

The Adaptation of Positive Youth Development Approach Towards Community College's Students in Malaysia

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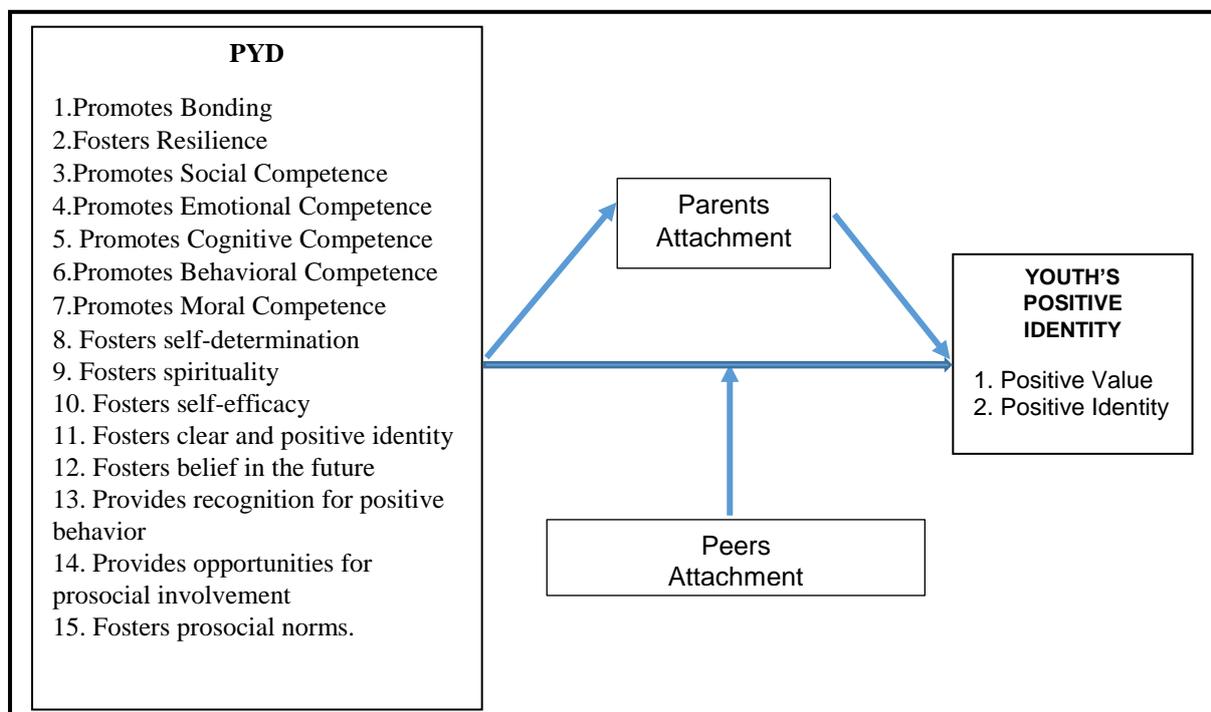
Introduction

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a contextualise approach that is pertinent elements in the development of youth. Approach that recognizes the strengths, talents, assets, positive character, the strength of positive identity and personality (Larson, 2000; Park, 2004; Benson & Scales, 2009, 2011; Lerner, 1992, 2005) possessed by youth is a source of strength (Damon, 2004) and needs to be fostered and cultivated. Rhetoric statement that youth is vulnerable to deficits behaviour such as substance abuse, delinquent and academic failure need to be dismissed, so the stakeholders do not have to deliberate and act about methods of prevention and treatment (Catalano et al., 2004) each time the problems occurred. This approach has been studied and implemented in some developed countries like the United States, Canada, China, Hong Kong (Lopez et al., 2014; Tebes et al., 2007; Barker & Forneris, 2012; Shek & Sun, 2013; Shek et al., 2012) and other countries and the implications is very impactful for the development of youth (Benson & Scales, 2009; Scales, Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2011). PYD approach is still less implemented widely in Malaysia. Youth in Malaysia as well have their own strength, ability and potential to be unleashed. Various interventions in youth development should be perceived holistically from the respective of the family, community, school, including institutions at tertiary level. This paper focuses on adaptation of PYD method towards Community College's (CC) students nationwide and to identify psychosocial factors that influence the development of the students at CC. This is because, 97% of the CC students are in the group of youths and aged between 15 to 30 years (The National Youth Policy, 2015). This determination is also in line with the government's aim to produce students who are knowledgeable, skilled and have a positive attitude, particularly among students of Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) who are the main actors of skilled human capital (Malaysian 10th & 11th Plan, 2015).

Literature Review

PYD approach which is the main approach decided in this study emphasize the development of human capital from childhood to adulthood. The development of an individual from childhood to adulthood is influenced by the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The environment includes parents, siblings, teachers, school, community and other external organizations. The more interactions occur among individuals in this environment, the more experience, enhancement and knowledge acquired by the individuals themselves. In addition, human development is also divided into eight psychosocial stages introduced by Erikson (1959, 1980, 1963, and 1968). The developmental stage of psychosocial growth happens in every level from infancy to adulthood. Environmental influences affect youth individual development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) described by Erikson where at this stage, youth are in the phase of identity vs. identity confusion. Young people who are confused with their identity, are very sensitive and are affected by negative rather than positive behaviours. More observation should be given at this stage and PYD is a comprehensive solution to ensure that youth who are in the phase of confusion is well guided and appreciated. Developmental assets of youth need to be nurtured to ensure their progress for a bright future (Benson and Scales, 2009). The assets identified include **resilience** (Catalano et al, 2004; Sanders et al., 2015; Lopez et al., 2014), **competence** (Catalano et al., 2004; Lerner 2005; King et al., 2005) and **religiosity** (Yaacob et al., 2015). In addition, psychosocial factors for the development of youth include parental and peer influence (Siti Raba'ah et al., 2013). The closest persons and peers will affect the development of youths' positive or negative behaviour.

Framework



The government's desire to produce graduates who are knowledgeable, and with positive behaviour and mind set, and to establish a civilized society (Higher Education Development Plan 2015-2025) become the main root of this study. Two of the ten rally success and value driven catalyst educated talent is through a holistic graduates, entrepreneurship and balanced and quality TVET graduates should be integrated to produce a quality community college graduates in terms of skills and moral. Therefore, students need to be equipped with high morality values, self-confidence and care and compassion toward others. This positive characteristics together with religiosity and PYD attributes further strengthen youth development. The psychosocial environment also helps to strengthen youth development.

Conclusion

Fifteen elements suggested above are responsible for developing youth with positive values and identity. Through the strength of the bonding with family and peers, youth's identity can be further developed.

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