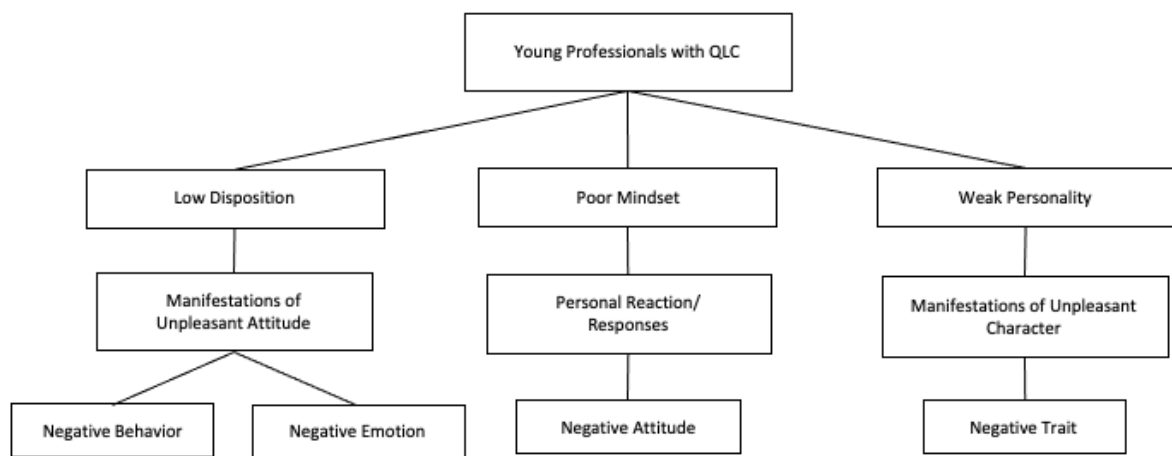


Figure 4. Framework for Psychological Wellbeing, Curiosity and Perfectionism among Young Professionals with QLC

4. Conclusion

While the study initially included 550 respondents, only 318 qualified, with the majority reporting a moderate level of quarter-life crisis (QLC). Interestingly, the statistics indicate that gender and relationship status may have an impact. Females and single people tended to be more abundant in the research, which might indicate a higher sensitivity to QLC in these populations. Furthermore, ordinary employees in private organizations made up a sizable proportion of the participants, indicating that this work environment may be more prone to triggering QLC. Socioeconomic status appears to be a role, with most participants describing themselves as "low income but not poor." Surprisingly, all individuals possessed bachelor's

degrees, suggesting that educational achievement may not directly prevent QLC. These findings provide useful beginning points for future study, but a bigger sample size and deeper dives into the causes of these tendencies are required for a fuller knowledge of QLC among young professionals.

This study discovered a disturbing tendency among young professionals going through a quarter-life crisis (QLC). Their psychological well-being and curiosity were much lower than the average. Interestingly, the study discovered significant levels of self-criticism and narcissistic perfectionism in this group. This shows that young professionals experiencing QLC may be grappling with setting unreasonable expectations for themselves and others (self-critical) and demanding perfection from others (narcissistic). The qualitative data supported the quantitative findings, stressing the link between QLC and these specific features of perfectionism. Future study might investigate potential interventions to assist young professionals build better mindsets and strategies for navigating the obstacles of early adulthood.

The study emphasizes the need for tailored interventions to assist young professionals experiencing a quarter-life crisis (QLC). In response, the research suggests implementing an "Existential Positive Psychology Wellness Plan" as a feasible option. This strategy draws on a variety of therapeutic techniques, including existential psychology, logotherapy, positive psychology, and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). By combining these strategies, the program hopes to address the highlighted challenges: high QLC levels, low psychological well-being, and excessive/negative perfectionism. The approach incorporates modified therapeutic activities from many sources, resulting in a complete program meant to assist young professionals in navigating the complexity of early adulthood and developing resilience in the face of QLC.

For future researchers who will venture on the same study, a bigger sample size will provide rich source of data and insights which in return, give more validity and reliability of the sample and its results. Variety of the sample must also be considered to represent demographic groups included. While for corporate companies, they may propose additional leaves for employees which may be called mental health leaves to further help their respective employees for their soul searching.

Acknowledgment

The researchers would like to extend their deepest and sincerest gratitude to the persons who have helped them in many ways to bring this research to completion. To their family and friends who inspired, encouraged and fully supported them despite every trial he encountered and for giving them all kinds of support they could give, financial, moral, emotional and spiritual support. To the respondents for their trust and willingness to participate in this study. And, most of all, to Almighty God, through His Divine Providence, provided them enough knowledge, strength, and guidance throughout this research journey.

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