

Positive Youth Development through Sports among Urban Poor Youth in Subang Jaya, Malaysia

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Abstract

Nowadays maximize youth experiences in community sports programs, especially for vulnerable and/or marginalized youth who may have limited access and opportunity to these experiences is vital. This study examined how community youth sports programs have been community-focused in developing the youth's life skills and creating positive youth development (PYD) among urban poor youths in Subang Jaya, Malaysia. Therefore, this study was conducted using a qualitative case study approach with participants that were chosen through purposive sampling. After interviewing eight interviewees, eight themes emerged using MAXQDA 20.0 statistics software. The study findings showed that a significant PYD that is measured through 8Cs of PYD based on Malaysian Youth Policy and the birth of the eighth C in the youths through the sports-based youth development programs. The study was able to capture and highlight the significant changes in the youths' lives.

Keywords: Life Skills, Positive Youth Development, Sports, Youth

Introduction

For the past 15 years, there has been an increase in research examining structured out-of-school-time activities and how programs can capitalize on the power of sports to cultivate positive youth development (PYD) (Boat et al., 2022). Youth participation in sports has been associated with strengthening psychological, emotional, and achievement-related behavior and development. Balaguer et al (2020) discovered that adolescents who engage in sports exhibit increased interest in school during grades 10 to 12, as well as higher academic achievement when compared to non-participants. Additional research suggests that sports

involvement consistently correlates with reduced rates of addiction, depression, and incidents of suicidal behavior (Jovanović et al., 2022).

In this case, sports-based youth development programs (SBYD) have shown that the non-physical skills learn from a sports setting (e.g., leadership, self-control, respect) can be transferred and applied to other areas of the youth's life. And these lessons can be called "life skills" (Jacobs & Wright, 2021). When sports programs have embraced the concept of developing youths positively on and off the fields, these programs can cater to at-risk youths to help them overcome social problems (Kochanek & Erickson, 2020). These SBYD programs can cultivate PYD which is viewed as the concept of development in which children and adolescents are gaining resources to be developed instead of looking at them as problems to be solved (Lee et al., 2021). PYDs are used to harness social environments to build strength and create positive developmental changes (Ross & Tolan, 2021).

PYD has been put forward in the developmental psychology literature using Lerner et al.'s (2005) 'Five Cs' model whereby the Cs stand for character (respect for societal and cultural norms), caring (a sense of empathy and sympathy), competence (social, academic, cognitive, and vocational skills), confidence (self-efficacy and global self-regard), and connection (positive exchanges between peers, family, school, and community). And after the youths have developed high levels of the Five Cs, there will be an emergence of a 'sixth C' which is a contribution (to self, family, school, community, and civil society) (Lerner et al., 2005). But for sports programs to develop these qualities, they have characteristics such as 1) safe and healthy facilities, 2) direct rules and expectations, 3) supportive relationships, 4) a platform for inclusion and belonging, 5) positive social norms, 6) support for productiveness and autonomy, 7) opportunities for skill-building, and, 8) coordination among family, school, and community efforts (Holt et al., 2016).

PYD in Malaysia is focused on efforts to unleash individual potential and the assets of the youths (Arshad et al., 2018). The Malaysian Youth Policy focuses on these aspects of unleashing the nation's youth toward a future of PYD (Nouri et al., 2023). To see the effectiveness of the Malaysian Youth Policy in this context, the Malaysian Youth and Sports Ministry produced six mechanisms and one of them is the 8Cs of PYD. Developing from Lerner's 5C into the Malaysian context, Malaysia developed 8Cs that further focus on the PYD of Malaysian youths.

PYD 7C+1 (8C) was developed to ensure the implementation of the Malaysian Youth Policy is constantly relevant and able to provide the needs of the PYD. The aim of the 8Cs is based on the need for development that is needed among the youths in Malaysia. The 8Cs that are needed to ensure the PYD in Malaysia are caring, competence, character, confidence, cooperation, consideration, competition, and contribution. These 8Cs are the main domains to evaluate PYD among Malaysian youths to unleash their potential. In 2019, the score of Malaysian youths in these 8Cs was generally shown as moderate with the contribution being the highest among all the moderate scores. Hence, this shows there is a need for intervention programs to develop these 8Cs among Malaysian youths (Zulkifli et al., 2021).

The main challenges in PYD in Malaysia are planning and implementing programs that are holistic and systematic and that can measure positive developmental assets that are within the youths. There is a lack of quality research in this context on youth development and a lack of understanding of the correlation between sports and PYD in Malaysia. Two models are employed in addressing PYD, the deficit model views youth as liabilities to be overcome, and the asset model of a positive perception of youth as assets to be developed (Razak, 2017). Furthermore, to achieve PYD, The National Youth Development Policy has set objectives for

the enhancement of the knowledge base in various subjects to develop the competence of youth; Inculcation of moral values, and development of a positive and creative attitude in youth (MOYS, 1997).

The Institute for Youth Research (2015) identified 48 assets in 10 primary domains. Furthermore, in the context of youth involvement in sports in Malaysia, there is a concern due to only 19.8% of youth being less active in sports and 39.4% being inactive at all. And to get more Malaysian youths involved in sports, the Ministry of Youth and Sports introduced the 'Fit Malaysia' program to facilitate the adoption of healthy lifestyles among Malaysians. At the same time, the Ministry of Education introduced the 1Student 1Sport program to encourage school students to take up at least one sport or one physical activity to foster children and youth development among the students (Lee et al., 2016).

Although many initiatives were introduced, the main objective of sports has always been perceived as activities meant only for winning medals and titles and therefore for only the minority elite athletes and the masses assume that it is not for them and the power sports for all as a tool to foster PYD has not really been researched or even applied by sports coaches, or teachers in their schools, or academies. Sports narrative in Malaysia has always been in the areas of performance and talent building for professional sports and leisure activities for physical health concerns (Daud, 2007). The potential of using SBYD programs for PYD, especially in urban poor areas where crime, drugs, and delinquencies are high among youth from the age group of thirteen years old to eighteen years old has not been fully explored through programs and policies.

Study Context

Selangor is one of the states that has the highest urban poor population as it is one of the most highly urbanized states in Malaysia. The Petaling district in Selangor is an area gazetted by the state government of Selangor as an urbanized area as the population has exceeded 619,925 people (Petaling Jaya City Council, 2022). Research has been conducted in the areas of Petaling Jaya and Kuala Lumpur on poverty and the denial of children's rights (UNICEF, 2020). This research found that poverty results in stunted growth in children, lack of nutritious food, conducive learning space, and a lower percentage of preschool registration. This situation has been the primary factor contributing to the widespread crime, drug influence, and delinquencies among the youths in urban poor areas in Selangor, especially in the district of Petaling where Subang Jaya is located (Andriani & Basri, 2022). The number of convicted youths in prison in 2017 in Selangor was 7,524 the highest among all states and 10% (1963) of drug addicts from Selangor are from 15 to 30 years old (Ismail et al., 2022). Hence, this study aims to explore the impact of SBYD programs on PYD among vulnerable youth in Malaysia.

Literature Review

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

As teenagers mature, they face biological, psychosocial, and cognitive changes, and they encounter various choices, opportunities, and challenges on their path to adulthood (Geldhof et al., 2015). To have a good overview of this psychological development, different facets of the life of youth can be examined, namely their identity and feeling of self-worth, ability to interact and get along with others, having compassion and concern for others, and their relationships with people in their setting (Lerner & Chase, 2019). These areas map onto the

study of PYD, specifically the 6Cs framework of confidence, competence, connection, character, caring, and contribution (Lerner, et al., 2015).

PYD is both a domain of study and field practice, which attempts to build the skills and competencies of youth specified by a positive sense to support and assist them to reach healthy adulthood (Lerner et al., 2015). Central to the PYD approach is the belief that youth development is not just about preventing behavioral problems among young people but confirms that all youth should be developed (Geldhof et al., 2014). While prevention and intervention approaches consider youth as problems to be solved, PYD emphasizes fostering the potential and strengths among youth as an important resource (Schmid et al., 2011). Hence, youth programs and practitioners that accept the PYD approach utilize a strengths-based attitude in cooperating with youth (Collura, 2016).

Life skill integration in a PYD sports program

SBYD programs intentionally use sports and physical activity contexts as the means for achieving PYD outcomes (Hemphill et al., 2019). They offer structured sports and physical activity experiences to youth that clearly promote the development of personal and social life skills, in addition to the physical development more often associated with sport involvement (Gordon et al., 2016). Life skills are widely defined in this context as personal attributes that help youth to survive and prosper in various aspects of their lives (Jeyarani, 2022). Past research indicates that when kids gain life skills through implicit or explicit practices within sports, they have the capacity to transfer such life skills to other contexts (e.g., Bean et al., 2018).

The development of positive relationships, an explicit focus on teaching and learning life skills, the transfer of these skills into other areas of participants' lives, and integrating life skill instruction throughout sports programs are some examples of best practices for life skill development in SBYD programs (Jacobs & Wright, 2021). Positive environments and an emphasis on life skills improve SBYD results and increase the likelihood that life skills will be applied in other contexts (Holt et al., 2016). Several initiatives designed to emphasize life skills make use of prior understanding of PYD frameworks (e.g., Weiss et al., 2013). Others, though, are created using a grassroots strategy of giving young people access to sporting possibilities. As long as they fulfill their objective and cater to the needs of young people in their communities, such programs may put a strong emphasis on life skills (e.g., Jacobs & Wright, 2021).

Sports PYD Program for Marginalized Community

A competent, competitive, leisurely physical activity that is structured in some way is called sport (Howe, 2019). Systematic reviews of research showcase the many physical, psychological, social, emotional, and intellectual benefits of youth sport participation (e.g., Sutcliffe et al., 2021). For example, the study of Fitch, et al (2017) among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth showed that youth who are impacted by sports programs. They found that Aboriginal youth can receive positive developmental assets through sports programs with intentional objectives. Other studies also found that participation in youth sports by students increases their grades, and educational aspirations, spend more time on homework and applying for more universities, and increases their self-confidence and locus of control (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).

Sports for PYD in Malaysia

The youth population in Malaysia constitutes 40% of the population and sports are considered one of the assets that are vital for nation-building sports provide opportunities for youths for self-expression, and the development of skills in communication, leadership, and self-confidence (Yusof et al., 2015). According to Gould (2019), sports have a direct and indirect influence on sports culture and the youth that leads to PYD through different areas of sports. But in Malaysia, the concern is the youths' lack of sports participation. Based on the study of IYRES, 19.8% of youths are less active in sports and 39.4% are inactive at all. As stated by Chan et al (2019), the levels of active lifestyles among Malaysians are only moderate.

This gap highlighted that Malaysian youth and sports policies have especially in trying to implement PYD through sports. As sports and youth development in Malaysian policy seemed like separate agendas although written on the same page because of the lack of understanding of the impact that sports can give in fostering youth asset development if the skill transfer is done well and intentionally (Krauss et al., 2020). Thus, there is a lack of engagement with grassroots sports clubs, and children's activity centers in conducting intentional physical activities, play, and sports that would inculcate positive development instead of the highly favored performance.

Methodology

This study aimed to investigate PYD through sports among urban poor youth. Throughout this study, the authors adhered to the Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research (Tong et al., 2007).

Design

This study utilized the qualitative approach to gather data. More detailed information was gathered via semi-structured interviews (Brown & Danaher, 2019). Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that the appropriate minimum informants for a qualitative study were between three to seven people depending on the saturation of the data occurring during future studies. Yin's (2018) opinion presented that two to ten samples were sufficient to reach saturation. As a result, the four interviewees showed signs of saturation when the same themes were repeated with subsequent interviewees.

The Research Team and Reflexivity

The researchers had been working as research assistants and faculty members. The researchers comprised three females, all trained in qualitative research. The researchers were also acquainted with four of the interviewees.

Setting and Time

The data were collected between May 20, and June 12, 2022, in Subang Jaya, Malaysia.

Sample

This qualitative study's sample consisted of four youths in Subang Jaya, Malaysia, who participated in focus groups. Four interviewees were interviewed as part of the study, all of whom were chosen by purposive sampling. The criteria for selecting these youths to be study participants were based on the importance of their personal experiences and abilities to articulate and reflect on issues and challenges of learning PYD through SBYD. The participants

of this study consisted of three male and one female youth. All participants must have a minimum of 3 times training per week (Table 1).

Table 1

Pseudonym and demographic information of informants.

No.	Name	Gender	Age	Years of being part of the sports program	Type of sports	of Training frequency per week
1	Adam	Male	16	2	Powerlifting	3-4
2	Tom	Male	16	3	Football	3
3	Afan	Male	15	3	Football	3
4	Rayan	Male	16	4	Athletics	4

Data Collection Tools

According to the existing literature, the data were gathered using a semi-structured interview form, which included the following open-ended questions:

1. Are the 8Cs domains of the PYD of Malaysian Youth Policy been imparted to the youths?
2. Are sports programs effective in creating PYD holistically?
3. Are the 8Cs domains of the PYD of Malaysian Youth Policy help them identify positive developmental assets within them?

Data Collection Process

Individual in-depth interviews were used to acquire the data. Pilot interviews with two participants other than the main participants were conducted before the start of the study interviews. Based on the results of these pilot interviews, the interview procedure and questions were modified. Initially, phone calls were made to those selected using the snowball sampling technique, those who satisfied the inclusion criteria

1. Informants must be aged 12- 18 years old
2. Informants must be living in Pangsapuri Angsana, Subang Jaya
3. Informants are youths who must be or are still involved in SBYD programs conducted in Pangsapuri Angsana were informed of the study's goal and methodology, and times for online interviews were scheduled.

Each interview only involved the interviewer and participant. The interviews lasted 45 to 90 minutes on average. Both verbal and nonverbal clues were noted using written notes and a voice recorder. Participants received interview transcripts for their approval, additional feedback, and/or revisions.

Data Collection Setting

Using urban poor community youths who live in Pangsapuri Angsana low-cost flats in Subang Jaya where social problems among them are prevalent that participate in SBYD programs that are operated by AYA, an NGO that partners with Subang Jaya's ADUN (Local State Assembly) office to run that uses sports such as powerlifting, football, and athletics to foster PYD among the youths.

Ethical Issues

Before performing this research, the study's protocol was authorized by the UPM Ethics Council for Research Involving Human Subjects. The provisions of the 1995 Declaration of Helsinki (as amended in Brazil, 2013) were explained to the interviewees before the start of the sessions, and their verbal and written agreements were acquired. The researchers closely observed the privacy principle when gathering and storing the interviewees' information. In achieving this, all identifiable information was completely anonymized during transcription by using a pseudonym. All interviewees were given access to the transcriptions for their review. Voice recordings, transcripts, and interview notes were stored on a password-protected computer. All obtained data will be destroyed five years after the research and publication procedures are completed. To engage in this study, the interviewees provided written informed permission.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was manually applied to the data. The study team used an inductive technique (Gratton & Jones, 2014) to read the transcripts line-by-line after the interviews to comprehend the interviewees' experiences and create themes. The researchers actively participate in SBYD programs with potential informants to be involved in the study. The researchers also observed the SBYD programs and takes field notes. In addition, the MAXQDA 20.0 statistics software was employed to prevent any human errors. A constant comparison technique was adopted to compare and improve the developing themes about the participants' varied experiences (Ritchie et al., 2014), and emergent themes developed based on the 8Cs domains of PYD.

Trustworthiness

For the results to be trustworthy, bias issues are required to be appropriately addressed and acknowledged (Flick, 2008). The researchers evaluated potential bias against the aim to impartially examine the subjective experiences of the subjects (Patton, 2005). This study adhered to a strict protocol with much pre-planning to ensure the data were succinct and to lessen researcher bias in the semi-structured interview. The transcripts and findings were shared with team members for feedback.

The following four criteria—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—were used to determine the study's trustworthiness (Carcary, 2020). Obtaining participants' approval, describing the studied phenomenon in detail, using the MAXQDA 20.0 software package to analyze the data, comparing the results with previous research findings, holding researcher meetings at regular intervals to discuss the research process, and advantageously implementing the researchers' intertextual qualifications and experiences all contributed to credibility. The research sample, setting, and procedure were all properly reported to guarantee transferability. Intertextual participant utterances were explicitly cited, and

comprehensive definitions of the researched environment and the study were established. Dependability was achieved by inter-coder consistency and by transmitting all data collecting tools, raw data, analytical encodings, and derived conclusions to a professional who was not involved in the research. Confirmability was ensured by using multiple data collection methods, considering each researcher's reflective comments, and having each researcher code the data individually.

Results

From verbatim transcripts and significant statements extracted, the findings showed how youths had a positive development through sports. Based on the description and narrated by the participants and organized into 8 main themes (Figure 1).

Theme 1: Dedication, hard-working, and discipline

Through the youths of Angsana low-cost flat taking part in the SBYD programs, almost all of that has gone through character development. Throughout the conversations, the participants constantly mentioned how they value time now. They take the time they have seriously, and they want to focus on their sports instead of anything else. As Adam said:

"...I am dedicated now, I used not even to care about doing my homework and now I do. And now I am on time. More punctual..."

The youths have found some that they are passionate about, and they are motivated by the training. Furthermore, taking part in these SBYD programs with the guidance of coaches and the desire to develop and demonstrate physical competence as the energizer of behavior in sports settings enables them to discipline themselves. These are maturing stages of youth in learning to make the right choices in their daily life. As stated by Tom:

"...I have to discipline myself and use my time wisely instead of spending my time using my phone and social media..."

These statements made by the participants of the SBYD program show respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity. They are self-aware of the standards of their behaviors that were not right and they are developing now through the exposure to rules, and norms that sports set within them. These developments can also be observed during their training sessions.

Theme 2: Confidence & Mental Strength

Through this study, it can be learned how much the participants have grown to be confident to be themselves and to further push themselves beyond their comfort zone. Growing up in a low-cost flat with a lack of opportunities and with limited exposure makes these youth lacks self-esteem and grow up with a lack of belief in themselves. The participants of this SBYD program have indicated that now they truly believe can progress well in a sport. As Rayan said that: *"...I used to be more fearful, and now I am not fearful of people or things..."*

Adam shares that:

"...I am now mentally stronger, and I have learned to trust in the process. I don't give up easily...I am even able to answer this interview now which I would not be able to do last time..."

SBYD programs showed to be safe social spaces for these youths to mature and find their self-worth. And in organized sports contexts, the youths may have used their physical competence to maintain their self-worth. Coming from families where they are most often neglected as parents are constantly not present in their lives due to the need to earn more for their families. These youths are looking for affirmation, validation, and self-worth through this sports program. They have also built resilience to not give up easily even when the training

session gets harder but to have confidence in their capabilities as well as realize that they are going in the right direction.

Theme 3: Positive interactions and better communication

Through this study, we have seen the participants' forming positive connections and interacting with other participants, and coaches and these bonds are being transferred to their own families as well. This comes about when the sporting youth is allowed to play more, enjoy the game, have a greater desire to play, and their performance is rewarded. A few participants shared that:

Afan said *"...I used to struggle to understand my friends when I am training but now I try to understand how my teammates how to play and try to assist them during matches to help my team win. And we did win..."*

As stated by Tom: *"...I can get closer to my coach and communicate better with new coaches and new friends. I have made friends off the field where I get to talk about other topics as well..."*

Participants also have indicated that they are closer to their families and they have learned how to take care of their siblings better. This may be best represented by a single factor that is based upon the development of pro-social values surrounding positive societal interactions with other people. Furthermore, this also indicates how having positive figures around to connect with such as coaches have helped them to develop pro-social values as well as being part of team sports, this has taught them to understand positive bond better where it translates as a life skill for them to care for their family members too.

Theme 4: Caring

Caring/compassion is shown among the participants as a sense of sympathy and empathy for others. Through this program, the pro-social values of caring for others have been developed through positive bonds that they have learned to develop through positive interactions with their teammates and coaches and as well as it is the measure of their character to realize to do the right thing. Adam said:

"...I want to be a better son and I want to help my parents. And I want to help my parents to buy a house one day..."

Afan also said:

"...I want to help and coach others also...I want to make my parents and family and coach proud through this platform..."

Through the SBYD program that he is involved in, he has realized that more youths in his community need help and also to experience the change that he has been experiencing throughout this program. Hence, he wants to coach other kids and help others in his community. These are tremendous improvements among the youths who were always known to care for themselves first but now looking around their community and realizing that there is a lot of need.

Theme 5: Academics, social, and sports skill development

Learner defines as a positive view of one's actions in social (e.g., conflict resolution), academic (e.g., school grades, attendance, and test scores), cognitive (e.g., decision making), and vocational (e.g., work habits and career choice explorations) areas of one's life. Through this program, the youths have grown in their competence level all around in different areas.

Adam shares: *"...My academics are doing alright. And I'm doing better now but I have passed a lot of my subjects and failed Science and Mathematics...Not as good as I am expecting yet. I can still improve myself..."*

This indicates that the participants realized that they are doing not so well in academics and now they are making the right decisions to care about it and make the right decisions to change it. Moreover, the participants have also shared that their physical competence as an athlete has also increased.

As Afan stated: *"...My football academy has helped me to improve a lot in my performance, and also my mindset toward football. My stamina has improved a lot and I am a lot more consistent in football...Sometimes, because the people and surroundings are different. But I have learned how to communicate better with different ones and apply what I learned from my football academy wise also in the school team..."*

All the participants in this study have shared that they have become healthier through the SBYD program due to their desire to do better and the guidance of the coaches to make the right choices. Furthermore, the participants have also learned to apply what they have learned from the field directly and indirectly to the other parts of their life.

Theme 6: Consideration

In this study and observation, the willingness of the youths to be willing to volunteer, donate or put others around them first before themselves was visible. The respondents through the sports programs have truly learned to be more considerate of the people and society around them.

In the current generation where youths are more narcissistic and inconsiderate towards the people around them. The SBYD have shown to be able to develop youths who are more considerate towards the people and circumstances around them. Tom stated: *"...I can volunteer my time. I have volunteered in giving out food to the poor. I taught my friends and relatives weightlifting when I was back home in my village..."*

Rayan also says: *"... I have learned how to take care of my sister better because I learn how to take care of my team first..."*

This shows that the consideration and selflessness that was built through the mechanism of sports and developmental relationships have created a life-skill transfer into taking care of his sister at home selflessly.

Theme 7: Goal-oriented and desire to push further

Being goal-oriented and desiring to push further in sports have been shown to have positive affective feelings, such as pride and enjoyment, accompany perceptions of success and make it more likely that the individual will continue to engage in mastery behaviors. The youths through this SBYD program have developed competitiveness within where they want to continue to achieve and engage in the same habit or lifestyle that continues to give them achievement that comes out of competitiveness. Malaysian Youth Policy measures the competition as one of the PYD through goal orientation and desire to push further to get better in their sport that has developed.

Tom stated that: *"...I can still improve myself. I do feel like mentally breaking down, but I keep on going during training and I want to get better..."*

Furthermore, the participant Rayan shares: *"...I want to win and make my family proud through me winning. I want to be a footballer player in the future and play professionally..."*

Through training and the coaches who are committed to sending them to competitions, the participants are constantly looking forward to achieving goals that they have set for themselves. These goal-oriented behaviors help them to focus on their training better, eat the right food, sleep right, and not waste their time getting involved in unhealthy activities. The competitiveness of the participants helps to guide them into making the right choices for their daily life.

Theme 8: Giving back to the community

The study also shows that teens have developed a sense of contribution to the society around them. The prosocial contribution which directly benefits the giver, the recipient, as well as the broader community, is an important youth positive functioning outcome. Particularly if youths demonstrate high levels of prosocial contribution, and are less inclined toward problem behaviors. The participants share that:

Participant D: *"...D: I want to carry Malaysia's name into the international arena and make Malaysia proud. This is my dream and ambition..."*

Participant R: *"...First, to be a footballer, if I can't I want to be a chef. Because I like to cook at home...Yes, if I get the chance I want to cook for others and give out to those who can't afford it..."*

The participants have developed a sense of belonging as well as realizing that their community needs help. All participants have there are needs in their community which they would like to contribute to help the people there. Furthermore, the participants also indicated they would like to coach in the same SBYD program where they would like to invite more youths and as well as also pass on their experiences and help younger ones to develop sporting skills –'giving something back'.

To the individual, the benefits of helping others include better self-esteem, increased positive affect, psychological well-being, and health. At the same time, the recipient of the prosocial actions also benefits from the helping behavior, be it a classmate, teacher, parent, family member, elderly individual, or someone in the community. Such a voluntary contribution can promote positive and harmonious functioning in society as well as through the youths.

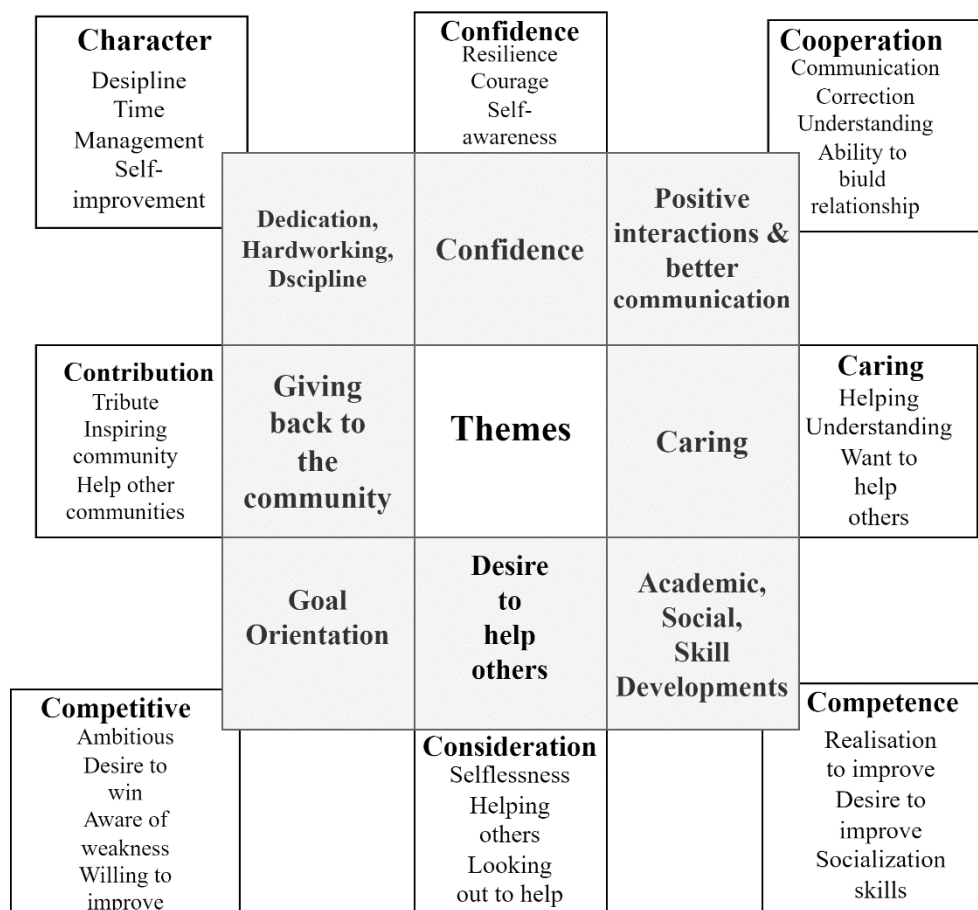


Figure 1. Themes, sub-themes, and 8Cs of PYD through sports.

Discussion

Based on the themes that have been developed through the studies and observations, it was evident enough to draw the themes back to connect them to the 7C+1C (8C) domains that were developed as part of the mechanisms of Malaysian Youth Policy 2015-2035. These 8Cs were developed from the basic Lerner’s 5Cs which states that once 7Cs are visible in youth that there will be an 8th C as well. And through these conversations that were done with the respondents, the themes that were developed were directly related to the 8C model of PYD that is highlighted through the Malaysian Youth Policy. The themes that were developed from the findings were directly related to the 8Cs of the PYD respectively (i.e. character, confidence, connection, caring, competence, considerate, competitive, then through it all developed contribution).

The participants were seen to have developed a sense of discipline, dedication, and hard work, which is correlated directly to character, the first C of PYD. Based on the 8Cs model, competence is the ability and skill to deal with the challenges, tasks, and stresses in life which was connected to the theme of academics, social and skill development where the participants can deal with their academic’s issues and they want to work on their academics, and they realize they are on weaknesses that they need to work for their skill developments (Lerner et al., 2021).

Besides that, confidence is a positive belief in one’s worth and efficacy where the participants have clearly stated how their confidence in communicating with people, and their self-perception have become much better through time spent in training, while the term

'cooperation' describes positive relationships with others, including family members, peers, and communities which seen among the youths where they have built their relationships with their family members and teammates better too. Caring implies a sense of sympathy for others (Adams et al., 2006).

The results showed that joining SBYD programs is a life-changing experience for vulnerable youth. The Angsana low-cost flat is a community that is struggling in poverty as well as in the cycle of not being able to produce people with prosocial contribution behaviors such as prevention of relapse among addicts and stopping other types of crimes (e.g., Amat et al., 2020). Many of the youths in Angsana flat fall back to the idea of taking the easier path which is dropping out early from school or pushing through without interest in school at all and proceeding with a gig economy life right after secondary school. It is a positive sign to see how the youths who have participated in the SBYD program learned to develop an excitement for school and the desire to do better in academics and life overall was highlighted as subthemes for competence and character. The values of organized sports and the demand to constantly improve to perform better have translated well into the lives of the youth who have participated in the SBYD programs as they now seek the betterment of their lives too.

One of the main reasons these SBYD programs work effectively as well is because for many participants the organizations provided a safe, supportive, achievement-oriented environment in which they could mature. Many acknowledged their debt to the programs and their relationships with the staff and the way this assisted their growing maturity. Furthermore, SBYD programs from Asian Youth Ambassadors such as BASICS (Before and After School Integrated Community Services) and Dream Village Football Academy (DVFA) are shaping them individually based on their personal needs and interests, and following their strengths, potentials, talents, and positive assets. To develop the youth, need support, opportunities, programs, and services. Together with autonomy, a secure atmosphere, a sense of belonging, and being involved, empowered, participating, exploring, experimenting, and developing skills. To do this, SBYD programs should address the seven elements of youth engagement: embrace, engage, assure, educate, enable, empower, and lastly, establish in their social, professional, and familial life (Nols et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Results from this study suggest that an intentional focus on well-defined life skills within an SBYD program can produce youths that have positive developmental assets and ones who can come out of at-risk behaviors as well as contribute to their society. This study has also found the involvement of the youths in the SBYD program helps them to find role models and mentors in their coaches indirectly and as well as there is a life skill transfer of the lessons learned into their lives. This study has also found that the involvement of these youths in sports has built their resiliency towards the hardship of life especially as they come from an urban poor background.

Recommendations

This research study was done qualitatively to understand in-depth the significance of PYD among the youths as well as it is an exploratory move since there is no specific case study done in this field in this community before. Hence in the future, it can be tested empirically and quantitatively for it to be validated to ensure it can deliver what has been conceptualized as well as provide data for future policy suggestions for other communities. SBYD programs should recognize the 7Es of youth involvement - embrace, engage, ensure, educate, enable, empower, and lastly, establishment in their social, career, and family life - to achieve this.

Limitations and Direction for Future Studies

The current study had some limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, this study focused only on one location and one program, hence there will be a limited exploration to understanding the potential of sports in reducing social problems among urban poor youths. Besides that, as the study is done in the qualitative case study method, there cannot be a statistical representation. As there is a lack of studies done on PYD through sports and SBYD-focused programs in Malaysia, this study lacks local references. And this study might have limitations in authenticity as the respondents are below 18 years old and questions directed are open-ended and the study is done qualitatively. Another issue in this study is that the interpretations are restricted. Observations and opinions are influenced by personal experience and expertise. Further research, such as empirical and longitudinal studies, will be required to assess the efficacy of sports activities. Lastly, the researchers chose the participants based on their interests and willingness to be interviewed. As a result, the volunteers may have had strong feelings on the subject.

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