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# Positive Youth Development: Levels of Positivity in Youth Development

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Positive youth development is a combination of Positive Episodes + Positive Associations + Positive circumstances. Youth development expert Richard Lerner theorizes that young people will thrive if they develop certain behaviours, dubbed the “five Cs,” over the course of childhood and early adolescence: competence, connection, character, confidence, and caring/compassion. According to Lerner, a youth with the five thriving behaviours is on the path to attaining a sixth C: contribution – to self, family, community, and civil society. It is the sixth C that leads to positive adulthood. “Committed— behaviourally, morally, and spiritually—to a better world beyond themselves,” he writes, “they will act to sustain for future generations a society marked by social justice, equity, and democracy and a world wherein all young people may thrive.” Richards Five C's model Competence: enhancing participants social, academic, cognitive, and vocational competencies, Connection :building and strengthening adolescents' relationships with other people and institutions, such as school, Confidence: Improving adolescents' self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy, identity and belief in the future, Character: increasing self-control, decreasing engagement in health-compromising (problem) behaviours, developing respect for cultural or societal rules and standards, a sense of right and wrong (morality) and spirituality,

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Compassion/Caring: improving youths' empathy and identification with others. Females reported highest score in caring (89%), connection (92%), character (85%). whereas males reported highest score in competence (78%), contribution (96%), confidence (88%).

*Keywords: Youth; positiveness; development.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is both a philosophy as well as a programmatic approach for supporting healthy, productive, and engaged youth as they grow into adulthood. The PYD approach rests on the idea that youth with more developmental assets are more likely to enjoy academic success, have greater economic prospects, be more civically engaged, and be more healthy in the long term [1-6].

The University of Minnesota's keys to Quality Youth Development summarizes eight key elements of programs that successfully promote youth development. Such programs are physically and emotionally safe, give youth a sense of belonging and ownership and foster their self-worth, allow them to discover their "selves" (identities, interests, strengths), foster high quality and supportive relations with peers and adults, help youth recognize conflicting values and develop their own, foster the development of new skills, have fun, and have hope for the future [7-11].

Shaojie et al. [12] conducted a study on "Trends of Positive Youth Development Publications (1995–2020): A Scientometric Review" "in this study, 1435 academic works on Positive Youth Development (PYD) are collected from the Web of Science using Cite Space, reviewed and analyzed. First, the number, subject distribution, country, and institution of published papers are presented, and the author collaboration network involved in PYD is analyzed using network analysis. The results show that authors and institutions in Western societies are the main contributors to PYD research and that interdisciplinary collaboration is gradually growing. Using document co-citation analysis, research hotspots in the field were investigated. Furthermore, the research frontiers and trendy topics in PYD from 2010 to 2019 were found by using burst detection, and research gaps were identified. The findings provide research directions for future PYD studies in the field of applied quality of life research".

Steven M. Worker et al. [13] conducted a study on "Promoting Positive Youth Development

Through Teenagers-as-Teachers Programs" "in the study 32 teenagers interviewed (median age 15; 27 female, 5 male) about their experiences, growth, and learning. Through consensus-based inductive thematic analysis, it identified 26 codes that can analytically be sorted and found they aligned with the six indicators outlined by the Five Cs of the positive youth development model. Adolescents reported positive experiences and their own growth in competence, confidence, connection, caring, character, and contribution".

Sneha et al. [14] conducted a study on "positive youth development among adolescents in urban area". "Data comprised of 100 adolescents (50 males & 50 females) age range between 16-18 years for the present study. The obtained data has been analyzed using descriptive statistics like mean, Standard Deviation (SD), independent sample t test. The study showed higher scores of female participants in comparison to the male participants on positive youth development. It was also found that females scored higher on the dimensions of Positive youth development that are emotionally regulated like character, connection and caring. While males scored higher on cognitive dimensions of positive youth development like competence and confidence. Researchers recognized need to promote positive youth development among youths, efforts are being made to establish appropriate programs for interventional purposes".

Seema Mehrotra et al. [15] conducted a study on "positive youth development programs for mental health promotion in Indian youth: an underutilized pathway" found that "there is an unprecedented growth in the young population worldwide and especially in India and mental health of youth is an area of growing concern. The scope of convergence of the fields of positive youth development and mental health promotion among youth is becoming evident in the recent times. The paper aims to provide a brief overview of the field of PYD research in India and come up with implications for utilizing this framework for youth mental health promotion. A rapid review was carried out to examine Indian research on positive youth development and its relevance for mental health promotion through youth engagement. Two sets of key words, 'Positive

youth development' and 'India' were jointly used as search words. The search was carried out in the month of April 2017, using EBSCO, ProQuest and MedIND as the electronic databases, with no restriction in the time-period of the published studies. A supplementary search of titles using Google search engine was done with eight Indian journals and one database for the period from 2010 till date. The search indicated significant paucity of Indian literature on positive youth development. A total of 24 articles were identified. Nine studies were retained of which six were non-intervention and three were intervention studies. The review suggests that PYD programs and PYD based mental health promotion programs are in a nascent stage in India with a dearth of published literature on the same. Implications for youth mental health promotion are highlighted" [16,17].

Mahadzirah Mohamad, Morliyati Mohammad and Nor Azman Mat Ali [18] findings of this study revealed that "different aspects of positive youth behaviour had different influence on youths' life satisfaction in Malay adolescents. The study also indicated that Malay female youths had higher pro-social norm and life satisfaction compared to their Malay male counterpart".

## 2. METHODS

The main focus of the study was to study on "Positive youth development: Levels of positivity in youth development". It focused on age group of 11 to 24 years.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire includes areas: Happiness/confidence, caring, connection, contribution, competence, character.

The Fig. 1 presents the levels of positivity in youth development.

### 3.2 Confidence

Confidence deals with improving adolescents' self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy, identity and belief in the future such as- happy at home, school, happy with people in their life, satisfied with their lives, feel like they are worth for something. In this area males scored maximum score of 88 percent whereas females scored 80 percent.

### 3.3 Caring

Caring deals with improving youths' empathy and identification with others such as- when others need help, they are ready to help them, it is easy to know how others feel, they try to encourage others when they are not as good at something as they were, they can be counted on to help if someone needs them, they care about the feelings of their friends [19-21]. In this area females scored maximum score of 89 percent whereas males scored 84 percent.

Table 1. Questionnaire

| S. no | Item                     | Category | Males (n=50) |    | Females (n=50) |    | Total (n=100) |    |
|-------|--------------------------|----------|--------------|----|----------------|----|---------------|----|
|       |                          |          | F            | %  | F              | %  | F             | %  |
| 1.    | Confidence/<br>Happiness | High     | 44           | 88 | 40             | 80 | 84            | 84 |
|       |                          | Average  | 2            | 4  | 6              | 12 | 8             | 8  |
|       |                          | Low      | 4            | 8  | 4              | 8  | 8             | 8  |
| 2.    | Caring                   | High     | 42           | 84 | 47             | 94 | 89            | 89 |
|       |                          | Average  | 5            | 10 | 2              | 4  | 7             | 7  |
|       |                          | Low      | 3            | 6  | 1              | 2  | 4             | 4  |
| 3.    | Connection               | High     | 45           | 90 | 47             | 94 | 92            | 92 |
|       |                          | Average  | 3            | 6  | 1              | 2  | 4             | 4  |
|       |                          | Low      | 2            | 4  | 2              | 4  | 4             | 4  |
| 4.    | Contribution             | High     | 48           | 96 | 42             | 84 | 90            | 90 |
|       |                          | Average  | 1            | 2  | 5              | 10 | 6             | 6  |
|       |                          | Low      | 1            | 2  | 3              | 6  | 4             | 4  |
| 5.    | Competence               | High     | 39           | 78 | 37             | 74 | 76            | 76 |
|       |                          | Average  | 7            | 14 | 8              | 16 | 15            | 15 |
|       |                          | Low      | 4            | 8  | 5              | 10 | 9             | 9  |
| 6.    | Character                | High     | 38           | 76 | 47             | 94 | 85            | 85 |
|       |                          | Average  | 7            | 14 | 2              | 4  | 9             | 9  |
|       |                          | Low      | 5            | 10 | 1              | 2  | 6             | 6  |

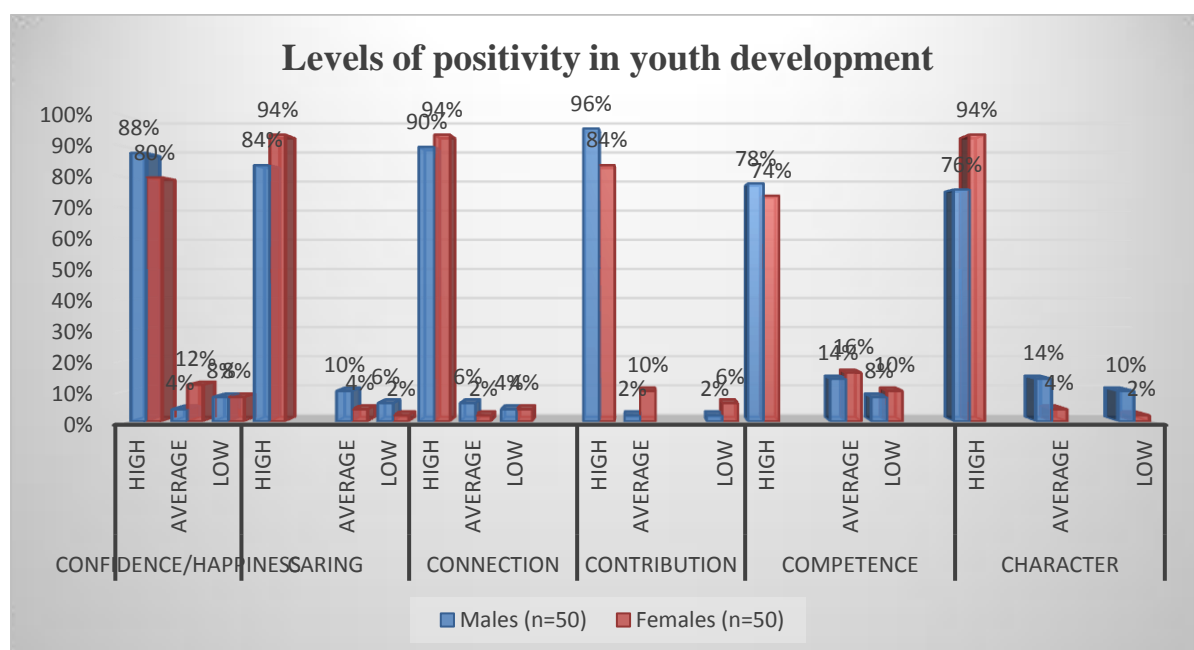


Fig. 1. Levels of positivity in youth development

### 3.4 Connection

Connection deals with building and strengthening adolescents' relationships with other people and institutions, like school such as- they have people in their life they look up to and admire, they have many different types of friends, their friends care about them, they feel connected to their friends and teachers [22-24]. In this area females scored maximum score of 92 percent whereas males scored 90 percent

### 3.5 Contribution

Contribution deals with they take an active role in their community, they are someone who gives to benefit others, they like to work with others to solve problems, they have things they can offer to others, it is important for them to try and make a difference in the world. In this area males scored maximum score of 96 percent whereas females scored 90 percent.

### 3.6 Competence

Competence deals with enhancing participants social, academic, cognitive, and vocational competencies such as- they have goals in their life, they know what they want to be and when they grow up. In this area males scored maximum score of 78 percent whereas females scored 76 percent.

### 3.7 Character

Character deals with increasing self-control, decreasing engagement in health-compromising (problem) behaviours, developing respect for cultural or societal rules and standards, a sense of right and wrong (morality) and spirituality. In this area females scored maximum score of 85 percent whereas males scored 76 percent.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The data collected with respect to understand the study on "Positive youth development: Levels of positivity in youth development". Positive youth development motivates youth to achieve their full capacity and energies themselves for active engagement in meta-development. The establishment of a sound positive environment around youths is a key to their effective functioning and survival. Positive environment is dependent on positive relationships and strengths established at school, family or social environment through interactions with parents, teachers, peers and society [25-28]. The development of a positive ethos within youths is the foundation for better opportunities to understand themselves as youths and engage in activities that would lead physical, psychological and social empowerment of the youth. The results found that females reported highest score in caring (89%), connection (92%), character (85%). whereas males reported highest score in competence (78%), contribution (96%), confidence (88%).

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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