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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPPG/v10-i1/7573>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPPG/v10-i1/7573

Received: 04 November 2023, **Revised:** 27 November 2023, **Accepted:** 14 December 2023

Published Online: 20 January 2024

In-Text Citation: (Rasheed et al., 10 C.E.)

To Cite this Article: Rasheed, I. O., Ismail, I. A., & Zulkifly, N. A. (10 C.E.). Promoting Effective Political Socialisation Strategies for Youth Leadership Development among Universiti Putra Malaysia Student Leaders. *International Journal of Academic Research in Public Policy and Governance*, 10(1), 11–31.

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Vol. 10, No. 1, 2024, Pg. 11 - 31

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Promoting Effective Political Socialisation Strategies for Youth Leadership Development among Universiti Putra Malaysia Student Leaders

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Abstract

Agencies of political socialisation facilitate transmission of political orientations, attitudes, and values to young citizens in the society. Youth are valuable assets that require proper political knowledge to maintain noble ideals and socially cherished norms across generations. This paper explored the relevance of family, educational institution, peer group and media in shaping youth leadership roles in the country. In contemporary times, these agencies work together and adopt strategies such as political learning, public sensitization, mentoring, and youth-oriented activities to get university students accustomed to leadership process of influencing group of individuals with a view to making meaningful contributions to the society. The student leaders apply orientations so acquired to conduct purposeful leadership activities on and off-campus. Data for this study was gathered from 17 informants through semi-structured qualitative interviews. The respondents are members of the Student Representative Council of the university. Findings from the study indicated that agencies of political socialisation inculcate right values in young people, stimulate effective leadership activities, promote progressive change in the community and improve quality of youth leadership development. Further research could undertake an in-depth investigation into the efficacy of political socialization strategies on leadership activities of student leaders in public universities across Selangor, Malaysia. Based on this, the paper recommends that socializing agents be structured to properly shape youth political behaviours, create enabling environment for continuous political awareness, enhance youth involvement in leadership training programmes towards fostering experiential learning among student leaders.

Keywords: Political Learning, Leadership Training, Youth Development, Community Engagement, Nation Building

Introduction

The idea of youth as the greatest resource in the society informs government action to design multiple socialisation systems in such a way to enhance youth leadership development through proper upbringing culminating in politically active, culturally compliant and socially

responsible generation of young elements. Importantly, youth is the period of transition from childhood to adulthood (Ismail, 2023; IsDB, 2019). A number of political socialisation agencies shape youth behaviour, and help them apply their ability to pursue developmental ideas and meaningfully contribute to society (Edelman et al., 2004). For instance, UPM is an educational institution structured to provide adequate training aimed at developing committed and responsible leaders for a brighter future.

Having undergone training process, student leaders demonstrate socially acceptable characters to make conditions more favourable for the community. Youth leadership development requires appropriate skills, decisive action, deep reflection and supportive environment capable of attaining radical transformation and progressive change. Creating conducive environmental conditions that offer a unique opportunity for young people strengthens community engagement and nation building. This experience would avert situations in which otherwise promising leaders have to spend valuable time in a fruitless engagement (Benitez, 2017).

Developmental experiences across the lifespan are the elements that impact an individual's capacity to lead (Liu et al., 2021). Broad experience developed from a number of political socialisation agencies enable the youth to take initiative and apply their potential by taking positive and constructive action in the development of the social system (IsDB, 2019). This explains why Benitez (2017) construed youth leadership as both internal and external capability to unleash potential for individual growth and collective development. Geldhof et al. (2021) observe that social contexts serve as a channel through which youth development is optimized. Based on this, the paper explores the extent to which both primary and secondary agencies of political socialisation stimulate youth leadership development among UPM students.

Research Questions

- i) Why are agencies of political socialisation necessary in youth development?
- ii) How does educational institution stimulate youth leadership development?
- iii) To what extent are leadership training programmes relevant to positive youth development?

Research Objectives

- i) To identify the impact of agents of political socialisation on youth leadership development
- ii) To describe how leadership programmes improve youth involvement in voluntary engagement
- iii) To discuss the extent to which leadership activities foster positive youth development

Review of Related Literature

This section discusses an appraisal of relevant works of scholars on youth political socialisation and leadership development in contemporary period with particular emphasis on their point of agreements and differences.

Youth leadership development

Leadership is generally conceptualised as a social influence process towards the achievement of shared goals (Antonakis & Day, 2018). In contemporary times, leadership is viewed from emergent process of interpersonal influence rather than formal authority. The youth are

considered as the most important group in society; hence the credibility of the “group’s leadership might indicate the future of a society” (Othman et al., 2023; p. 88). Student leaders need to be exposed to leadership process and be equipped with the skills prior to being entrusted with responsibilities “to avoid costly errors that could emanate from abysmal performance” (Kuranchie & Affum, 2021; p. 118). Youth leadership may offer the prospects of emancipation and empowerment (Bolden et al., 2023; P. 17).

From a lifespan developmental perspective, individuals are exposed to a variety of developmental experiences across their life course which serve as great opportunity for leader development (Liu et al., 2021) in adulthood. The social environment provides a neutral ground to rebuild young generation so as to uncover unique potential and deploy appropriate strategies for growth and development. The imperative of youth leadership development informed the decision of the Wisconsin University, Madison to recruit trainers from the Leading Change Network that train, guide and create a plan of action for youth (Bonell et al., 2016). The arrangement broadened leadership horizon of students and strengthen their resolve to develop capacity for effective community leadership.

Experiential learning enhances active involvement in leadership activities and builds self-confidence that spur youngsters to undertake challenging activities capable of making a positive contribution to micro and macro social systems. With supportive structures, youth have abundant potential windows of opportunities to be creators, innovators and problem solvers who can adapt to any environmental context to gain wider exposure, discharge leadership tasks, and render community service. This is connected to positive youth approach that emphasizes increasing the enabling structures that strengthens constructive relationships in the life of youth so as to improve positive results (Olenik, 2019).

Leaders are the individuals with or without formal positions of authority, who work collectively to tackle problems (Gutherie, 2021; p. 2). UPM, as an institution of higher learning, creates leadership opportunity and promotes talent discovery. Leadership development facilitates developing individual self-awareness, community relationship building (Gutherie, 2021; p. 9) on account of worldwide digital communication. Youths have become... a vocal segment that processes more information quickly due to the availability of technology (Nathen et al., 2021). Given the current realities, leadership should no longer be viewed as one-man show but a property of the system that emerges in various ways owing to different situational factors (Bolden et al., 2023; P. 11).

Youth development carries the process of preparing people to meet challenges through a dedicated, coordinated and progressive programme development that is “supported by experience to help them achieve competencies” (Nathen et al., 2021; p. 2474). Positive youth development emanated through strong relationship and bond between young leaders and leadership community of practice in the development process (Arshad & Hong, 2019; p. 1342). PYD programmes emphasize civic engagement from productive age through volunteerism and other community contributions (Arnold, 2020). The existence of mutually beneficial relations between young people and institutions of their social world would engender hopeful future characterised by positive contributions to individual and collective progress (Lerner et al., 2005).

The significance of youth development makes Arnold advocates a “robust investment in America’s youth to ensure their well-being” (Arnold, 2020; p. 4). The need to unleash youth potential calls for greater inclusion and participation in leadership process that shift the perspective from “who is leading to how leadership is accomplished” (Bolden et al., 2023). Malaysia Youth Council plays a role in strengthening the principles of voluntarism and

democracy in the youth movement (Joha et al., 2022). Expectedly, MYC should emphasize long-term planned programmes based on Malaysia Youth Policy to get young people incorporated into the process of consultation, collaboration and decision making in the society. Entrenching social norms and social comparisons in the peer context influence adolescents' adjustments (Veenstra & Laninga-Wijnen, 2023) to what is required of them as active participants in community change project.

Political Socialisation

As an interdisciplinary concept, political socialisation is a lifelong process involving the transmission of values and beliefs relating to a political system across generations. The research on political socialisation evolved in three phases namely the initial rise, the revival and recent branching (Pedraza & Perry, 2019). The initial rise comprised classic scholars that emphasized on stability of political attitudes (Schwarzer, 2011; Sears, 1990). They contended that orientations received and inculcated at infancy remained ingrained in the mind of an individual, and shaped his political perceptions in future (Kudrnac, 2015). Whatever ideas and ideals an individual might have been learnt in childhood becomes indelible in their intellectual and reasoning perceptions.

The second phase of political socialisation research emerged when scholars began to review and criticize the top-down models highlighting transmission of values in the family setting. The assumption is that exposure of adolescents to a variety of social influence has significant impact on their cognitive orientations, behavioural patterns and attitudinal dispositions (Hobbs, 2018; Niemi & Hepburn, 1995; Neundorf & Smets, 2016). As Hobbs rightly put it, youthful age is a "socially crystallized lives" of exploring different facets of human development. In these contexts, such agencies of political socialisation as educational institutions and social media provide broader knowledge to youngsters, and compensate for the defects in parental socialisation.

The third perspective of political socialisation focused on child-to-parent transmission of political culture in the household. In what McDevitt and Chaffee (2002) call "trickle-up influence", it was contended that children could be effective in the transmission of political knowledge and principles to their parents owing to the superior information regarding political developments that could be leveraged upon to inform, educate and socialised their disadvantaged parents during debates within the family. For example, young citizens from low socio-economic backgrounds and children born of immigrants have the opportunities to explore socio-political environment and acquire relevant political teachings and civic instructions that could be communicated to elderly ones whose status may preclude them from having similar chance to be abreast of contemporary development.

Relatedly, every society strives "to shape, guide and influence the next generation of leaders" (Friaes et al., 2023; p. 1055). Ismail (2023) opine that Generation Z (11-26 years) of the youth population are technology savvy. Despite having access to digital world, Gen Z lacks wisdom that only comes through experiential learning. Well-established agencies of political socialisation can only fill this vacuum provided the political leadership demonstrates readiness to improve political orientation of Gen Z and Gen Y (27-42 years) considered to have lacked what Ismail (2023) calls "heartware" in coming up with unique leadership strategy and political ideals that could add value to nation building.

As young people are made to learn certain political culture within the system, it is important that socialisation domains manage morally repugnant behaviour, and encourage positive attitudes that helps youth realize their unique abilities (Lerner et al., 2005). Kouzes & Posner

(2018) provide an interesting insight when they submit that effective leaders tend to model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, foster collaboration and strengthen others. Deriving from the above, if people are exposed to learn and practise leadership development during adolescence, allowing themselves to explore, succeed, and fail, it is an indication that leadership will become integrated into a stable and enduring sense of self (Tackett et al., 2022; p. 7).

Getting socialised in leadership activities in the academic environment affords young people the opportunities to practice and possess better understanding about leadership (Haber-Curran & Pierre, 2023; p. 81). Learning about leadership process affords rational individuals to enhance their cognitive, socio-emotional development as leaders using everyday life experiences and activities. Adequate leadership knowledge and experience is positively related to effectiveness (Day et al., 2021). However, emerging leaders should be encouraged to imbibe and exhibit effective and ethical leadership practices that portray them as committed individuals (Newstead et al., 2021). Enhancing leadership capability is integral to productivity, delivery, and improved outcomes in every facet of community setting (Bolden et al., 2023).

Methodology

Methodology involves the strategy adopted in the conduct of research inquiry. This research adopts purposive sampling technique to collect data from members of UPM Students' Representative Council-the supreme decision-making organ of students' body. UPM, as a structured academic environment facilitates students' developmental experience in terms of competencies, leadership skills and self-efficacy. It also offers a conducive setting to practise and experiment leadership at various developmental categories namely residential college level, faculty level and SRC level all of which offer diverse set of leadership experiences.

Young citizens constitute greater resource required for positive youth development and nation building process. The research participants belong to Generations Y and Z in Malaysia which make the study timely and appropriate. A series of semi-structured qualitative interviews was arranged and conducted to gain in-depth knowledge of youth political socialisation and leadership development among UPM student leaders. Being an exploratory study, students with practical leadership experience constitute the research participants for the interviews.

Typical of case study method, student leaders were assured of ethical principles of anonymity and confidentiality which gave them the opportunity to provide useful information and fresh insights into youth political orientation, youth leadership and positive development. The interview protocol was refined to accommodate fresh ideas offered by individual research participants during conversation. Besides, the situation affords the researcher to have deep understanding of youth political socialization and leadership development among UPM students. Importantly, data collected for this research was analysed using Atlas.ti 23 software to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

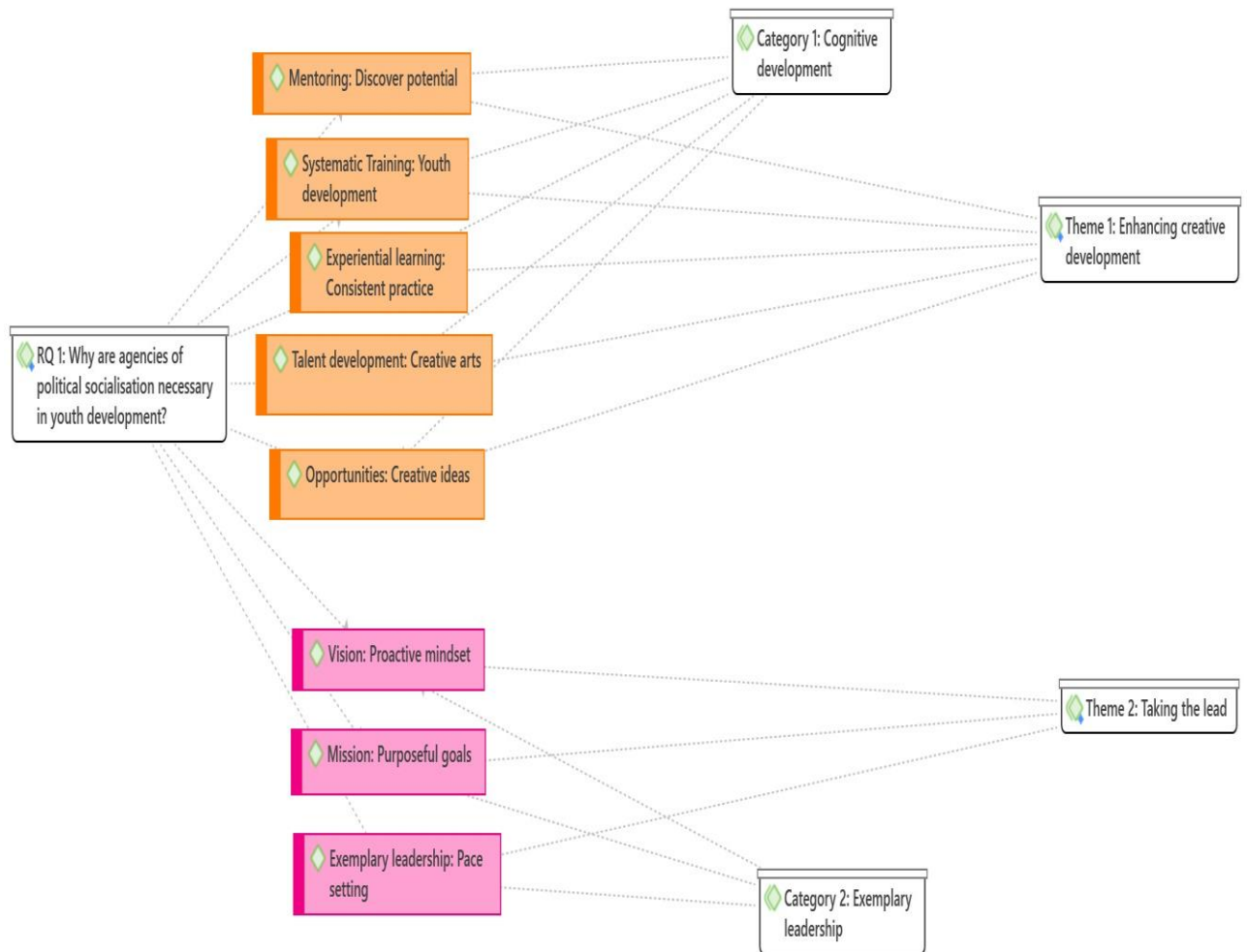
Table 1

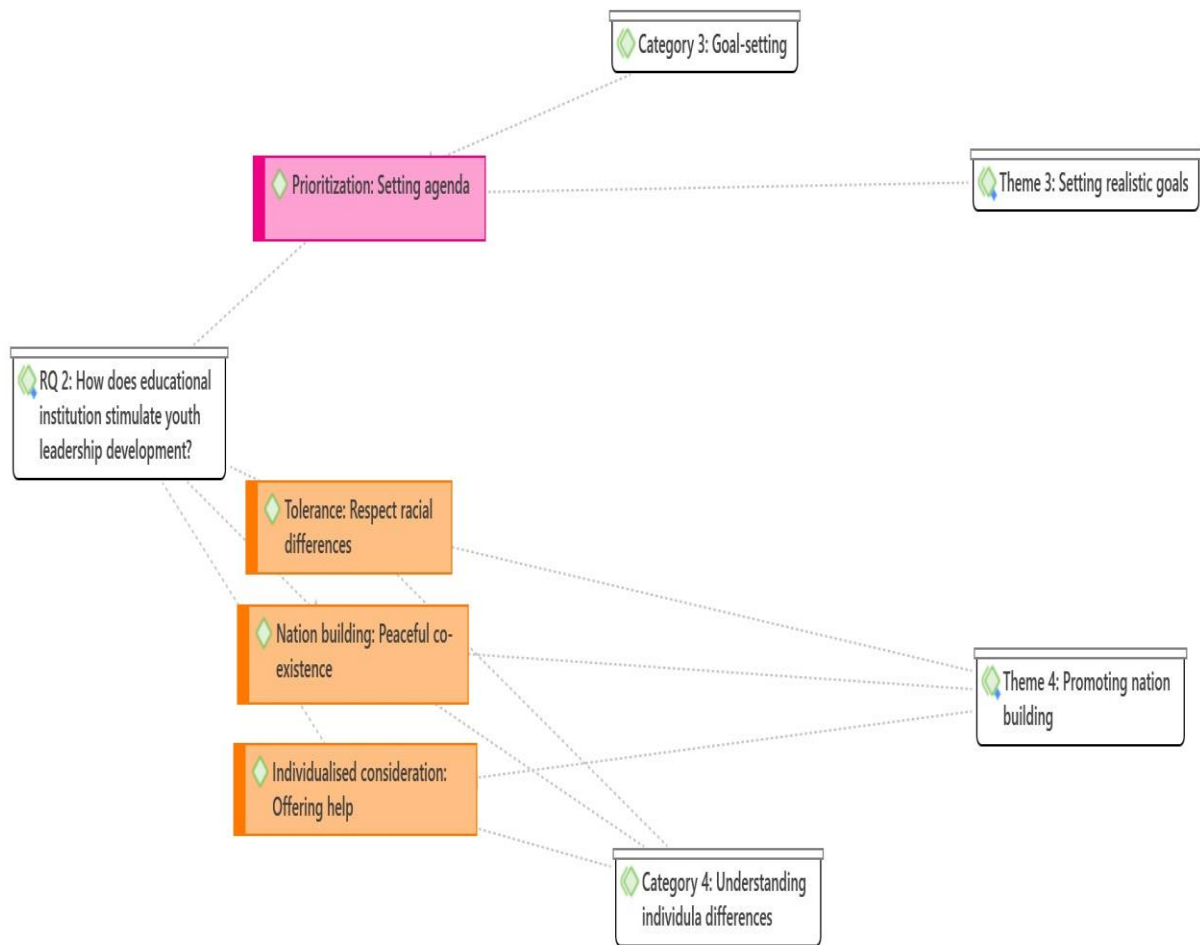
Background of informants

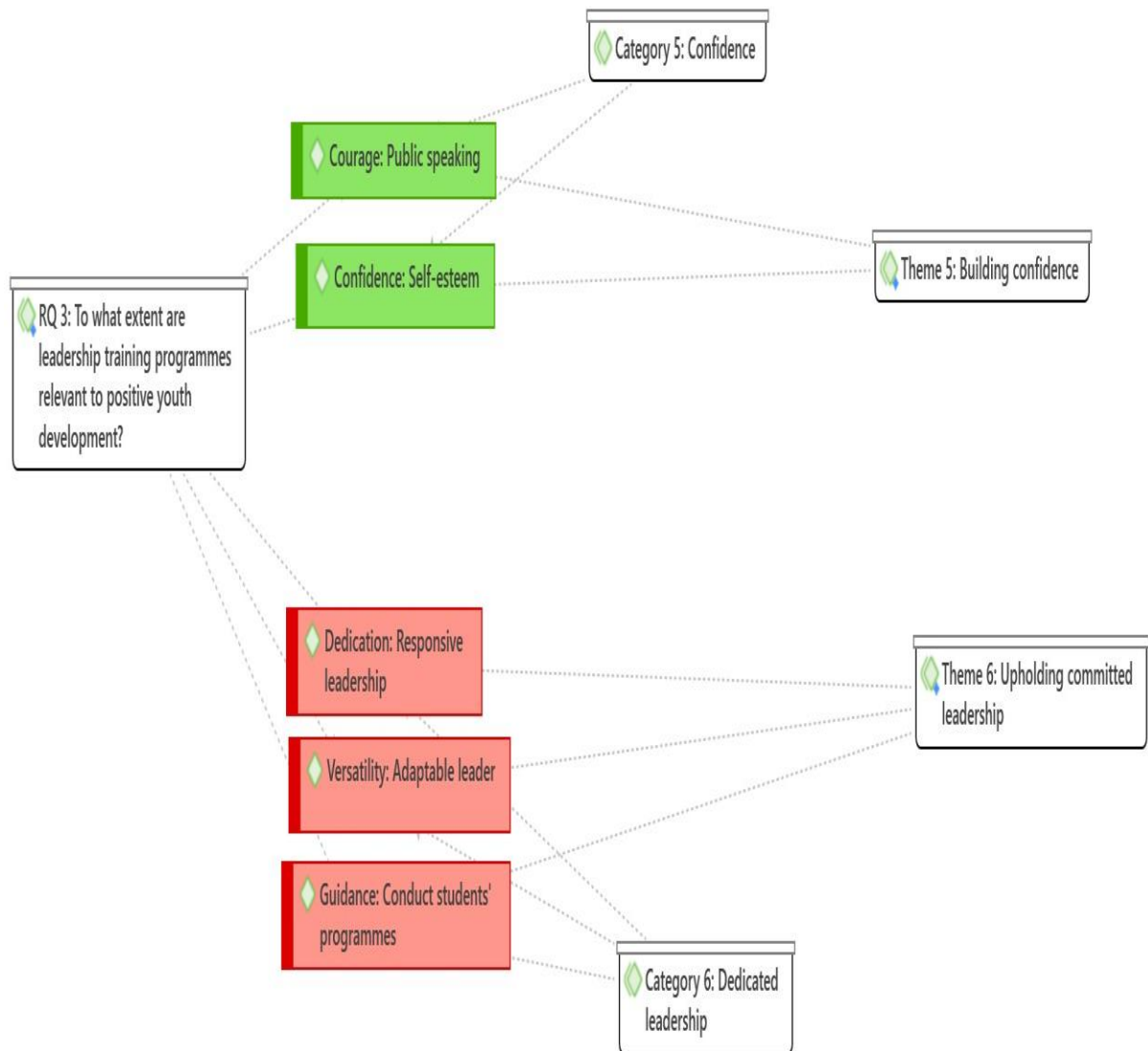
S/N	Participant's ID	Designation	Age
1	SRC #1	President	24 years
2	SRC #2	Vice-President	23 years
3	SRC #3	Secretary	24 years
4	SRC #4	Transportation	23 years
5	SRC #5	Food Quality	21 years
6	SRC #6	Publication	22 years
7	SRC #7	Organizational Coordination	23 years
8	SRC #8	Entrepreneurship	24 years
9	SRC #9	Research	23 years
10	SRC #10	Treasurer	21 years
11	SRC #11	Spirituality	24 years
12	SRC #12	Arts and Culture	22 years
13	SRC #13	Academic and Research	23 years
14	SRC #14	Welfare and Safety	22 years
15	SRC #15	Sports	23 years
16	SRC #16	Work	23 years
17	SRC #17	Graduate Studies	32 years

Discussion of Findings

This section provides explanation to data collected from the field, and their significance to the effective roles of political socialization agents in promoting youth leadership development among UPM students. Importantly, the responses are classified into themes to afford readers the opportunity to have deep understanding of the perceptions of the research participants in the course of exploratory study.







Theme #1: Enhancing creative development

As an agent of political socialisation, institutions of higher learning provide conducive atmosphere for youth leaders to learn political ideals capable of shaping their orientations and guiding future political behaviour. UPM trains young people to gradually become “competent decision makers” (Nathen et al., 2021) that strive to attain progressive change in the society. A series of youth-driven development programmes are designed to sharpen leadership competence and skills of students. A respondent confirmed this when she asserts that;

UPM enhances talent development of students. The University initiated Talent Development Programme at the Residential college to promote student involvement in leadership activities. I did not know I have talent in dancing until my course mates influenced me to get involved in dancing competition. The lecturers are part of our group because they observe how we conduct ourselves [SRC#10].

Every student is required to undergo leadership training process the moment he/she commences academic activities on campus. The idea is to enable students have practical

experience on how to lead people, principles of team work, taking initiative and decision making. A respondent provided an interesting insight thus

UPM promotes youth development process in the students. It has given us basic step, that is, start from zero, to climb up the ladder of leadership. As a new student in UPM, you start by joining the programme in the Residential college in which they will give you exposure on these programmes. After that, you are given the freedom to join activities in your faculty in which they give you platform to increase your own soft skills in terms of communication skills. You are given opportunity to occupy position in the faculty. When you already have a lot of positions which came from your experiences, then you will be able to promote yourself into the higher level which is Students' Representative Council. UPM not only celebrate students but give them a platform to shine [SRC#8].

Getting engaged from simple to complex leadership activities avail students the opportunity to understand and experiment leadership competence and skills within and outside of the university system. A combination of ideas and values imbibed from various channels enable youth to impact on the environment and produced a desired result (Gutherie et al., 2021). Some respondents expressed positive impacts of internalized youth socialization by getting involved in leadership programmes and activities. In their words:

When you join youth programme, you get contentment and motivation that can drive you to initiate change as a leader who has feelings to serve people. It sharpens the leadership skills of every student [SRC#2].

It improves my competence and shapes my participation in youth development activities. Giving youth chances to engage in creative activities enable them to know what life has to offer them [SRC#13].

In a demonstration of talent development, a respondent singlehandedly organised Music seminar as a required programmes for the semester.

I conducted a Seminar in my first year when Amir Jahari was invited from Sarawak to give talks on how knowledge is essential to becoming a musician [SRC#9].

The readiness of student leaders to conduct talent-based youth programmes is a reflection of the cognitive development designed in UPM curriculum to ensure that students undergo leadership training process in the course of academic activities.

Theme #2: Taking the lead

UPM ensures that developmental resources are invested efficiently to produce set of dynamic leaders that can consciously make a difference (Abner et al., 2021; McCarron et al., 2023) in every facet of national economy. The educational institution consistently empowers youth to take decisive action and become responsible in adding value to the social development of their community (IsDB, 2019). A respondent buttressed this view when she noted that:

UPM provides platforms for students who are interested to take the lead in any kind of voluntary programmes. I think...leaders should be charismatic. We have to show examples to others so that they can follow what a leader does [SRC#1].

The enabling environment provided by the university reinforces student leaders to model the model the way for their colleagues towards transformative change. Being engaged in student organizations, Rosch & Nelson (2018) submit, encourages student leaders to focus on group needs rather than individual desires. Faced with this kind of leadership challenge, youth feel the need to stand up for their values, and develop a sense of responsibility for developing others to become change agents. As a respondent rightly put it

As a leader, you have to think outside the box to be able to solve emerging problems. Nowadays, youth have problems of not being able to step out of their comfort zones. They don't feel the need to unleash their potential. They are not even aware of the potential and don't even care to sharpen their skills. As a student leader, if I have the voice and power to influence others, I would promote platforms for them to become aware of who they are as a person, and for them to feel free to cultivate interest in youth leadership programmes. They need to chart a new course that would benefit them in the nearest future [SRC#8].

The above expression aligns with the view that students should be exposed to “planning, strategies, programmes and implementation techniques” (Othman et al., 2023; p. 82) to enable them facilitate transformative change and steady nation building. Besides, successful leading attempt promotes cooperation, coordination and increased efforts (Bastardo & Day, 2022; 16) that could produce a set of dynamic leaders.

Flowing from the foregoing, both themes 1 and 2 provide answers to the RQ 1 relating to relevance of agencies of political socialisation in enhancing creative development and giving the adolescents the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills by setting the pace for others in the conduct of programmes and activities with a view to promoting youth development.

Theme #3: Setting Realistic Goals

Leaders are required to be proactive in planning and decision making to avoid being caught off guard when decisive actions are needed. Student leaders make choices out of available options, coordinate activities and assign followers with tasks with a view to accomplishing common goals. The relevant opinion is indicated by the respondent as stated below.

Whenever I want to make decisions on leadership programme, I need to think about my action. I don't just take random steps. As a leader, I cannot just think about the decision without consulting other stakeholders. I don't take decision abruptly [SRC#9].

This aligns with what Franco & Rodrigues (2018) call “self-efficacy” which regulates human actions and impacts on establishment and accomplishment of shared prospects through painstaking efforts. Interestingly, another respondent highlighted plan of actions required of an effective leader to assist members actualize their individual and collective objectives in academic setting.

I want to help students prioritize their academic activities, and encourage them to achieve their academic goals at the appropriate time. I set agenda for student development to be able to serve them effectively. Also, I have a big responsibility

to influence others to join civic programmes. That's why I drive my group members to be socially responsible [SRC#16].

To incorporate followers into leadership activities, youth leaders need to be liberal and open-minded. This was substantiated by Oc et al. (2023) that follower's inclusion in leadership development initiatives is essential. As leaders strive to make things work for group members, the ideas and opinions of the latter should be accorded consideration to optimize strategies to achieve set goals (IsDB, 2019). McCauley & Palus (2021) share similar view when they stressed that relational leadership encapsulates direction alignment and commitment among people with shared work. It is common to find student leaders communicating vital information and exchanging ideas with members of their respective groups through Twitter, Instagram or WhatsApp to solve youth-related problems and meet developmental needs. Todorovic et al. (2023) notes that online world provides adolescents opportunities to validate their identities, and serves as arena for fulfilling the developmental tasks by constructing their social environment. The advancement in technology facilitate sharing of ideas on agenda, objectives, goals and feedbacks between leaders and followers within short notice. Utilization of social network by a number of adolescents to promote youth-oriented issues heightened relevance of peer group and by extension, influence cohorts (Tackett et al., 2022; Veenstra & Laninga-Wijnen, 2023) to identify with the shared goals. This affords student leaders the opportunity to come up with novel ideas that can bring about genuine improvement in the academic and social lives of members.

Theme #4: Promoting nation building

UPM is a public university that offers admission to both local and international students to undertake undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes within a stipulated period. Students are being socialised to learn and demonstrate virtues of tolerance and harmonious relations towards one another irrespective of racial, ethnic or religious background. A respondent provides evidence to substantiate this view

UPM has youth programmes comprising Malays, Chinese and Indians in the College clubs. Faculty council also has multiracial membership. To support nation-building process, we have to live together and work together. I think this is the easiest way to make diverse people become a union [SRC#7].

Student leaders are trained to relate with each member, understand their peculiarities and foster cooperation with a view to achieving shared goals. By implication, people with higher levels of education are expected to be more open to globalisation due to exposure to liberal values in education (Kunst et al., 2023). Having good knowledge of the group members helps youth leaders to coordinate group activities, "assign certain members to tasks, and allocate resources in a way that promotes common goals" (Tackett et al., 2022; p. 4). This informs UPM incorporation of students into variety of leadership programmes right from the first year in order to get them acquainted with the principles of managing human and material resources using appropriate strategies.

At the Residential college, faculty and council levels are many activities created to build youth development. These have helped me as a leader on how to attend to students from different races and ethnic backgrounds [SRC#3].

Ting and Kho (2021) affirm that university provides conducive environment for Malaysians to have more opportunities to have direct interactions, in principle at least, with people across ethnic boundaries.

Based on my experience, it is important we celebrate and don't discriminate against any race. I have a roommate who is an Indonesian. Non-malays are given opportunity to immerse themselves in many programmes. They are also given chance to lead class discussions [SRC#17].

In a heterogenous country like Malaysia, political socialisation is vital to guard against what Ismail et al. (2019) termed "isolation in the socialisation process" occasioned by lack of interaction with other ethnic groups. This situation may be attributed to indoctrination which has adverse effects on youth ability to think critically, make rational choice, and take informed decisions. A study conducted Rahman et al. (2019) indicated that students' involvement in activities and programmes foster harmony among youth from various ethnic groups in Malaysia. Youth leaders deserve proper socialization to enable them show concerns for colleagues and demonstrate willingness to provide necessary social and emotional supports to students in need at the appropriate time.

We have to understand the needs of students on campus. Being from a comfortable background, I intend to utilize the privilege I had to help students that are in need. We need to think critically to give these students what they want. Sometimes, we negotiate with authorities to intervene in the price of food served at Cafeteria on campus [SRC#5].

The importance of motivation in the formation of students' social skills and their practical application in higher education institutions (Mamejanovna, 2023) boosts student involvement in leadership activities. The training student leaders received at different leadership programmes emboldened them to represent the interests of their teeming followers at management level of UPM. Wong et al. (2022) buttress this situation when they aver that well-organized learning activities by teachers provided space for student participation and articulate voice that enhance contribution to civic engagement despite many challenges.

At this point, both themes 4 and 5 provide answers to RQ 2 on how educational institution stimulate youth leadership development in terms of getting students equipped with the leadership competence to set realistic goals while dealing with UPM students from diverse racial backgrounds.

Theme #5: Building Confidence

Active involvement of youth in leadership programmes develops in them courage, boldness and self-assurance to write a proposal, organize programmes, prepare a speech, give a talk and represent the group in University programmes. Promoting youth leadership activities has helped a number of students to discover their hidden potentials on how to take initiative and coordinate youth development activities within and outside UPM.

Once you are appointed as a leader, you are expected to get actively involved in leadership activities and conduct a programme. You learn from this experience

because it improves your confidence and self-esteem. People come to assist you in the conduct of the programme. These experiences mature you over time in ways that it provides you with sense of self-reflection. The moment we observed that some students are not committed in the assigned tasks, student leaders may adopt different approach to ensure students gain confidence in leadership programmes” [SRC#15].

Beatty and Gutherie (2021) lend credence to the above assertion when they contend that self-confidence centres on belief in the ability to work towards common goals with others in the leadership process. In the opinion of a respondent;

“I encourage fellow students to take bold steps. I gained knowledge on how to think critically and creatively to conduct a suitable programme so as to achieve my goals. The leadership programmes taught me the proper way to deliver speech in front of VIPs. I conducted a music seminar in my first year when a well-known musician, Amir Jahari was invited from Sarawak. He gave talks on how knowledge is essential to becoming a musician. When celebrities provide the right knowledge, students will be inclined to establish youth development in themselves. Youth should take the initiative to become involved in seminar talks on youth leadership” [SRC#12].

Once student leaders apply the right leadership skills to positively influence others, there is tendency to experience gradual improvement in youth attitudes. This implies that contextual factors such as national culture and institutional forces influence leadership process and leadership outcomes (Oc, 2018). As such, investments in youth development translate into benefits for society by increasing young people’s connections to their communities and helping them make successful transition to adulthood (Olenik, 2019; p. 5).

Theme #6: Upholding committed leadership

Political socialisation contributes to the stability of a political system by “instilling civic attitudes and values amongst youth” (Giugni & Grasso, 2021; p. 4). The significance of the learning process is underscored by youth engagement in communal activities to improve living conditions of people, and growing level of political consciousness to influence public policies in favour of their members. At the instance of voluntary associations and non-governmental organisations, youth leaders have visited several less-privileged communities across Malaysia to teach children basic education; render assistance to the elderly; and adapt to the sociological patterns of relations existing among people of the environment. Both leadership competence and political efficacy are “individual outcomes of youth participation in civic organisations” (Martinez et al., 2017; 974).

Political socialization promotes civic development of UPM students. When students receive better knowledge, they get enhanced to help others in the community. Just like the rebranded Rakan Muda programmes introduced by government, civic development reinforces students to do more in the society [SRC#6].

Following this lead, youth should be encouraged to engage in volunteerism so as to give back to the society (Chambre, 2020). Youth groups are fertile ground that nurtures citizen-oriented identity formation towards a progressive society. Understanding social reality stimulates policy engagement to appraise formulation and implementation of government programmes. Frequency of contacts to rural communities sustained moral inspiration and motivation that they are relevant to the larger society. Expressing strong determination to assist people, a respondent stress that:

My priority is to develop in students the awareness on the importance of how to contribute to the society. Sometimes, students know it is important to carry out civic duties such as voluntary services to the less-privileged but (they) lack knowledge about how and when to do it. They feel there is no platform provided for them to discover their talents. As a student leader, I will strive to increase awareness by providing them with programmes, sufficient resources and platform for them to be creative and critical in solving societal issues. We need to provide knowledge on how to manage resources [SRC#14].

Dolan (2022) established the core connection of youth having empathy for others which “lead to their being better civically engaged” (p. 265). Civic skills encourage individuals to work in groups, to respect the views of others, and to reach a consensus in acceptable manner (Ismail et al., 2019). Students play an important role in transmitting the “youth’s voice to concerned stakeholders and members of the community” (Othman et al., 2023; p. 78). Sense of patriotism inspires citizens to promote political, economic, social and security aspects of the nation.

Sometimes, we invite government officials to give talks on leadership. We are concerned about how to develop students in different ways. I used to encourage them to join more development programmes so that they can know what they are good at. Students try to excel to win medals at co-curricular activities such as debating programmes and sports for their respective Residential college. We have to supervise and manage youth programmes [SRC#4].

Aside engagement in leadership programmes within the University environment, student leaders have had course to participate in international leadership activities in Asian countries. This avails them the opportunities to explore and comprehend the dynamics of leadership process in other climes.

I have been a director for Mobility Programme at Kuta, Japan in September 2023. I plan to bring some students to attend Cultural Exchange Programme between Malaysia and Indonesia in March 2024 [SRC#11].

Institutions of higher learning need to design workable plans and make sustained efforts to creating leadership opportunities for youth so that they can engage in cross-fertilization of ideas with their counterparts across the globe. This becomes imperative as learnability of virtue and leadership (Newstead et al., 2021) engenders positive engagement and productive outcomes among competent youth.

Regarding RQ 3 that emphasizes relevance of leadership training programmes positive youth development, both themes 5 and 6 provide answers on how students’ involvement in

leadership workshops develop self-confidence to conduct programmes and coordinate people in the performance of assigned tasks. Besides, leadership training exposed youth leaders to the necessity of rendering community service to rural dwellers. This leadership task reinforces spirit of empathy and togetherness among youth leaders to support different categories of people irrespective of their geographical locations, ideological leanings and socio-economic status.

Conclusion

The paper explored strategies of agencies of political socialisation in promoting youth leadership among UPM students. Established in the discussion is abundant opportunities provided by family, institution of higher learning and social media to stimulate in youth population political awareness, experiential learning and active engagement in leadership activities. Acquisition of relevant political values and development of requisite leadership skills reinforces youth leaders to face challenges, take risks, seek probable solutions and demonstrate willingness to ensure well-being of communities.

Importantly, emerging adults are exposed to a broad range of skills to enable them survive in the future; cultivate acceptable social values; perform leadership functions effectively, and encourage cohorts to identify with the course of development. Youth leadership development can be enhanced when students receive the right orientations and proper training from agents of political socialisation purposely designed to nurture upcoming leaders in the society. Political institutions are required to ensure that workable strategies are adopted to improve effective transmission of political ideals and inculcation of leadership skills in Malaysian youth.

From the foregoing, the paper recommends provision of necessary facilities to ensure educational institutions boost youth development activities; creating conducive atmosphere that fosters youth involvement in productive service; organizing leadership workshop to entrench socially acceptable values in young generation; providing right guidance to ensure positive youth contribution to the society. Only when appropriate strategies are put in place to encourage political socialisation process can youth leadership development be actualised.

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