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Christian Religious Education and Strengthening Christian Character in Facing the Quarter-Life Crisis Phenomenon among Church Youth

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ABSTRACT

The quarter-life crisis phenomenon is becoming an increasingly real challenge for young people in early adulthood, including in church settings. It is characterized by anxiety, identity confusion, uncertainty about the future, and pressures related to education, work, relationships, and life's calling. Although various studies have examined the quarter-life crisis from a psychological perspective, studies reconstructing the role of Christian Religious Education (PAK) as a model for developing Christian character responsive to this crisis are still limited. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of the quarter-life crisis among church youth and formulate a conceptual framework for contextual-transformative PAK as a strategy for strengthening Christian character. The study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method through critical analysis of books, reputable journal articles, and relevant theological literature. The results of the study indicate that PAK functions not only as a means of transferring faith knowledge but also as a model for forming an integrative spiritual identity through internalizing the values of faith, hope, love, perseverance, integrity, and self-control. The novelty of this study lies in the reconstruction of PAK that integrates pedagogical, theological, and character-building dimensions as a preventive and transformative approach to helping church youth build spiritual resilience and face the quarter-life crisis holistically.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of the quarter-life crisis has become an issue that is receiving increasing attention in the fields of psychology, education, and religion because it is closely related to individual development in early adulthood. The term "quarter-life crisis" refers to a crisis experienced by individuals aged approximately 18–30 as they face various life demands related to education, work, social relationships, identity formation, and future planning (Ayqina Mafazania et al., 2024). At this stage, individuals are in a transitional period from adolescence to adulthood and must make various important decisions that determine the course of their lives. The inability to cope with these demands often leads to confusion, anxiety, feelings of helplessness, a loss of purpose in life, and even an identity crisis (Rosyiddin & Afandi, 2023). Amid the evolution of modern society, this phenomenon has become increasingly complex due to the influence of advances in digital technology, rapid social change, and high expectations regarding the achievements of the younger generation.

A quarter-life crisis is part of a developmental crisis that arises when individuals strive to establish a solid sense of self and achieve independence in various aspects of life. During this phase, individuals begin to question their life's purpose, the meaning of their existence, their career choices, the quality of their relationships with others, and even their core beliefs (Sakai et al., 2023). Many young people feel left behind compared to their peers, whom they perceive as more successful in their education, careers, and family lives. The influence of social media further amplifies this pressure, as individuals are constantly exposed to the achievements of others, which are often portrayed in an

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idealized light. As a result, they experience self-dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and excessive anxiety about the future (Nendissa, 2025). This shows that quarter-life crisis is not just an emotional issue, but is also related to the process of identity formation and the search for the meaning of life.

The quarter-life crisis is a phenomenon commonly experienced by young Christians. Although they come from religious backgrounds and are active in church activities, they still face the same challenges as other young people, such as academic pressure, job uncertainty, relationship issues, and various life problems that affect their psychological and spiritual well-being. The crisis they are experiencing not only affects their mental health, but also impacts the quality of their faith and their relationship with God (Hamilton, 2019). When expectations do not align with the reality they face, some young people begin to doubt God's presence in their lives, lose their motivation to worship, drift away from the church community, and even experience spiritual decline. This situation demonstrates that the quarter-life crisis has far-reaching effects because it touches on both psychological and spiritual dimensions.

As the next generation of the church and the nation, young people in the church require serious attention in addressing this phenomenon. Early adulthood is a crucial period for character development, defining life goals, and making decisions that will shape their future (Adok, 2026). Therefore, an approach is needed that not only helps them cope with psychological stress but also strengthens their spiritual foundation as the basis of their lives. In this context, Christian Religious Education (PAK) plays a strategic role because it serves not only as a means of imparting religious knowledge but also as a process of character development and life transformation based on biblical values (Rakim et al., 2025). Through PAK, students are guided to come to know God properly, experience growth in their faith, and apply Christian values in their daily lives so that they can face life's various challenges, including a quarter-life crisis.

Essentially, PAK is oriented toward shaping individuals to become more like Christ. This process of formation encompasses not only intellectual aspects but also touches on the affective and behavioral dimensions. Through ongoing education, individuals are guided to understand their identity as God's precious creations, to have a clear purpose in life, and to be called to live in accordance with His will (Tonapa et al., 2025a). This understanding is crucial for young people who are experiencing an identity crisis due to the pressures of modern life. When a person realizes that their self-worth is not determined by academic achievement, social status, or material success, but rather by their relationship with God, they will have a more solid foundation for facing life's uncertainties. Thus, PAK plays a vital role in building a healthy and strong spiritual identity.

In addition to shaping spiritual identity, PAK contributes to strengthening Christian character. Christian character refers to qualities of life that reflect the values of the Kingdom of God and the example of Jesus Christ. These character traits include faith, hope, love, integrity, patience, self-control, perseverance, and humility. These values are highly relevant in helping young adults face the various challenges that arise during the quarter-life crisis. Strong faith enables a person to view life's difficulties as part of a process of growth permitted by God. Hope helps individuals remain optimistic in the face of failure and uncertainty, while perseverance and self-control help them make wise decisions and endure life's pressures (Sari, 2020). Therefore,

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Page 1486-1501
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strengthening Christian character through Christian Religious Education is a critical need in the church's youth ministry today.

On the other hand, the changing times present various new challenges that influence the character development of the younger generation. A culture of instant gratification, rising individualism, intense competition, and the dominance of digital media often push young people to measure success by worldly standards. As a result, many young people experience anxiety when they feel unable to meet these demands. In such a situation, it is not enough for the church to focus solely on liturgical activities and doctrinal teaching; it must also develop an educational approach that is contextual and relevant to the needs of the younger generation (Prasetiono & Fayola, 2021). PAK must serve as a means of guidance capable of addressing the real struggles of young people, including issues of self-identity, the meaning of life, mental health, and spiritual resilience.

The authors reviewed previous research by Otniel et al., which states that PAK serves as a means of fostering spirituality, strengthening faith, and providing hope for individuals experiencing psychological stress due to academic, work, or social pressures (Adua & Pakpahan, 2024). Robby & Ivana found that identity crisis, anxiety about the future, and emotional instability among people aged 20–30 can be minimized through identity formation in Christ, spiritual practices, and inner resilience rooted in faith (Makal & Sikape, 2025). Eklis et al. discuss how Jesus' teaching on the prohibition against worrying provides a theological foundation for individuals who experience anxiety about the future (Sakai et al., 2023). The three previous studies indicate that research on the quarter-life crisis in a Christian context is still dominated by psychological, pastoral, and practical spiritual approaches. No study has yet been found that specifically links the phenomenon of the quarter-life crisis to young people in the church. Therefore, the novelty offered by this paper lies in Christian religious education and the strengthening of Christian character in addressing the phenomenon of the quarter-life crisis among young church members. Thus, this study has the potential to make a new contribution to the field of Christian Religious Education (PAK), particularly regarding the issue of spiritual identity formation among adults facing a quarter-life crisis.

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that the quarter-life crisis is a real challenge faced by many young people in the church today. This crisis not only affects them psychologically but also impacts their spiritual lives and the quality of their faith. In addressing this situation, Christian Religious Education plays a vital role as a means of shaping spiritual identity and strengthening Christian character. Through an educational process focused on life transformation, young people can be guided to understand their identity in Christ, develop character grounded in biblical values, and build spiritual resilience that enables them to face life's various challenges. Therefore, it is important to conduct a study on the role of PAK in strengthening Christian character to address the phenomenon of the quarter-life crisis among young people in the church, in order to develop a mentoring model that is relevant, contextual, and tailored to the needs of the younger Christian generation amid the dynamics of modern life. This study aims to analyze the role of Christian Religious Education in strengthening Christian character as a foundation for church youth in facing the *quarter-life crisis* phenomenon.

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RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method because it is capable of exploring the subjective meanings, life experiences, and religious values that underlie the responses of church youth in facing a quarter-life crisis. This method focuses on a deep understanding of social and religious phenomena that are complex, cannot be measured quantitatively, and are closely related to the process of individual character formation (Sugiyono, 2016). With this approach, researchers can gain a more complete understanding of the dynamics experienced by young people during the transition to adulthood.

The approach used was library research, which involves collecting and reviewing various written sources such as books on Christian religious education, scholarly articles on the quarter-life crisis, church documents, and previous research on Christian character development. The research process involved identifying keywords, searching for sources in academic databases and church libraries, selecting sources based on their relevance and credibility, and systematically recording bibliographic data (Mestika Zed, 2008). The literature was selected based on four criteria: articles and scholarly books published in the last ten years, discussing Christian Religious Education, Christian character formation, or the quarter-life crisis, originating from reputable sources, and having conceptual relevance to the research focus. In the content analysis stage, the research used a theological framework based on Christian anthropology, discipleship spirituality, and the formation of Christ's character, while the pedagogical framework refers to the principles of Christian Religious Education (PAK) which emphasizes faith transformation, reflective learning, and the integration of biblical values in strengthening the character of church youth. This approach allows researchers to examine theological concepts such as hope, self-control, and the example of Christ, as well as their relationship to the various challenges faced by young adults aged 20–30, such as anxiety, identity confusion, and social pressure.

To ensure reproducibility, this qualitative library research employs a systematic, multi-stage search strategy. First, a structured Boolean query combining keywords such as ("Christian religious education" OR "faith formation") AND ("quarter-life crisis" OR "emerging adulthood") AND ("character" OR "resilience") was executed. Second, database selection was purposively limited to three high-credibility sources: Scopus and Web of Science for peer-reviewed empirical articles, and ATLA Religion Database for theological and ecclesial literature, covering publications from 2010–2026 to capture contemporary relevance. Inclusion criteria prioritized journal articles and book chapters, excluding dissertations and non-academic blogs. Third, methodological and data triangulation was applied: methodological triangulation involved comparing findings across quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies, while data triangulation cross-verified insights from theological texts, pastoral case studies, and empirical surveys (Creswell, 2017). All searches were documented with date, database, keywords, and filter settings. This transparent protocol permits external audit and replication, thereby strengthening the study's trustworthiness and academic rigor.

The data obtained were analyzed using content analysis through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. During the data reduction stage, information from various sources was filtered and grouped according to the research focus on the role of PAK in building character resilience. Next, the data is presented in a narrative-thematic manner, for example, through themes such as

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Page 1486-1501
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strengthening one's identity as a child of God to overcome feelings of worthlessness, and spiritual discipline as a means of managing stress. The final stage involves drawing conclusions through reflective theological and pedagogical interpretations. This analysis is inductive because it generates new insights from the synthesis of Christian teachings, such as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23, with the psychosocial challenges that arise during a quarter-life crisis. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation and verification of original quotations, resulting in a comprehensive picture of the role of Christian Religious Education in shaping resilient Christian character as a preparation for facing life's uncertainties (Sarosa, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Concept of Quarter-Life Crisis

A quarter-life crisis is a developmental crisis typically experienced by young adults, generally between the ages of 18 and 30. This condition arises when a person faces various demands to become more independent and responsible. In developmental psychology, a quarter-life crisis is understood as a state of emotional instability that occurs due to a discrepancy between expectations about the future and the realities of daily life (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). This situation is often characterized by confusion, anxiety, fear of failure, low self-confidence, and uncertainty about one's life direction—whether in the areas of education, work, social relationships, or life goals in general.

The quarter-life crisis is closely linked to the process of psychosocial development in early adulthood. At this stage, individuals strive to form a more mature identity after emerging from adolescence. Although they are considered adults in terms of age, many individuals are still in the process of finding a stable role and place in society. The transition from a situation of dependence on others to a more independent life often causes significant stress, especially when important decisions that affect one's future must be made (Krismawati, 2018). This stress is compounded by demands from family, competition in the workplace, evolving societal standards of success, and the influence of social media, which often portrays an idealized image of life.

A quarter-life crisis is not a mental disorder, but rather a normal part of human development. However, if an individual is unable to manage it effectively, this condition can lead to various negative consequences, such as prolonged stress, increased anxiety, a loss of motivation to grow, and even a spiritual crisis. During this phase, people often begin to question the meaning of life, the purpose of their existence, and the values that have long guided their lives (Arnett, 2014). Therefore, a quarter-life crisis not only affects psychological aspects but also relates to an individual's existential and spiritual dimensions.

Among young people in the church, the quarter-life crisis often involves more complex dynamics because they face not only the challenges of daily life but also struggles related to their faith. Questions about God's will, their life's calling, and a future in line with Christian teachings are part of the process they go through. Many young people feel confused when the reality of their lives differs from their spiritual expectations. These circumstances can lead to disappointment, self-doubt, and even struggles in maintaining one's faith (Ayqina Mafazania et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the quarter-life crisis can be viewed as an important transitional period because, through

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Page 1486-1501
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this process, individuals have the opportunity to grow psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually toward a more well-rounded maturity.

The Essence of Christian Religious Education

Christian Religious Education (PAK) is an educational process grounded in the Bible and focused on Jesus Christ as the source of truth and the primary role model for the lives of believers. PAK is not merely understood as the transmission of knowledge about Christian teachings, but also as a process of faith formation that brings students closer to God (Marsaulina, 2025). Through PAK, individuals are guided to understand God's will, recognize their identity as both God's creation and children of God, and apply the values of the Kingdom of God in their daily lives (Homrighausen, 2005). Therefore, PAK has a spiritual dimension that emphasizes life transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit, so that the truths learned are not only understood intellectually but also experienced and manifested in concrete actions.

As a planned and ongoing learning process, PAK aims to develop students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills based on Christian values. PAK focuses not only on increasing knowledge but also on shaping character, attitudes, and behavior that reflect the example of Christ. This educational process takes place in various settings, such as the family, the church, and formal educational institutions, thereby exerting a comprehensive influence on an individual's development (Hidayat et al., 2023). Thus, PAK serves as an important means of shaping individuals of integrity who are spiritually mature and capable of facing life's various challenges wisely and responsibly.

The primary goal of PAK is to guide students toward spiritual maturity and a transformation of life in accordance with God's will. This spiritual maturity is evident not only in a growing understanding of Christian doctrine, but also in changes in values, attitudes, and behavior that increasingly reflect the character of Christ (Manga' et al., 2024). In facing various life challenges, including the quarter-life crisis phenomenon often experienced by young people, Christian Education plays a role in strengthening spiritual identity, providing a clear direction in life, and fostering hope based on God's promises (Hahuly, 2022). Through Christ-centered education, young people are encouraged to recognize that their self-worth and purpose in life are determined by God's calling, not by the world's established standards of success.

PAK fulfills complementary educational, formative, and transformational functions. The educational function focuses on imparting a correct understanding of the Christian faith, while the formative function emphasizes character development and the cultivation of lifestyle habits consistent with biblical teachings. Meanwhile, the transformational function aims to bring about a comprehensive change in mindset, attitude, and behavior so that individuals may become witnesses for Christ in society (Mau et al., 2022). Therefore, Christian Education not only supports one's spiritual growth but also plays a crucial role in building the mental, moral, and social resilience needed to face various life crises in early adulthood. In this context, Christian Education serves as a strategic foundation for developing strong Christian character, enabling church youth to face the quarter-life crisis with faith, hope, and a constructive attitude.

Christian Character

Christian character is a crucial element in the life of a believer because it relates to moral, spiritual, and behavioral qualities formed based on the example of Jesus Christ

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Page 1486-1501
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and the teachings of the Bible. From a Christian perspective, character is not simply understood as a collection of good qualities a person possesses, but rather as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit, who continually transforms an individual's life. Christian character reflects the unity between faith, understanding God's Word, and applying it in daily life in accordance with God's will (Simanjuntak et al., 2025). Therefore, character development is a continuous process that involves spiritual growth, life experiences, and active participation in the fellowship of believers.

Christian character development is rooted in God's call for every believer to become more like Christ. The Apostle Paul explains that the goal of spiritual growth is to attain spiritual maturity that reflects the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). This likeness is realized through the renewal of the mind and ongoing life transformation. In Romans 12:2, Paul advises believers not to follow the world's lifestyle, but to experience transformation through the renewal of their minds, enabling them to understand and carry out God's good, pleasing, and perfect will (Hasugian, 2023). Thus, Christian character is tangible evidence of a life renewed by God's grace, glorifying Him in every aspect of life.

One of the fundamental foundations of Christian character can be found in the teaching about the fruit of the Spirit, as found in Galatians 5:22–23. The fruit of the Spirit describes the qualities of life that emerge as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in believers: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These values demonstrate that Christian character is not only related to one's relationship with God but is also reflected in harmonious and constructive relationships with others (Widiyaningtyas & Duha, 2023). The presence of the fruit of the Spirit is both a sign of spiritual growth and a strong foundation for a person as they face life's various challenges.

In the lives of church youth facing a quarter-life crisis, Christian character plays a crucial role. Faith provides assurance that God remains sovereign over the future, despite the uncertainties of the situation. Hope in Christ helps individuals view every difficulty as part of a divinely purposeful self-formation process. Love fosters healthy relationships with God and others, while integrity guides decision-making amidst various social pressures. Furthermore, perseverance helps youth endure life's failures and challenges, while self-control enables them to manage emotions, anxiety, and psychological stress more wisely (Tonapa et al., 2025b). Thus, Christian character not only shapes the identity of believers but also serves as a source of spiritual strength in navigating the complex dynamics of early adulthood.

Discussion

The Dynamics of Quarter-Life Crisis in Church Youth

The quarter-life crisis is a type of developmental crisis that is increasingly common among young church members in early adulthood, particularly those aged 18–30. At this stage, individuals face various life changes and demands related to education, work, social relationships, family, and future planning (Mawey & Ondang, 2024). For church youth, these conditions not only impact their psychological and social aspects but also their spiritual lives. The resulting struggles often create tension between hopes built on faith values and the realities of life that don't always align with their desires (Nendissa, 2022). As a result, many youth experience confusion, anxiety, and

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Page 1486-1501
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uncertainty, which impacts their spiritual well-being and participation in church services.

The first dynamic of the quarter-life crisis is the struggle with identity and the search for one's calling in life. In early adulthood, individuals strive to understand their true selves and determine the life goals they wish to achieve. Young people in the church often face a dilemma between following a calling they believe comes from God and meeting the social and economic demands of their surroundings (Mawey & Ondang, 2024). When the expectations of family, church, and society do not align with personal desires, inner conflict can arise and trigger identity confusion. In such situations, some young people begin to doubt their abilities, self-worth, and even the meaning of their long-held calling. This struggle is further exacerbated by the culture of social comparison that often occurs through social media.

The second dynamic—uncertainty about the future and one's career—is also a major factor exacerbating the quarter-life crisis among young people in the church. Increasingly fierce competition in the job market, high unemployment rates, and rapidly changing economic conditions have left many young people feeling anxious about their future. Their hopes of securing a decent and stable job often do not match reality after they finish their education (Adua & Pakpahan, 2024). This situation can lead to feelings of failure, low self-esteem, and dissatisfaction with personal accomplishments. For young people actively serving in the church, pressure also arises from balancing ministry responsibilities with the demands of a professional career. When life goals and expectations are not met, their motivation and optimism can decline.

The third dynamic, struggles in interpersonal relationships and marriage is also an important part of the quarter-life crisis. In early adulthood, there is significant social pressure to form serious relationships that lead to marriage. Young people in the church often face the challenge of choosing a life partner who aligns with Christian values while also meeting the expectations of their family and social circle. Relationship uncertainty, experiences of relationship failure, and concerns about long-term commitment can be significant sources of stress (Adnan & Bhakti, 2025). Furthermore, the habit of comparing oneself to peers who are married or considered more successful in life often leads to feelings of being left behind, insecurity, and reduced self-confidence.

The fourth dynamic, quarter-life crisis, can also trigger a crisis of meaning in life and spirituality. When faced with failure, rejection, or prolonged uncertainty, young people often begin to question the purpose of life, God's will, and the meaning of their suffering. In the lives of young church members, this condition can be seen in a decline in enthusiasm for worship, prayer, Bible reading, and involvement in church activities. Some even experience doubts about their faith because they feel their prayers have not been answered or their hopes have not been realized (Adellia & Varadhila, 2023). Nevertheless, a spiritual crisis does not always have negative consequences. In many cases, such experiences actually serve as a means of reflection that helps young people develop a more mature and personal faith. Therefore, the quarter-life crisis should be understood as a phenomenon that encompasses identity, career, relationships, and spirituality in a comprehensive way, thus requiring holistic support through faith communities and PAK that are relevant to their developmental needs.

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PAK's Contribution in Facing Quarter-Life Crisis in Church Youth

Dentity Formation in Christ

One of the factors that triggers a quarter-life crisis is the identity confusion that individuals often experience as they enter early adulthood and must face a variety of complex life choices (Andrian, 2024). In such situations, PAK plays a vital role in helping young people in the church build a strong identity rooted in Christ. Through biblically grounded faith education, young people are guided to realize that their self-worth and existence depend not on academic achievement, employment, or social recognition, but on God's love and calling. This awareness helps them develop a positive self-concept, enabling them to face life's various pressures without losing their sense of direction and purpose.

Developing a Mindset Based on God's Word

Quarter-life crises are often accompanied by the emergence of various negative thought patterns, such as anxiety about the future, fear of failure, and the habit of comparing oneself to others. In this regard, Christian Religious Education (PAK) serves as a means of renewing one's mindset, helping young people understand life through the perspective of God's Word (Liud et al., 2024). Through biblical teachings relevant to the realities of life, young people are encouraged to recognize that every process they experience is part of God's plan and presence. This shift in mindset enables them to view challenges as opportunities for growth, both spiritually and personally. Thus, PAK helps reduce unhealthy thought patterns and encourages the development of a more positive and constructive perspective.

Instilling the Value of Christian Hope

Hope is a crucial element of the Christian faith and is highly relevant in facing the quarter-life crisis. Uncertainty regarding education, employment, relationships, and the future often leaves young people feeling anxious or even hopeless (Pelmelay, 2023). Through Christian Religious Education (PAK), young people are guided to cultivate hope grounded in faith in God's sovereignty and faithfulness. This hope is not merely a psychological expression of optimism but also a conviction that God continues to work in every stage of human life. With a strong foundation of hope, young people can face uncertainty with greater calm and confidence, while continuing to grow in their faith.

Strengthening Mental and Spiritual Resilience

Mental and spiritual resilience are essential for coping with the various pressures of the quarter-life crisis. Religious Education contributes to this by fostering character development based on Christian values, such as patience, perseverance, self-control, and faith in God. These values help young people remain steadfast in the face of adversity without losing emotional or spiritual balance. Furthermore, various spiritual practices such as prayer, Bible reading, self-reflection, and fellowship with fellow believers serve as sources of strength that strengthen their resilience (Rotua et al., 2025). Therefore, Religious Education not only enriches religious understanding but also plays a role in improving the mental and spiritual health of young people.

Mentoring through Faith Communities

Another important contribution of Christian Religious Education is the formation of faith communities that support the growth and mentoring of youth. During the quarter-life crisis, many individuals experience feelings of loneliness, isolation, or lack of

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Page 1486-1501
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support from their surroundings. Through learning activities, discipleship, small groups, and youth ministry, Christian Religious Education provides a safe space for them to share experiences, struggles, and hopes with fellow believers (Adellia & Varadhila, 2023). The presence of a healthy faith community provides much-needed emotional, social, and spiritual support during difficult times. Furthermore, guidance from spiritual mentors and interaction with fellow believers helps youth gain wiser insights into life decisions, thus fostering continued spiritual growth.

Christian Character Values as a Response to the Quarter-Life Crisis

Faith as the Foundation of Trust in God

Faith is the primary foundation for Christian character formation, providing strength for young people when facing the uncertainties of the quarter-life crisis. During this phase, many individuals experience confusion about their future, life goals, career choices, and relationships with others (Basuki, 2014). Through Christian Religious Education (PAK), young people are guided to understand that their lives are under the sovereign care and protection of God. Faith helps them see every challenge not as a threat to be feared, but as part of a process permitted by God to shape spiritual maturity. Thus, faith serves as a source of resilience that helps young people remain steadfast in the face of emotional and psychological stress.

Hope as Strength in the Face of Uncertainty

Christian hope provides direction and confidence for the future amidst uncertain situations. Unlike optimism, which relies on human abilities or chance, Christian hope rests on God's promises and faithfulness. When young people experience educational failure, difficulty finding employment, or confusion about their life's future, they are vulnerable to despair and loss of enthusiasm (Halawa, 2021). In these circumstances, hope becomes a strength that enables them to maintain a sense of purpose and the courage to move forward. Christian Religious Education helps young people understand that every event in life has meaning in God's plan, enabling them to look to the future with a more positive and confident attitude.

Perseverance in Facing Life's Challenges

Perseverance is a Christian character trait essential for facing the challenges of the quarter-life crisis. This phase is often marked by a search for identity and efforts to achieve various life goals, which do not always go according to plan. Many young people hope for quick results, but in reality, success often requires a long process. Christian Religious Education teaches that personal and spiritual growth requires patience, discipline, and faithfulness in navigating each stage of life (Susan, 2021). By cultivating perseverance, young people do not give up easily when faced with failure or obstacles, but are able to use each experience as a learning tool that shapes their character and enhances their ability to adapt to change.

Integrity in Decision-Making

During the quarter-life crisis, young people are often faced with important decisions related to education, careers, relationships, and ministry. These stressful situations can lead individuals to neglect moral values in order to achieve certain advantages or gain social recognition. Therefore, integrity is a crucial Christian character. Integrity encourages a person to remain faithful to the principles of truth and the values they believe in, despite facing various challenges and temptations (Stevanus, 2018). Through

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Christian Religious Education (PAK), young people are formed to understand that every decision must be based on biblical values and responsibility before God. With strong integrity, they can make decisions wisely and consistently with their identity as followers of Christ.

Self-Control Against Social Pressure

Technological advances and the increasing use of social media have created various forms of social pressure on the younger generation. Many young people tend to compare their lives to the achievements of others displayed in the digital world, leading to low self-confidence, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy. This condition often exacerbates the experience of a quarter-life crisis. Self-control, as part of Christian character, helps individuals manage their thoughts, emotions, and actions more healthily (Tonapa et al., 2025a). The Christian Religious Education emphasizes the importance of building an identity based on God-given love and values, rather than on worldly standards of success. With good self-control, young people can avoid impulsive actions, maintain mental health, and develop gratitude in every aspect of life.

Love and Caring in Community

Love and caring are Christian values that play a crucial role in helping young people navigate quarter-life crisis. One common impact of this phase is feelings of loneliness and isolation due to various life struggles that others find difficult to understand. In such situations, a church community grounded in Christ's love can be a safe place to share experiences, receive emotional support, and receive spiritual guidance. Christian Religious Education emphasizes not only the relationship between man and God but also the importance of building healthy relationships with others. The presence of a loving community helps young people realize that they do not have to face their struggles alone (Budiardjo, 2024). Therefore, love and caring are crucial factors in building spiritual resilience and strengthening young people's ability to navigate quarter-life crisis more effectively and grow in their faith.

A Model for Strengthening Christian Character Among Church Youth

A Formative Approach

The formative approach is a Christian character development strategy that emphasizes the process of instilling values, attitudes, and ways of thinking based on the teachings of God's Word through Christian Religious Education (PAK). In facing the quarter-life crisis, this approach is highly relevant because many young people experience confusion about their identity, unclear future direction, and doubts about their life's purpose. Through PAK, young people are guided to develop a life perspective that aligns with the values of the Kingdom of God so that their identity does not depend on academic achievement, career, social status, or recognition from their surroundings. Contextual Bible study helps them realize that true identity is found in a relationship with Christ. Furthermore, the formative approach encourages young people to develop reflective skills regarding various life issues so they are able to make the right decisions based on the principles of the Christian faith. Thus, the process of character formation does not only focus on the aspect of knowledge, but also touches on the dimensions of attitudes and behaviors reflected in everyday life.

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Page 1486-1501
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Relational Approach

The relational approach emphasizes the importance of building healthy and meaningful relationships as part of the process of Christian character formation. Quarter-life crisis often leaves young people feeling alone, disoriented, and struggling to cope with the pressures of life. Therefore, the existence of a supportive faith community plays a crucial role in helping them navigate these difficult times. Through mentoring, discipleship, and spiritual guidance, young people have the opportunity to share experiences, express struggles, and receive both emotional and spiritual support. The relationships established within the church community create an atmosphere conducive to faith growth and character formation. Furthermore, relationships with mentors or spiritual guides allow for the transmission of values, life experiences, and wisdom that are useful in facing the challenges of adulthood. Thus, the relational approach emphasizes that Christian character formation requires community involvement that provides love, acceptance, and a living example consistent with the teachings of Christ.

Transformational Approach

The transformational approach focuses on comprehensive change in young people's lives, encompassing spiritual, moral, social, and behavioral aspects. This approach views Christian character as the result of an ongoing process of renewal through the work of the Holy Spirit and the individual's active participation in church life. In the context of a quarter-life crisis, young people need not only a theological understanding of life's struggles and uncertainties, but also a space to put their faith into action. Involvement in church services, social activities, and community empowerment programs can help young people discover meaning in life beyond mere personal interests. Through these activities, they learn to develop responsibility, empathy, concern for others, and an awareness of their calling as followers of Christ. Therefore, the transformational approach helps young people view crises as opportunities for growth and character development, positively impacting themselves and their social environment.

Reflective Approach

The reflective approach is a character-building model that emphasizes the importance of young people's ability to critically and spiritually evaluate themselves based on their life experiences. Quarter-life crisis often raises fundamental questions about self-identity, life purpose, and relationship with God. In these circumstances, spiritual reflection is an effective tool to help young people understand their life experiences from a Christian perspective. Through activities such as Bible meditation, spiritual journaling, pastoral counseling, personal prayer, and reflective discussions, young people are encouraged to recognize God's presence and presence amidst the various struggles they face. This approach also helps them increase self-awareness, manage emotions, overcome anxiety, and face uncertainty in a more positive manner. Furthermore, spiritual reflection enables young people to recognize and develop Christian values in their lives. Thus, the reflective approach serves not only as a means of emotional recovery but also as a process of spiritual maturity that strengthens faith, hope, and Christian character in the face of quarter-life crisis.

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Page 1486-1501
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CONCLUSION

The quarter-life crisis phenomenon is a developmental issue frequently experienced by young church members during early adulthood. This crisis is not only characterized by anxiety, confusion in finding one's identity, and uncertainty about the future, but also relates to the individual's social and spiritual aspects. The various demands that arise during the transition to adulthood, such as determining career direction, building interpersonal relationships, achieving economic independence, and finding life's purpose, often become a source of stress that impacts young people's emotional health and spiritual well-being. In these situations, Christian Religious Education plays a crucial role as a means of fostering and strengthening Christian character, helping individuals face life's challenges more wisely.

Practically, these findings call for a paradigm shift in CRE from a mere transfer of doctrine to a space for existential mentoring. Churches and parents need to design curricula that address the real questions young people have regarding work, relationships, and the meaning of life. Theologically, QLC is no longer viewed as a failure of faith but as part of a biblical narrative of character formation (akin to the testing of faith in James 1:2–4). Youth are thus equipped to become agents of peace amidst a culture of instant gratification and perfectionism.

This study is limited by its geographical scope and the homogeneity of its participants, who represent only specific urban churches. Furthermore, the qualitative approach employed does not statistically measure the correlation between the duration of CRE and the level of character resilience, thereby limiting generalizability. External factors such as family support and social media influence have not yet been examined in depth. Christian Religious Education (CRE) must shift from doctrinal transfer to holistic discipleship that equips youth with biblical identity, emotional resilience, and vocational clarity to navigate quarter-life anxiety. Practically, churches should integrate small-group mentoring, narrative therapy-based Bible studies, and peer-support networks that normalize struggle while fostering hope. Educators need to design interactive curricula addressing real-life dilemmas career choices, relationships, and purposeusing case studies and testimony sharing. Regular pastoral check-ins and collaboration with professional counselors are essential. CRE's goal is not merely information but transformation: forming young Christians who practice lament, embrace community, and steward their gifts amid uncertainty, turning crisis into mature faith formation.

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