

The Psycho-social matrix of midlife crisis: An Indian perspective

Anoop Kumar* K V and Dr. T. Sasidharan**
University of Calicut

Abstract

Commonly midlife crisis is assumed to be a crisis that may be experienced in the middle-age involving frustration, panic and feeling of meaninglessness, at times, resulting in radical and even destructive changes in lifestyle. An explorative case study research was undertaken to understand the dynamics of midlife crises in the Indian context. The objectives were; to conduct detailed case studies on midlife crisis and to conceptualize the underlying psychological factors into a compact set of a discernable framework, by searching for underlying common themes. The cases were selected on the basis of certain predetermined criteria indicative of the existence of midlife crisis. A sample of 10 cases were selected, both males and females, between the age group 30 to 60 years. Methodology of case study was used for the research; aided with qualitative techniques for data collection. The individual case histories and life histories were subjected to qualitative thematic analysis to extract personal meanings and individual themes. Finally a set of themes were identified, that formed a common thread or matrix, across all the different cases studied. Certain pre-conditions emerged from the analyses that appear to be the basic obligatory conditions necessary for the emergence of midlife crisis in the Indian context. The research study concludes that though many aspects of midlife crisis in the Indian context overlap with its counterparts observed anywhere else in the world, certain unique themes clearly differentiate it from the rest, like; initial submission to parental authority, indirect presentation of the issues and tendency to scapegoat one's own child.

Keywords: *midlife, midlife-crisis, thematic analysis, explorative case study*

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Anoop Kumar KV, Anugrah, 38/627, West hill Post, Kozhikode, Pin-673005(Kerala), India.

Email: kannanambili@gmail.com

*Anupkumar K.V., Ph.D. Scholar, Dept. of Psychology, University of Calicut

**Dr.T.Sasidharan, Reader, Dept. of Psychology, University of Calicut.