



## ***Existential Crisis in Modern Man's Life through the Lens of Franz Kafka's "Metamorphosis"***

**Md Jashim Uddin**

*Associate Professor, Department of English and Modern Languages, IUBAT—International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology, Bangladesh*

*Email: [jashim.uddin@iubat.edu](mailto:jashim.uddin@iubat.edu)*

**Abstract:** *Existential crisis is a common phenomenon in modern life, arising from a sense of meaninglessness and disconnection from oneself, others, and the world. It is a state of being that can result from a variety of factors, including the rapid pace of technological change, globalization and societal pressures. In this paper, we explore the nature and causes of existential crisis in modern life, its impact on individuals and society, and strategies for coping with and overcoming it. We draw on a range of philosophical, psychological, and sociological perspectives to provide a nuanced understanding of this complex phenomenon. Ultimately, we argue that while existential crisis is a challenging and often painful experience, it can also be an opportunity for growth, self-discovery, and transformation. Through a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of existential crisis, individuals and society can work to cultivate greater meaning, purpose, and connection in modern life.*

**Keywords:** *Existential crisis, transformation, modern life, meaninglessness, disconnection, technological change, globalization and societal pressures, self-discovery.*

### **I. Introduction**

Existential crisis in today's world refers to a profound period of self-reflection that may arise from significant life events or manifest spontaneously. It involves questioning fundamental beliefs and values and



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grappling with profound questions about existence, such as the purpose of life, the nature of reality, and the inevitability of death. This crisis often leads to feelings of emptiness, disillusionment, and disconnection from the world, making it difficult for individuals to find direction or meaning. Concurrently, it can also foster personal growth and self-discovery as individuals explore new perspectives and gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. The swift paces of social and technological changes, globalization, and increasing complexity have made existential crisis a prevalent topic in modern life. Despite its initial negative impact, it can inspire self-reflection and personal development, promoting empathy and stronger connections with others. Existential philosophy and therapy provide a helpful framework to address existential concerns and the pursuit of meaning and purpose, assisting individuals in coping with the challenges of contemporary existence. Moreover, existential crises may have broader implications for society, contributing to the development of more compassionate, inclusive, and sustainable communities.

An existential crisis, characterized by profound self-reflection and introspection, can be triggered by significant life events or manifest spontaneously (Riordan & King, 2018). During this period, individuals grapple with fundamental questions about existence, such as the purpose of life, the nature of reality, and the inevitability of mortality, leading to feelings of uncertainty and existential angst (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). This emotional turmoil may elicit strong feelings of anxiety, despair, and nihilism as individuals confront the harsh realities of life and question their beliefs, potentially experiencing a sense of meaninglessness and disconnection from the world (Yalom, 1980). However, the crisis also presents an opportunity for personal growth and self-discovery, enabling individuals to explore new perspectives and reconsider their values, ultimately gaining a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world (Batthyany & Russo-Netzer, 2014). Two illustrative examples, John's existential crisis triggered by personal setbacks and Sarah's struggle with nihilism after the loss

of a close friend, demonstrate the transformative potential of such crises (Telles-Correia et al., 2020). Moreover, existential crises can foster empathy and connection as individuals confront the complexities of human existence, promoting a sense of community and understanding (Deurzen & Adams, 2011). Addressing existential concerns, existential philosophy, and therapy offer valuable frameworks to cope with such challenges, helping individuals find meaning and purpose in life and develop resilience (Schneider et al., 2016). In conclusion, existential crises, despite their initial distress, can be transformative and hold broader implications for personal development and societal well-being.

The prevalence of existential crises in modern life underscores the need for deeper self-reflection and consideration of life's profound questions. While these crises may initially lead to feelings of despair and disconnection, they also hold the potential for personal growth and a deeper sense of purpose. Existential philosophy and therapy can aid individuals in navigating these challenges and promote empathy and understanding within society. By acknowledging and addressing existential concerns, individuals and communities can foster more compassionate, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

## **2. Key Focus of the Study**

This study aims to investigate the profound existential themes and concepts presented in Franz Kafka's iconic novella, "Metamorphosis," and their relevance to Kafka's own philosophical outlook. The research will delve into various aspects, including existentialism, isolation, power dynamics, dehumanization, and freedom, to unveil how Kafka's literary works offer a poignant portrayal of the human condition and his unique perspective on the world. A comprehensive comprehension of Kafka's literature and philosophical ideas will be essential to conduct a thorough analysis of the

text, revealing the underlying themes and messages woven intricately into the story. By shedding light on Kafka's literary legacy, this study seeks to elucidate how his masterful works continue to enthrall and exert a lasting influence on contemporary readers.

### **3. The Rationale for Qualitative Findings**

Historical context of research suggests that the results of the research and the findings are influenced by the opinions of the researchers and by the political as well as social situation at the time of the research. As usual, qualitative research was used to providing a detailed description and analysis of the specific programme, practice or setting (Mertens, 1997) (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative research includes the collection of a wide range of empirical materials, including case studies, introspective life stories, interviews, observational studies, historical data, visual texts, etc., that describe problematic events and the understanding of individual lives. (p. 2) (Donald (2005), a qualitative research is the umbrella term for a range of research methods that use language data (p. 137).

### **4. Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research approach to achieve its objectives. To begin with, a comprehensive review of existing literature related to Franz Kafka's novella "Metamorphosis" (1915) has been conducted, including published articles, books, web pages, and dissertations, which have been critically assessed and incorporated into the analysis. The methodological process encompasses several key steps: i) Thoroughly examining the text of "Metamorphosis" to grasp its essence; ii) Conducting an in-depth analysis of relevant research works, books, articles, reviews, and movies to unveil Kafka's philosophical reflections pertaining to modern life; iii) Carefully selecting the most pertinent sources that align with the research objectives; iv) Analyzing

and interpreting the gathered data and information to synthesize meaningful insights and themes; v) Employing qualitative methods to explore and elucidate the research questions in the context of the existential crisis in contemporary society. Ultimately, this paper aims to provide a compelling portrayal of how Kafka's profound philosophical reflections, as portrayed in "Metamorphosis," resonate with the challenges and complexities of modern human existence.

## **5. Literature Review**

The literature review on existential crisis encompasses a comprehensive examination of existing research and publications, aiming to gain a profound understanding of this subject and identify potential knowledge gaps. To initiate the review, a clear definition of existential crisis is provided, exploring its causes and drawing insights from influential existentialist thinkers like Søren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Martin Heidegger. Furthermore, a historical overview traces the evolution of this concept from its origins in the 19th century to its contemporary understanding.

Delving into the psychological perspective, the review analyzes the impact of existential crisis on human behavior and mental health, with a focus on the role of anxiety, depression, and identity formation. Additionally, it investigates how cultural and social factors contribute to the development of existential crisis, taking into account the influence of globalization, technological advancements, and shifts in societal values and norms.

In exploring coping mechanisms, the literature review delves into the significance of spirituality, religion, and psychotherapy as tools to assist individuals in navigating the challenges posed by existential crises. Furthermore, it examines the broader implications of existential crisis on society, including its potential influence on social and political movements and its role in driving societal transformations.

Identifying research gaps, the review suggests potential areas for future investigation, including the consideration of alternative research approaches such as qualitative and mixed-methods research. Throughout the review process, a systematic and rigorous approach is employed, encompassing diverse sources such as academic journals, books, and online databases, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of existential crisis and its profound impact on individuals and society at large.

In delving into Kafka's "Metamorphosis" and its profound themes, scholars have unearthed multifaceted layers that comment on the existential turbulence in modern life. Thompson (1989) offers a compelling reading, suggesting that Gregor Samsa's alarming transformation isn't merely a physical alteration. Instead, it serves as a stark representation, an exaggerated mirror reflecting the metaphysical anxieties that many individuals grapple with in the face of modernity's challenges. These sentiments find further resonance in the works of Martinez (1995), who meticulously analyzes Gregor's unsettling metamorphosis into an insect. For Martinez, this isn't a random transformation; it's a symbolic gesture, a commentary on how the modern societal machine often dehumanizes individuals, viewing them through the narrow lens of their utilitarian roles.

While Martinez and Thompson grapple with the tangible impacts of society on the individual, Blythe (2000) approaches the novella from a slightly different angle. Drawing inspiration from existential and absurdist philosophies, Blythe sees Gregor's seemingly inexplicable and random plight as a representation of life's inherent absurdity, particularly evident in the unpredictable, often disjointed trajectory of modern existence. Building upon this foundation, Green (2002) provides a poignant discourse on the burdens of responsibility that the modern individual bears. By analyzing Gregor's pre-transformation life—a life swamped by work responsibilities and familial

obligations—Green underscores the alienating effects of such pressures, suggesting that they can exacerbate, if not trigger, existential crises.

Finkel (2008), in his comparative literary approach, introduces an intriguing perspective. By juxtaposing "Metamorphosis" with age-old parables, Finkel suggests that Kafka's work isn't just a tale for its time; it's a modern parable, a cautionary tale for contemporary readers. The core message? The perils of leading a life devoid of authentic introspection and understanding, and the importance of seeking one's true self amidst the cacophony of societal expectations.

Franz Kafka's magnum opus, "Metamorphosis," delves deep into the labyrinthine corridors of human consciousness, providing a sharp critique of the existential anxieties plaguing the modern individual. This novella stands out not merely for its surreal narrative but for its poignant reflection of the human condition. Two pivotal scholars, Corngold (1972) and Karl (1974), have dedicated significant research to deconstructing the layers of this work. Their analyses predominantly revolve around the novella's protagonist, Gregor Samsa, whose startling transformation into an insect serves as more than just a captivating plot twist. They argue that this metamorphosis poignantly encapsulates the profound feelings of alienation and existential solitude that many individuals feel in the modern era. These emotions stem from the widening rift between one's personal aspirations and the demands placed upon them by society, making the character's plight all the more relatable.

The symbolic richness of the narrative extends beyond its immediate plot. Luke (1983) contends that Gregor's transformation isn't merely a tale of personal despair; it mirrors the broader human quest for purpose and meaning in a world that often seems callously indifferent to individual struggles. In this indifferent landscape, societal constructs and expectations

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take on an overpowering role. Binder (1997) contributes a sociological lens to this discourse. He maintains that Kafka's narrative underscores the adverse consequences befalling those who dare to defy or deviate from societal norms and conventions. Their alienation and consequent suffering illustrate the sacrifices demanded for non-conformity in a strictly structured society.

Taking a more introspective turn, Pawel (1984) offers insights into Kafka's own life. He suggests that "Metamorphosis" can be viewed as a semi-autobiographical work, resonating with the author's personal experiences and internal conflicts. Kafka's documented struggles with identity, belonging, and the weight of societal expectations provide a deeper context to the narrative, making it a window into the author's soul as much as it is a critique of society.

"Metamorphosis" stands as a literary beacon, casting light on the myriad existential challenges faced by individuals in the modern world. Kafka artfully intertwines personal identity struggles, societal alienation, and the oppressive weight of conventions, crafting a narrative that echoes the trials of modernity with unsettling clarity.

### **6.I. "The Existential Crisis in Modern Life: Causes and Consequences"**

In this review, the authors explore the concept of existential crisis in modern life, discussing its causes, consequences, and potential solutions. The review highlights the impact of modern life on human existence, including the disconnection from nature, the pressure of social media, and the emphasis on productivity and success, leading to a crisis of meaning and purpose, resulting in feelings of emptiness, anxiety, and depression.

The potential consequences of an existential crisis are also examined, including a loss of motivation, reduced creativity, and decreased resilience.



Addressing the underlying causes of the crisis, such as reconnecting with nature, cultivating meaningful relationships, and prioritizing personal growth, may help individuals find a sense of purpose and meaning in modern life.

The existential crisis in modern life has become a widely discussed topic in recent years, with scholars and researchers examining the causes and effects of this phenomenon. According to Kegan (1982), existential crisis refers to the sense of confusion and disorientation that arises when an individual questions the meaning and purpose of their existence. This crisis often occurs in response to significant life changes, such as the loss of a loved one, a major career change, or a health crisis.

Several studies have explored the impact of social media on the development of existential crisis in modern life. A study conducted by Twenge and Campbell (2009) found that individuals who spent more time on social media platforms reported higher levels of anxiety, depression, and existential crisis, suggesting that social media may contribute to feelings of isolation and disconnection from one's authentic self.

Additionally, research has identified a link between existential crisis and mental health. According to Solomon et al. (2009), individuals who experience existential crisis may be at greater risk for developing depression and anxiety disorders, emphasizing the importance of addressing the underlying existential concerns in effective treatment for these mental health conditions.

### **6.1.2 "Existential Crisis and Mental Health: A Systematic Review"**

This review explores the relationship between existential crisis and mental health, drawing on a range of studies across different populations and contexts. The review highlights the prevalence of existential crisis among individuals with mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The authors suggest that existential crisis may

contribute to the development and maintenance of mental health problems, as individuals struggle to find meaning and purpose in their lives. Potential interventions for addressing existential crisis in mental health treatment, such as existential therapy, mindfulness-based interventions, and spiritual practices, are also examined.

The review underscores the importance of considering existential concerns in mental health treatment and the potential benefits of addressing these concerns in promoting psychological well-being. Existential crisis in modern life has become a prominent topic in psychology, with scholars exploring its causes and consequences. According to Yalom (1980), existential crisis refers to the experience of confronting fundamental questions of human existence, triggered by major life events or transitions.

Several studies have examined the role of spirituality in helping individuals navigate existential crisis in modern life. Wong (2010) found that a sense of connection to something greater than oneself, such as a higher power or a sense of purpose can help individuals find meaning and purpose even in the face of adversity. Similarly, Park et al. (2013) reported that individuals with a strong sense of spiritual well-being were less likely to experience existential crisis.

Moreover, research has identified a link between existential crisis and creativity. Rank and Rank (1952) found that individuals experiencing existential crisis may engage in creative pursuits as a means of finding meaning and purpose in their lives. This suggests that creativity could serve as a valuable tool for those struggling to find meaning and purpose in modern life. Overall, this systematic review provides valuable insights into the complex relationship between existential crisis and mental health, shedding light on potential avenues for intervention and support.

### **6.1.3. "Existential Crisis and the Search for Transcendence in Modern Literature"**

Existential crisis is a pervasive and complex theme in modern literature, reflecting the challenges individuals face in finding meaning and purpose in an increasingly fragmented and uncertain world. This literature review aims to explore how various literary works depict existential crisis and the human search for transcendence. It delves into the role of literature in reflecting the human experience, providing insights into the human condition, and offering readers a sense of connection and meaning amidst the chaos of contemporary society.

Existential crisis, as proposed by Frankl (1959), emerges from the fundamental tension between the human quest for meaning and the inherent unpredictability of life. This tension gives rise to emotions such as anxiety, despair, and a sense of existential emptiness. It manifests in various ways, including feelings of disconnection from others, lack of motivation, and an overall sense of disillusionment.

Research by Baumeister and Leary (1995) suggests that individuals experiencing existential crisis may tend to withdraw from social interactions and relationships as a coping mechanism. This pattern of social isolation can intensify feelings of loneliness and disconnection, perpetuating the cycle of existential crisis.

Jaspers (1951) points to the modern world's loss of traditional values and the resulting sense of fragmentation and disorientation. This cultural shift exacerbates existential crisis as individuals struggle to find purpose and meaning in a world seemingly devoid of clear values and direction.

Contrary to its negative connotations, Kierkegaard (1844) proposes that confronting the existential void can serve as a catalyst for radical self-examination and personal growth. Through this transformative process, individuals may achieve a deeper sense of authenticity and purpose, leading to a positive and profound impact on their lives.

Modern literature provides a rich and diverse portrayal of existential crisis and the quest for transcendence. Authors explore the depths of human

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emotions, grappling with themes of isolation, disillusionment, and the search for ultimate meaning. Novels like "The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger and "The Stranger" by Albert Camus offer poignant examples of characters struggling with existential questions and seeking a connection beyond societal norms.

Poetry, with its expressive and evocative nature, becomes a powerful medium for delving into existential themes. Poets like T.S. Eliot and Rainer Maria Rilke use vivid imagery and introspective verse to capture the essence of human struggle and the yearning for a deeper understanding of life's mysteries.

Memoirs, too, contribute to the exploration of existential crisis. Authors like Viktor Frankl in "Man's Search for Meaning" and Cheryl Strayed in "Wild" share personal narratives of survival, resilience, and finding purpose amidst adversity, inspiring readers to seek their own paths of transcendence.

Modern literature acts as a profound mirror to the human experience, encapsulating the complexities of existential crisis and the search for transcendence. Through novels, poetry, and memoirs, authors offer readers a unique perspective on the challenges of finding meaning and purpose in a chaotic world. As literature continues to evolve, it remains a vital source of solace, connection, and inspiration for individuals navigating the complexities of the human condition and seeking to transcend existential uncertainties.

### **7. Historical Perspective**

#### **7.1. Overview of Existentialism**

The concept of existential crisis emerged from the existentialist philosophy movement of the 20th century, which emphasized individual experience and the search for meaning and authenticity in life (Frankl, 1963). Philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Martin Heidegger contributed

to this movement by highlighting the inherent anxiety and uncertainty experienced by humans and the need to confront life's ultimate questions (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). This philosophical groundwork led to the development of existential therapy, designed to help individuals address and overcome their existential concerns (Yalom, 1980).

During the postwar era, existentialism gained popularity among disenchanting youth who sought an alternative to the conformity and consumerism of mainstream society (May, 1958). The 1960s counterculture embraced existentialist ideas of personal liberation and self-discovery, making the notion of the "existential crisis" a prevalent theme in popular culture (Bugental, 1976). As modern life continues to undergo rapid social and technological changes, globalization, and environmental degradation, a sense of uncertainty and disorientation has become more prevalent, making the concept of existential crisis increasingly relevant (Krell, 2017). Moreover, the rise of mental health issues like anxiety and depression has been linked to the challenges posed by existential concerns in modern living (Längle & Kralik, 2014).

In contemporary times, scholars from various fields, including philosophy and psychology, continue to study the concept of existential crisis, recognizing its significance for individuals struggling to find purpose and meaning amidst the complexities of modernity (Levy, 2013). The exploration of existential themes remains a topic of interest and provides valuable insights into the human condition and the quest for personal fulfillment and self-discovery (Spinelli, 1989).

### **7.1.2. Contributions of Key Existential Thinkers:**

Existentialism, a philosophical movement, has greatly enriched our understanding of the human condition and the search for meaning and authenticity in life. Prominent existentialist thinkers, such as Jean-Paul Sartre,

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Martin Heidegger, and Albert Camus, have made significant contributions to this field.

Jean-Paul Sartre's contributions include the concept of "existence precedes essence," which asserts that individuals are not born with a predetermined nature but must define themselves through their choices (Sartre, 1946). He emphasized "radical freedom," highlighting the individual's responsibility for their choices and actions (Sartre, 1943). Sartre also introduced the notion of "bad faith," describing the tendency of people to deny their freedom by conforming to societal norms (Sartre, 1943).

Martin Heidegger's ideas encompass the concept of "Dasein," signifying the unique human experience of existing in the world and grappling with its fundamental questions (Heidegger, 1927). Heidegger discussed "Being-toward-death," underscoring the necessity of confronting existential questions about mortality (Heidegger, 1927). He also stressed "authenticity," advocating for individuals to take responsibility for their existence and make choices true to their individuality (Heidegger, 1927).

Albert Camus' contributions involve the concept of "the absurd," capturing the human experience of facing the meaningless and irrational aspects of existence (Camus, 1942). Camus discussed "revolt," encouraging individuals to seek meaning and purpose despite the absurdity of life (Camus, 1942). He also emphasized "solidarity," highlighting the importance of human connection and empathy in the face of the absurd (Camus, 1942).

The ideas of these existentialist thinkers have enriched our understanding of the human condition and the significance of confronting life's ultimate questions. Their insights remain relevant in navigating the complexities and uncertainties of modern life, where the search for meaning and authenticity continues to be a profound and enduring quest.

### **7.1.3. Historical Context of the Emergence of Existentialism:**

Existentialism, a philosophical and literary movement that emerged in the early to mid-20th century, responded to the historical context of its time, marked by significant social and political upheavals. World War I left European society disillusioned with traditional values and institutions, as the devastation and trauma of the war had profound effects (Smith, 2018). The interwar period witnessed economic instability, political turmoil, and the rise of totalitarian regimes, leading to a pervasive sense of anxiety and uncertainty (Flynn, 2006).

Postwar reconstruction brought about new social and political forms, but it also introduced challenges and contradictions, contributing to existentialist critiques of conformity and alienation (Husserl, 1931). Additionally, the ideological conflicts and fears of nuclear annihilation during the Cold War added to the existential dread and uncertainty (Carlin, 2014).

Amidst these historical events, existentialism grappled with the question of how to lead a meaningful and authentic life in a seemingly purposeless world. The movement emphasized individual freedom and responsibility for existence and encouraged facing life's ultimate questions on personal terms (Sartre, 1946). Existentialism's emphasis on subjectivity, authenticity, and the search for meaning has had a lasting impact on philosophy, literature, and popular culture (Kaufmann, 1975).

## **8. Causes of Existential Crisis in Modern Life**

### **8.1. Impact of Globalization:**

Globalization has emerged as a prominent cause of existential crisis in modern life. Defined as the increasing interconnectedness of economies, societies, and cultures through technological advancements (Scholte, 2005), globalization, despite its advantages, can engender existential concerns through several mechanisms.

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Firstly, globalization can erode cultural identity as traditional customs and practices are supplanted by a homogenized consumer culture (Appadurai, 1996). This displacement can leave individuals feeling disoriented and disconnected, fostering a sense of loss of identity and belonging.

Secondly, economic insecurity can arise from globalization's impact on the job market, as companies outsource labor to cheaper markets, and workers face global competition (Friedman, 2005). This uncertainty about employment prospects can trigger anxiety and contribute to existential crises.

Thirdly, globalization's relentless pursuit of economic growth and consumption can lead to environmental degradation (Steger, 2003). The depletion of resources and degradation of ecosystems may evoke feelings of despair and hopelessness about the future.

Lastly, urbanization and technological advancements, integral to globalization, can alienate individuals from nature (Giddens, 1990). The diminishing contact with natural environments may generate feelings of disconnection and disorientation, accentuating existential concerns.

To tackle these issues, policymakers must adopt a comprehensive and balanced approach to economic, social, and environmental policies (Beck, 2000). By emphasizing the significance of human connection and meaning in contemporary life, societies can mitigate the adverse effects of globalization and foster a more gratifying and sustainable future.

### **8.1.2. The Rise of Individualism:**

The rise of individualism has emerged as a significant factor contributing to existential crisis in modern life. Individualism places a high value on personal needs and desires over communal connections and social bonds, resulting in feelings of isolation and loneliness (Putnam, 2000). This disconnection from



others can trigger existential concerns and a sense of alienation, as individuals feel detached from a broader sense of purpose and belonging.

Moreover, the emphasis on personal achievement and success in individualistic societies can create a lack of meaning and purpose in life (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). As individuals prioritize their own advancement over deeper pursuits, they may experience a sense of emptiness and disillusionment, ultimately contributing to existential crisis.

Individualism can also lead to a fragmentation of identity, as individuals prioritize different aspects of themselves without cultivating a cohesive sense of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This internal conflict can lead to confusion and disorientation, as individuals struggle to reconcile their various identities and find a unified sense of purpose and direction.

Furthermore, the self-centered focus of individualism can amplify the fear of mortality (Greenberg et al., 1986). As individuals prioritize their own survival and well-being over broader concerns about the human condition, they may confront feelings of anxiety and despair when confronted with the inevitability of death.

To address these existential concerns, it is essential to reevaluate the societal emphasis on individualism and promote a renewed focus on social connection, community, and collective meaning-making (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). By fostering a more holistic understanding of human existence and its relationship to the wider world, individuals can cultivate a sense of purpose and belonging that extends beyond their own self-interests.

### **8.1.3. The Technological Advances:**

In modern life, technological advances have been recognized as a contributing factor to existential crisis. Technology's prevalence has led to a sense of detachment from reality as people increasingly engage in virtual spaces and

online communities (Turkle, 2011). This detachment can evoke existential concerns, inducing feelings of alienation and disorientation. Moreover, technology's role in dehumanizing interactions, making them more mediated and impersonal, can lead to a loss of meaning and a sense of emptiness (Sherry Turkle, 2015). Additionally, technology can overwhelm individuals with overstimulation and information overload, resulting in anxiety and mental fragmentation (Rosen, 2012). The constant stream of information becomes challenging to process, contributing to existential crisis. Furthermore, technology's potential threats to privacy and autonomy, with personal information becoming susceptible to surveillance and manipulation, can foster feelings of vulnerability and a lack of control (Floridi, 2014). Addressing these issues necessitates a thoughtful and ethical approach to technological development, emphasizing the significance of human connection and meaningful experiences (Bardzell & Bardzell, 2011).

#### **8.1.4. Economic Factors:**

Economic factors, such as job insecurity and income inequality, have also emerged as causes of existential crisis in modern life. Job insecurity generates anxiety and uncertainty about the future, leading to feelings of despair and hopelessness that can trigger existential concerns (Ertel & Nargis, 2018). Income inequality contributes to perceptions of injustice and unfairness, engendering disillusionment and cynicism, which can further fuel existential crisis (Davies et al., 2018). Moreover, economic pressures may propel consumerism and materialism, causing individuals to prioritize material possessions and status symbols over more meaningful pursuits, resulting in a sense of emptiness and a lack of purpose (Kasser, 2002). Inadequate access to essential resources, such as healthcare, education, and housing, can foster a sense of powerlessness and vulnerability, exacerbating existential crisis (Clark et al., 2019). To address these concerns, promoting a fair and equitable

economic system and emphasizing the value of human connections and meaningful endeavors are vital (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Overall, technological advances and economic factors can both contribute to existential crisis by fostering feelings of detachment, anxiety, unfairness, and a lack of purpose. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes human connections, meaningful experiences, and equitable economic practices.

## **9. Effects of Existential Crisis in Modern Life**

### **9.1. Mental Health Issues:**

Existential crisis is a profound and introspective period marked by questioning one's fundamental beliefs and values, triggered by significant life events or arising spontaneously (Riordan & King, 2018). It engenders uncertainty and anxiety as individuals confront ultimate questions about existence, including the purpose of life, the nature of reality, and mortality's inevitability (Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

Modern life's prevalence of existential crises can be attributed to the fast-paced, technologically-driven world, leading to feelings of disconnection, isolation, and alienation. Individualism, globalization, and technological advancement have contributed to this sense of fragmentation, resulting in heightened levels of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, powerlessness, and vulnerability.

The causes of existential crises are multifaceted, encompassing social, cultural, economic changes, and personal life events. Individualism's rise has led to prioritizing personal achievement over social connection, resulting in a lack of meaning and purpose. Globalization can lead to loss of cultural identity, economic insecurity, environmental degradation, and disconnection from

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nature. Technological advancement may induce disconnection from reality, dehumanization, overstimulation, and concerns about privacy and autonomy.

Despite its negative aspects, existential crisis can foster personal growth and self-discovery, encouraging individuals to explore new perspectives and develop a more authentic sense of identity. By addressing the root causes proactively, individuals can find purpose and meaning in their lives, even amid modern challenges.

Philosophy and therapy offer frameworks to address existential concerns and navigate modern life's challenges. Mindfulness and meditation practices, building meaningful relationships and community, and reconnecting with nature are potential coping mechanisms for existential crises. Adopting a more reflective and values-based approach to life is crucial, necessitating a thoughtful and ethical stance on technology's development and use, while emphasizing human connection and meaning-making in response to economic, social, and environmental challenges.

In conclusion, existential crisis is a complex issue requiring a comprehensive understanding of its contributing factors. Acknowledging the root causes and taking proactive steps to address them can lead to finding purpose and meaning in life, even amidst modern challenges. Embracing a reflective and values-oriented approach has broader social and cultural implications, fostering more compassionate, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

### **9.1.2. Social Consequences:**

Existential crises deeply shape an individual's spiritual and religious convictions, instigating a reconsideration of firmly held beliefs and driving the exploration of novel spiritual or philosophical standpoints. Such crises primarily stir individuals to reassess their prevailing spiritual or religious tenets, especially when they no longer furnish comfort or significance. It can

result in disillusionment with their religious affiliations, pushing them towards different viewpoints that align with their transformed perspectives. Amidst this crisis, the pursuit for profound meaning in life intensifies, with many delving into religious or spiritual realms to mitigate feelings of doubt and unease. This journey could lead to the adoption of unfamiliar spiritual practices or traditions. While some find their faith rejuvenated, feeling a deeper connection and appreciation for their spiritual roots, others might be inclined to critically evaluate and subsequently renounce their earlier religious beliefs, finding their religious circles insufficient in delivering the necessary support. In essence, existential crises can monumentally influence one's spiritual and religious ethos, encompassing skepticism, pursuit of significance, rekindled faith, or even renunciation of religious beliefs. During such transformative periods, maintaining an open-minded quest for significance and drawing on the wisdom of credible spiritual or religious mentors is paramount (Yalom & Elkins, 2016).

### **9.1.3. Political Implications:**

An existential crisis is a state of emotional distress and confusion that emerges when an individual's sense of purpose and meaning in life is challenged or jeopardized (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). In the context of modern life, various factors can trigger such crises, including social isolation, economic insecurity, and political upheaval.

Populism, as a political ideology, capitalizes on the feelings of disenchantment and disillusionment that often arise during an existential crisis to gain support (Hawkins et al., 2012). Populists appeal to the interests and aspirations of ordinary people, presenting simplistic solutions to complex problems. By blaming immigrants or minority groups for economic or social issues, they offer emotionally appealing answers that resonate with individuals grappling with uncertainty.

Extremism, a more radical form of populism, takes advantage of the fear and instability experienced during an existential crisis to recruit vulnerable individuals to their cause (Krueger, 2017). Extremists provide a sense of purpose and meaning that may be lacking in an individual's life, along with a community that shares their values. This appeal can lead to individuals embracing extremist ideologies and resorting to violence or coercion to impose their beliefs.

Both populism and extremism have serious consequences for democracy and social stability. Populists may undermine democratic institutions by bypassing established political processes and directly appealing to the people (Hawkins et al., 2012). This can erode the rule of law and weaken the foundations of democratic governance. Extremists, on the other hand, may engage in acts of violence or terrorism, posing a significant threat to the safety and security of individuals and communities (Krueger, 2017).

Addressing the political implications of an existential crisis requires tackling its underlying causes. This entails efforts to reduce economic inequality, provide support and resources for those facing social isolation and distress, and promote social cohesion and inclusion (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008). By addressing these root causes, we can mitigate the risk of political extremism and work towards building a more resilient and inclusive society. Understanding the relationship between existential crises, political ideologies, and social implications is crucial in crafting effective solutions to the challenges posed by these crises.

## **10. Coping with Existential Crisis**

### **10.1. Psychotherapeutic Approaches:**

Existential crises can be emotionally taxing, giving rise to feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and despair. However, individuals facing such challenges can find

solace and direction through psychotherapeutic approaches like existential therapy and logotherapy.

Existential therapy is a therapeutic modality that centers on exploring existential themes such as death, freedom, and meaning. It emphasizes an individual's capacity to create their own meaning in life and take responsibility for their choices and actions. The therapist in this approach guides the individual in exploring their values, beliefs, and goals, supporting them in cultivating a sense of purpose and direction.

Logotherapy, developed by Viktor Frankl, also constitutes a form of psychotherapy that prioritizes the pursuit of meaning in life as a fundamental motivating force. It emphasizes the significance of finding meaning even in times of suffering and encourages individuals to view their struggles as opportunities for growth and self-discovery. In logotherapy, the therapist assists the individual in identifying their unique purpose and values, fostering a proactive approach towards achieving these goals.

The effectiveness of both existential therapy and logotherapy in aiding individuals to cope with existential crises has been well-documented (Batthyany & Guttmann, 2020). These therapeutic methods offer a safe and supportive environment for individuals to explore their inner thoughts and emotions, leading to a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Through these therapeutic approaches, individuals can learn to navigate uncertainty and find a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives, even amidst adversities.

In addition to psychotherapeutic approaches, alternative coping strategies for existential crises may include engaging in creative outlets such as art or writing, incorporating mindfulness or meditation practices, and seeking support from friends and family. It is essential to recognize that each individual's journey is unique, and finding the most suitable approach may require time and exploration (Henderson & Thompson, 2011).

### **10.1.2.Philosophical and Spiritual Frameworks:**

In addition to psychotherapeutic approaches, incorporating philosophical and spiritual frameworks can offer valuable tools for individuals coping with existential crises. Mindfulness and Buddhism are two examples of such frameworks that can be particularly helpful in this regard.

Mindfulness is a practice focused on being fully present and engaged in the current moment without judgment. By cultivating mindfulness, individuals can reduce feelings of anxiety and stress, while developing a deeper sense of awareness and acceptance. Meditation, breathing exercises, and other mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques are common practices that aid individuals in coping with existential crises (Keng et al., 2011).

Buddhism, as a spiritual tradition, places emphasis on understanding the nature of reality and fostering compassion and mindfulness. It acknowledges suffering as an intrinsic part of life and encourages individuals to cultivate inner peace and understanding as a means of coping with challenging emotions and circumstances. Central to Buddhism is the notion of non-attachment, encouraging individuals to release rigid ideas and expectations while embracing the concept of impermanence (Dalai Lama, 1998).

Apart from mindfulness and Buddhism, other spiritual and philosophical frameworks such as Stoicism, Taoism, and Transcendentalism can also be helpful in navigating existential crises. These frameworks prompt individuals to focus on the present moment, embrace change, and derive meaning and purpose from their experiences.

However, it is crucial to recognize that selecting the appropriate philosophical or spiritual framework can be a highly individualized process. Different individuals may find varying approaches more or less effective in coping with existential crises, and it may require time and exploration to



identify the right framework or combination of approaches that resonates with each person (Hayes-Skelton et al., 2012).

### **10.1.3.Social Interventions:**

Social interventions offer effective coping mechanisms for individuals facing existential crises. By fostering connections with others and engaging in community building and civic engagement, individuals can discover a sense of purpose and belonging, empowering them to enact positive changes in their lives and communities.

Community building involves joining groups or organizations with shared interests or values, such as sports teams, clubs, or volunteer organizations. This fosters a sense of belonging, provides social support, and offers opportunities to connect with others while acquiring new skills (Dentato, 2012).

Civic engagement entails actively participating in the political process and striving to effect constructive change in society. Activities may include voting in elections, taking part in protests or demonstrations, or advocating for social justice issues. Such involvement instills a sense of agency and empowerment, allowing individuals to contribute to meaningful social progress (Clary et al., 1998).

Additionally, social interventions encompass seeking mentorship or guidance from individuals who have experienced similar struggles or possess expertise in areas linked to existential crises. This provides invaluable perspective, guidance, and practical coping tools and resources to navigate difficult emotions and challenges.

Ultimately, overcoming an existential crisis hinges on discovering meaning and purpose in life, as well as forging meaningful connections with others. Social interventions serve as potent tools to achieve these goals, offering

individuals opportunities to connect, engage in meaningful activities, and contribute to positive social change (Kaniasty & Norris, 2008).

## II. Conclusion

In modern life, key findings reveal that existential crises can stem from various factors, including social isolation, economic insecurity, and political upheaval. The impact of these crises can be profound and far-reaching, leading to significant political implications such as the rise of populism and extremism. To navigate through existential crises and discover meaning and purpose in life, individuals can benefit from psychotherapeutic approaches like existential therapy and logotherapy. Additionally, philosophical and spiritual frameworks like mindfulness and Buddhism offer valuable tools for coping with such crises. Social interventions, such as community building and civic engagement, prove effective in helping individuals cope by providing them with a sense of purpose and belonging. Ultimately, addressing the root causes of existential crises and adopting effective coping strategies empowers individuals to navigate these challenging periods and forge a path towards a more fulfilling and meaningful life, while fostering connections with others in meaningful ways.

Existential crises are emotional states of distress and confusion that arise when an individual's sense of purpose and meaning in life is challenged by various factors prevalent in modern life, such as social isolation, economic insecurity, and political upheaval. These crises can have significant political implications, contributing to the rise of populism and extremism. Coping strategies to navigate existential crises encompass psychotherapeutic approaches like existential therapy and logotherapy, philosophical and spiritual frameworks like mindfulness and Buddhism, and social interventions such as community building and civic engagement. Ultimately, finding meaning and purpose in life and fostering meaningful connections with others are central to coping with existential crises. The implications for policy and

practice are far-reaching and involve increasing access to mental health services, addressing economic and social inequality, promoting social cohesion and inclusion, mitigating political polarization and extremism, and investing in research to inform effective interventions and promote a resilient and inclusive society. A comprehensive and multifaceted approach is necessary to address existential crises and promote mental health and well-being in the contemporary world.

Future research on existential crisis in modern life should explore various areas to enhance our understanding of this phenomenon. One crucial area is investigating the impact of social media, as it has become an omnipresent element in contemporary society, and its role in exacerbating or mitigating existential crises warrants examination. Additionally, understanding how different cultural beliefs and values influence individuals' experiences and coping strategies during existential crises can provide valuable insights. Intersectionality is another vital aspect to explore, as research should delve into how multiple identities and social categories, such as race, gender, sexuality, and class, intersect and influence the experience of existential crises. Identifying and evaluating effective coping strategies, incorporating philosophical and spiritual frameworks, social interventions, and psychotherapeutic approaches, can further enrich our knowledge. Furthermore, researching preventative measures, including early identification and intervention strategies, as well as approaches to reduce risk factors like economic insecurity and social isolation, will contribute to more comprehensive approaches to address existential crises. Ultimately, delving into these areas of research is crucial for informing effective policy and practice interventions and improving our comprehension of the intricate factors contributing to and influencing existential crises in the modern world.

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