



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***INFLUENCE OF LIFE SATISFACTION, PEER RELATIONSHIPS, SELF-IMAGE,
PARENTING STYLE AND SPIRITUALITY ON POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SELANGOR MALAYSIA***

ATEFEH KIADARBANDSARI

FEM 2015 22



**INFLUENCE OF LIFE SATISFACTION, PEER RELATIONSHIPS, SELF-
IMAGE, PARENTING STYLE AND SPIRITUALITY ON POSITIVE YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SELANGOR MALAYSIA**

By

ATEFEH KIADARBANDSARI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

July 2015



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DEDICATED TO

My beloved husband “*Afshin*” for his endless affections, encouragement and partnership for success in my life.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

INFLUENCE OF LIFE SATISFACTION, PEER RELATIONSHIPS, SELF-IMAGE, PARENTING STYLE AND SPIRITUALITY ON POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SELANGOR MALAYSIA

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July 2015

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The focus of this study is to examine the influence of life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality on Positive Youth Development (PYD) among 593 adolescents, ages 14 and 16 years old. PYD as a theoretical framework focuses on mutually influential relationships between individuals and contexts. Malaysia is planning to become a fully-developed country by the year 2020. Thus, adolescents are considered as a significant resource and should be nurtured to guarantee the supportable continuous growth of the country. While recent researchers have found PYD a pathway to self-thriving in Western societies, few studies have incorporated in Asian contexts. To address this paucity, the current study was primarily conducted to determine the relationship between life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality with PYD, and the most significant predictor of PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor. A total of 593 adolescents from four national secondary schools of Selangor participated using Multi-Stage Cluster sampling. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaire included Satisfaction with Life Satisfaction Scale, Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, Self-image consisted of two parts, namely, Physical Appearance and Personality/Social Acceptance, Parenting Style Inventory II, Daily Spiritual Experience Scale, and PYD-very short form. The findings revealed life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, authoritative parenting style, and spirituality were correlated positively and significantly with PYD. Furthermore, the regression analysis showed life satisfaction, peer relationships, authoritative parenting style, and spirituality explain a significant amount of the variance in the adolescents' PYD in Malaysia. Life satisfaction was identified as the most significant predictor of PYD. The study thus, provides significance contribution on how life satisfaction could enhance adolescent PYD. Findings from this study may have significant implications. Theoretically, the findings may shed light on the influence of context for adolescents in Malaysia as these studies shown variable were found to be highly correlated with PYD. From a practical perspective, the findings may imply that any effort in helping parents,

psychologist, practitioners, and policy makers. Future studies recommended including a vast sample of respondents from all of the states of Malaysia to ensure the generalizability of the findings in a wider context.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

PENGARUH KEPUASAN HIDUP, HUBUNGAN RAKAN SEBAYA, IMEJ KENDIRI, CARAGAYA KEIBUBAAPAN DAN SPIRITUALITI TERHADAP PERKEMBANGAN BELIA POSITIF (POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT) DALAM KALANGAN REMAJA DI SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

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Fokus kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pengaruh kepuasan hidup, hubungan rakan sebaya, imej diri, gaya keibubapaan, dan spiritualiti terhadap Pembangunan Belia Positif (*Positive Youth Development, PYD*) dalam kalangan 593 remaja, berumur 14 dan 16 tahun. *PYD* sebagai rangka kerja teori memberi tumpuan kepada hubungan saling pengaruh antara individu dan konteks. Malaysia menuju ke arah sebuah negara maju sepenuhnya menjelang tahun 2020. Oleh itu, remaja dianggap sebagai aset yang penting dan perlu dipupuk untuk menjamin pertumbuhan berterusan negara. Walaupun penyelidik terkini telah mendapati *PYD* laluan perkembangan sendiri dalam masyarakat Barat, hanya beberapa kajian dilaksanakan dalam konteks Asia. Bagi menangani jurang ini, kajian semasa dijalankan untuk menentukan hubungan antara kepuasan hidup, hubungan rakan sebaya, imej sendiri, gaya keibubapaan, dan spiritualiti dengan *PYD*, dan peramal *PYD* yang paling signifikan dalam kalangan pelajar remaja sekolah menengah kebangsaan di Selangor. Seramai 593 remaja dari empat buah sekolah menengah kebangsaan di Selangor menggunakan persampelan kluster pelbagai peringkat. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan soal selidik yang ditadbir sendiri termasuk Kepuasan, Perapatan Ibu Bapa dan Rakan Sebaya, Imej Kendiri terdiri daripada dua bahagian, iaitu, Penampilan fizikal dan Personaliti / Penerimaan Sosial, Cara Gaya Keibubapaan II, Skala Pengalaman Harian Spiritual, dan *PYD*-ringkas. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan kepuasan hidup, hubungan rakan sebaya, imej diri, gaya keibubapaan autoritatif, dan spiritualiti mempunyai hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dengan *PYD*. Analisis lanjutan menggunakan analisis regresi menunjukkan kepuasan hidup, hubungan rakan sebaya, gaya keibubapaan autoritatif, dan spiritualiti menyumbang varians yang signifikan ke atas *PYD* remaja di Malaysia. Kepuasan hidup telah dikenal pasti sebagai peramal yang paling penting *PYD*. Kajian itu, memberikan maklumat yang berharga tentang bagaimana kepuasan hidup boleh meningkatkan *PYD* remaja. Secara teorinya, penemuan menjelaskan pengaruh konteks

untuk remaja di Malaysia kerana kajian ini menunjukkan pembolehubah dikaji mempunyai kaitan yang tinggi dengan *PYD*. Dari perspektif praktikal, penemuan mungkin mencadangkan sebarang usaha membantu ibu bapa, ahli psikologi, pengamal dan pengubal dasar. Kajian masa depan dicadangkan menggunakan sampel responden yang lebih besar dari semua negeri di Malaysia bagi memastikan generalisasi penemuan dalam konteks yang lebih luas.



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APPROVAL

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 6th July 2015 to conduct the final examination of Atefeh Kiadarbandsari on her thesis entitled “Influence of Life Satisfaction, Peer Relationships, Self-Image, Parenting Style, and Spirituality on Positive Youth Development Among Adolescents in Selangor Malaysia” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DSES	The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale
IPPA-R	The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment
JKEUPM	Jawatakuasa Etika Universiti Melibatkan Manusia
MoE	Ministry of Education Malaysia
PSI-II	The Parenting Style Inventory II
PYD	Positive Youth Development
PYD-VSF	Positive Youth Development Very Short Form
SMK	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan
SWB	Subjective Well-Being
SWLS	The Satisfaction With Life Scale

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Richards (2008) defined adolescence as the period between the onset of puberty and attainment of adulthood, i.e. approximately 13-19 years of age. The term “adolescence” originated from the Latin word *adolescere*, which means “growing to adulthood” (Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). In all cultures, adolescence is the transitional period from childhood into adulthood, signifying the readiness of an individual to face the challenges of the future (Larson, Wilson, & Rickman, 2009; Schlegel, 2009).

The definition of “youth” has become a methodological challenge in research on youth development. Most researchers have indicated that youth includes roughly the second decade of life, corresponding to between 10 and 20 years of age (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005). In Malaysia, the age for youth is defined as those between 15 and 40 years old but the main focus of development programs in the country are for those aged between 18 to 25 (Faizah, 2007).

Adolescence is the period in which an individual experiences biological, cognitive, social, and economic transitions (Steinberg, 2010). Based on Rathus (2011), these challenges, and the adolescents’ ability to cope with them, vary during the phases of adolescents and most observers (e.g. Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2009; Sontag et al., 2008) divide adolescence into three phases as early adolescence (11 or 12 to 14 years of age) which is characterized by rapid biological changes, relatively high level of stress, and relatively low coping ability; middle adolescence (approximately 14 to 16 years) that biological changes have largely run their course. Stress diminishes somewhat and coping ability increases; late adolescence (16 to 18 or 19 years) in which the adolescent matures so that she or he looks more like an adult. Stress usually declines and coping ability is usually higher than in early and middle adolescents.

Developmental systems theories of human development demonstrate that the foundation of positive and thriving routes through the lifetime of an individual is influenced by a bidirectional and beneficial relationship between this individual and the current sources in the context that preserves and increases healthy development (Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 2006 ; Brandtstadter, 2006). In the early 1990s, a new style and term related to the positive youth development (PYD) perspective emerged to illustrate the usage of a special age of developmental system theories. Measuring the potential for positive transitions in various areas during the life span from childhood to the 10th and 11th decades of a lifetime is one example of the desire to focus on flexibility through these theories (Baltes et al., 2006). Although the researchers cited the lack of consensus on the description of PYD, major explanations focused on five

concepts, namely, (a) progressive environments, (b) the nature of the child with emphasis on the distinctive ability to develop and thrive, (c) developmental strengths and two complementary conceptualizations of developmental success, (d) the reduction of high-risk behavior, and (e) the promotion of thriving (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sems, 2006).

The theory of PYD focuses on the association of the strengths and environmental assets of adolescents for increasing their respective appropriate and positive outcomes. Based on the alignment between individual and context, the theory suggests that the youths may improve their positive features by developing their “Five Cs”. After the development of these Cs, a sixth C will emerge as the “contribution” of the youth to himself/herself, family, and society (Lerner et al., 2005). The preceding analysis implies that PYD is positively connected to contribution, whereas it is negatively to at-risk and problem behaviors.

Theokas and Lerner (2006) have recognized the settings in the ecology of youth that create main developmental assets due to encouraging such as the people in youths’ lives (e.g., parents, teachers, trainers, and mentors), the institutions existing in their community (e.g., structured out-of-school-time [OST] activities, or libraries), the situations for young people and adults to work together in valued community activities (e.g., on school boards); and the accessibility to these individuals and institutions (e.g., due to suitable transportation, keeping a safe setting for youth, or low financial costs).

Theokas and Lerner (2006) similarly discussed that individuals in the youths’ context is the most significant development asset that is related to a higher level of PYD and a lower level of at-risk behaviors (e.g., bullying or substance abuse); they also referred to other individuals in all of the settings who are caring, committed, and involved in the lives of the youth. Theokas and Lerner further stated that collective activities in the family setting (i.e., having meals together) are the major predictors of PYD; similarly, school accessibility, the small size of school, unenthusiastic teachers, number of students, and presence of mentors in the current community play significant roles as assets for PYD (Larson, 2006).

Instead of seeking situations that can reduce or prevent the occurrence of problematic activities, PYD theory extends the range of investigations to measure the individual and context relationships for increasing the thriving among adolescents and incurring a defensive influence. The factors that describe the development of thriving among the youth must be examined. Thriving refers to the development of attributes, thereby compelling a person to become successful and experience healthy growth (Lerner, von Eye, Lerner, Lewin-Bizan, & Bowers, 2010). Youths with higher thriving exhibit distinct characteristics, such as competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring, which are collectively known as the “Five Cs” (Lerner et al., 2005).

Positive youth development attempts to identify how gender differences, cognition, psychological factors (e.g., positive regard, sense of identity), and social networks with family and peers play out across multiple contexts (Lerner, 2004). Moreover, PYD

focuses on the positive or adaptive factors that support a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood (Durlak, 1998).

In sum, the importance of PYD must be significantly considered for increasing the thriving of adolescents via the enhancement of the influential factors in their contexts (i.e., families, schools, and communities) along with their strengths. Several developmental assets influence PYD and its indicators (Five Cs). However, this study focuses on the life satisfaction of adolescents, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Prevention science regards adolescence as a period in which young people experience risk-taking situations, conflicts, and troubles (Schwartz, Pantin, Coatsworth, & Szapocznik, 2007). By contrast, the PYD perspective concentrates on the strengths of youths and promotes their thriving by coordinating their strengths with contextual sources (Benson et al., 2006; Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers, 2009; Lerner et al., 2010).

Studies have reported that the occurrence of adolescent developmental problems, including school violence (Wong, 2004), adolescent suicide (Sun & Hui, 2007), and substance abuse (Shek, 2007), have exhibited an increasing trend. Nonetheless, considerable evidence has revealed that PYD and the other positive structures can hinder the prevalence of negative outcomes of adolescents (Phelps et al., 2009; Tebes et al., 2007). Prevention the onset of problem behaviors (e.g., substance abuse) is crucial among young people (i.e., prior to age 15) because they may be at risk of long-term troubles such as addiction (Windle, Mun, & Windle, 2005) and educational failure (King, Meehan, Trim, & Chassin, 2006). Evidence has also demonstrated that early sexual experience can increase the level of at-risk sexual behaviors, such as sexual relationships with numerous partners and unprotected sex (Smith, 1997). In this case, adolescents are more vulnerable to at-risk sexual infections, including HIV. Schwartz and colleagues (2010) argued that youths who are not engaged in early sexual activities may display more positive long-term outcomes.

Hashim (2007) contended that Malaysian teenagers, in general, face numerous life challenges and experience distress. They are at risk of becoming frustrated and unhappy youths and may choose to get involved in negative activities such as gangsterism, drug abuse, bullying, sexual misconduct, and crime. Chin Siang and Abu Talib (2011) by reporting Diyanah (2010) stated 77% of youth were not happy with life in Malaysia. Based on this background, this study seeks to ascertain the influence of life satisfaction on youths' PYD. Abdul Kadir et al. (2012) indicated that 25% of the population would be classified as at-risk youth in Malaysia. According to the Malaysian Youth Report (Hamzah, 2007), substance abuse and underage sexual intercourse are the most prevalent risk behavior among the adolescents and youths.

Many adolescents may feel uncertain about their academic achievements and social skills and may feel less connected to their parents and peers. In the greater ecological contexts through the transition of these adolescents to new and different learning contexts, acquiring experiences and autonomy under these new social conditions become their significant developmental targets. Hence, determining PYD is a beneficial factor in the thriving of young individuals who are undergoing life changes is significant. Adolescents increasingly participate in activities outside of their homes and become more involved within peer groups during their transition period from middle school or junior high school. Meanwhile, when adolescents enjoy more freedom and power, they are expected to be self-managed, more responsible, and active participants of social activities (Bowers, Li, Kiely, Brittian, Lerner, V., & Lerner, M., 2010). Protective features such as family members, friends, and social organizations guarantee and promote positive opportunities for adolescents while growing up and transitioning into adulthood (Bellis, Downing, & Ashton, 2006). In this case, developmental studies must explore the critical influential aspects of assets on the life of adolescents (Lerner et al., 2003).

A series of recent studies drew attention to the increased crime rate, such as pornography, destructive behavior, truancy (Mey, 2010), and drug addicts (Mohamed, Marican, Elias, & Don, 2008) among Malaysian youths, thereby raising the concern over juvenile delinquency (Nasir, Zamani, Khairudin, & Wan Shahrazad, 2011). Family, peer and school environments directly or indirectly contribute to these risk behaviors (Nasir et al., 2011). In particular, negligence, as an absence of a caregiving relationship with adolescents, is a significant risk factor underlying the development of risk behaviors. Related studies showed that most of the drug addicts started abusing substance when they were still secondary school students (Ghani, Zamani, Rahman, Zainal, & Sulaiman, 2008).

This study aims to determine which among the independent variables (i.e., life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality) has a higher level of relationship with PYD within the Malaysian context. Only a few studies have examined PYD in Malaysia. Therefore, the number of comprehensive studies on PYD among adolescents within the Malaysian context is inadequate. Thus, the PYD factors among Malaysian adolescents should be further investigated to help them improve their strengths and prevent them from developing or acquiring problem behaviors. According to Aribi et al. (2007), youth development efforts in Malaysia in this era should be undertaken judiciously. The population of Malaysia, which is a multi-ethnic developing country, is increasing annually. Based on the Statistics Yearbook Malaysia (Department of Statistics, 2011) in 2010 youths constituted 42 % (10.95 million) of the 26 million Malaysian citizens. Malaysia is planning to become a fully-developed country by the year 2020. Thus, youths are considered as a significant resource and should be nurtured (Ruth & Brooks-Gun, 2003) to guarantee the supportable continuous growth of the country (Mohamad, Mohammad, Mamat, & Mamat, 2014).

1.2 Significance of study

Several aspects highlight the significance of this study. The first aspect refers to the influence of life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality on PYD; previous studies (e.g., Jellicic, Bobek, Phelps, Lerner, V., & Lerner, M., 2007; Lerner et al., 2005; Phelps et al., 2007, 2009; Zimmerman, Phelps, & Lerner, 2007; Gilman & Huebner, 2003; Bloomquist, 2010; James, Fine, & Turner, 2012) have cited these variables as positively and significantly related with each another.

The PYD perspective provides a basis for how a strength-based idea of youth can provide a revised schedule for the study of adolescent development and a different emphasis for programs and policies designed to improve the life opportunities of youths with varied circumstances. Hence, such a perspective recommends that policies should focus not only on decreasing or preventing problems, but also on nurturing conditions that encourage the attributes of thriving (Lerner et al., 2010). Positive PYD benefits both the individual development and the welfare of the social context that supports the development of all individuals (Lerner, 2004). This rationale clarifies the importance of measuring PYD for youth development in the social world of youth and for applications (e.g., community-based programs) that aim to promote youth thriving (Phelps et al., 2009). Theokas and Lerner (2006) stated that in all contexts, the assets related to individuals are the most powerful aspect in predicting PYD. They also noted that family is the most significant asset in the lives of adolescents.

Several studies have indicated the potential role of life satisfaction as a barrier against the negative effects of stress and the development of psychopathological behavior (e.g., Suldo & Huebner, 2004). Proctor, Linley, and Maltby (2009) asserted that such a finding is extremely important in promoting positive development among the youth. The literature demonstrates the need for research among children and adolescents across cultures because the majority of previous studies in this area was conducted only within the United States. Hence, Proctor, Linley, Maltby (2009) proposed that future research should assess the capacity of life satisfaction measures to transcend cultures and specific groups.

The other variable in the current study is self-image. Negative body- and self-image can adversely affect the quality of life of adolescents (ter Bogt et al., 2006). ter Bogt et al. (2006) contended that the self-image of an individual influences the choices that he/she makes, including the types of social activities he/she engages in, and that negative self-image can cause problems such as depression. Evidence suggests that teens with low self-image are more likely to engage in negative behaviors such as drug abuse (ter Bogt et al., 2006).

A common societal assumption is that having a strong spiritual core is a developmental asset for adolescents; however, very little empirical evidence supports this argument (Lerner, Roeser, & Phelps, 2009). Lerner, Albert, Anderson, and Dowling (2006a) indicated that although multiple relationships between people and contexts have been the focus of research on PYD, the role of spirituality in thriving among young people

merits further attention because it may fuel the adaptive individual and context relations that enable humans to productively contribute to the healthy development of self, family, community, and civil society. Unfortunately, despite the importance of spirituality in adolescent development, a review of the literature showed that less than 1% of the studies on children and adolescents examined the issues on spirituality and religiosity (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003).

In fact, these variables have not been thoroughly explored in the Malaysian context. The population of Malaysia, which is a multi-ethnic developing country, is increasing annually. The Department of Statistics of Malaysia (Statistical Handbook Malaysia, 2013) reported the presence of 29,906,800 citizens of all ethnicities in Malaysia in 2013. With regard to demographic variables, Theokas and Lerner (2006) revealed a significant link between gender and PYD whose outcomes are contribution and risk behavior. They further indicated that girls exhibit higher PYD and contribution but lower risk behaviors. In terms of age, the 4-H Study (Lerner, 2005) was conducted based on the grades of the participants because it was designed as a longitudinal research. Meanwhile, the findings for such an investigation were collected yearly via the grades. Thus, the current research as a cross-sectional study aims to assess PYD via the age of the participants. Meanwhile, race/ethnicity was determined to be the only significant predictor of risk behaviors. Among three different races, namely, European American, Latino, and African American, the African American respondents displayed higher scores on risk behaviors. A previous study (Schmid, Phelps, Kiely, Napolitano, Boyd, & Lerner, 2011) revealed that the respondents who have mothers with high education are more likely to be in the appropriate PYD, contribution, and depressive symptoms groups compared with the respondents whose mothers with a level of education. Approximately 8,352,900 people of this population are 10 to 24 years old. Therefore, the results of this study may provide parents with valuable information with regard to how they can help their children and adolescents thrive in numerous areas. Families can increase the safe relationships of young individuals with family members, peers, and community. Parents can realize significant features related to the positive development of their adolescent children.

Moreover, the findings of this study can support educators in their efforts to improve PYD among adolescents who are engaged with adolescence transition outcomes. Adolescents, who are at risk of developing behavior problems, such as substance abuse, suicidal tendencies, dropping out of school, depression, and delinquency, can be protected by influential and early intervention by educators. The results of this study may also guide family policy makers in planning government policies, strategies, and programs for developing and increasing family and youth well-being. They can increase the advantages of PYD through trained and experienced educators and positive programs for children and adolescents to improve their strengths.

Overall, PYD aims to promote a variety of developmental competences that youths need to become productive, contributing members of society. Instead of a pathological focus, PYD stresses the strengths, resources, and potential of young people, consequently upholding positive expectations of the contributions that youths can make to society and to their immediate environments. Moreover, PYD adopts a holistic view of development by focusing on the physical, personal, social, emotional, intellectual,

and spiritual development of the youths (Durlak et al., 2007). The findings of the current investigation can enhance our knowledge about PYD, given the lack of a comprehensive study related to PYD as a new perspective in Malaysia. This study can also be used as a reference in future research.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the level of PYD, life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor?
2. Are there any significant differences in PYD level by adolescents' age, gender, race, school location as urban or rural, and parents' level of education among adolescent students of national secondary schools of Selangor?
3. Are there any relationships between life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, spirituality and PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor?
4. Do life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality significantly predict PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor?

1.4 Research Objectives

Generally, the aim of the current study is to determine the influence of life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality on PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the level of PYD, life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor
2. To determine the differences in PYD by adolescent's age, gender, race, school location as urban or rural, and parents' level of education among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor
3. To determine the relationships between life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality with PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor

4. To determine if life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality are predictors of PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor

1.5 Research Hypothesis

Based on the aforementioned research questions and objectives, hypotheses are considered as follow:

H01. There is no significant difference in PYD level between 14 years old and 16 years old students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H02. There is no significant difference in PYD by gender among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H03. There is no significant difference in PYD by school location as urban or rural among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H04. There is no significant difference in PYD by ethnicity among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H05. There is no significant difference in PYD by parents' education among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H06. There is no significant relationship between life satisfaction and overall PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H07. There is no significant relationship between peer relationships and overall PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H08. There is no significant relationship between self-image and overall PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H09. There is no significant relationship between different parenting styles and overall PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H010. There is no significant relationship between spirituality and overall PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

H011. Life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality do not significantly predict PYD among adolescent students of national secondary schools in Selangor.

1.6 Definitions of terms

This part describes the conceptual and operational definitions of variables that were used in this study.

1.6.1 Positive Youth Development (PYD)

Conceptual definition: Development that occurs from an intentional process that promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, relationships and the support to promote outcomes of competence, character, caring, confidence, connections, and contribution (Lerner et al., 2006b).

Operational definition: The score of the PYD-VSF (Positive Youth Development very short form) scale consists of 17 items, which measure the five indicators of PYD, namely, competence (academic, social, and physical competence), confidence (self-worth, positive identity, and appearance), character (social conscience, values diversity, conduct behavior, and personal values), caring (its subscale items were an exception because it was not composed of any subscale), and connection (family, neighborhood, school, and peer). In the PYD short version, all of the items do not sufficiently illustrate PYD as a construct, and some items should not be involved when researchers intend to compute an overall PYD composite score. Specifically, the items from the physical appearance, social competence, and physical competence subscales should be eliminated from a PYD composite (Geldhof et al., 2014).

1.6.2 Life Satisfaction

Conceptual definition: This concept pertains to a judgmental procedure in which people determine the quality of their lives according to their personal matchless set of values (Shin & Johnson, 1978).

Operational definition: The score of SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) is determined via a five-item scale that measures the global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative effect).

1.6.3 Peer Relationships

Conceptual definition: The term "peer" refers to people who are about the same age or maturity level (Santrock, 2008). Peer relationship is defined by its characteristics, including receiving social care, awareness of each other's life affairs, and establishing friendly connections that can strongly influence the adjustment of a young person during adolescence more than the other stages of life (Engels, Kerr, & Stattin, 2007).

Operational definition: The score of peer attachment subscale of the revised version of IPPA-R (Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment–Revised; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) measures the grade of mutual trust, quality of communication, and degree of anger or alienation by asking 25 questions. The IPPA–R was developed to determine the whether the perceptions of adolescents toward the affective/cognitive dimension negatively or positively influences their relationships with close friends and parents, particularly on how well they play a role as sources of psychological security.

1.6.4 Self-image

Conceptual definition: ter Bogt et al. (2006) defined self-image as the conception of an individual of him-/herself and an assessment of physical features (e.g., weight, height, and appearance), personality, and personal worth.

Operational definition: The score of five different parts, which are extracted from two different parts of the Harter (1982, 1988) questionnaire, “What Am I Like”; the scale of “Social Acceptance” and “Romantic Appeal” for measuring the Personality/Social Acceptance, as well as other sub-scales from the Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI) (Garner, Olmstead & Polivy, 1983) and from the “Drive for Thinness (DT) and Body Dissatisfaction (BS)” sub-scale for determining Physical Appearance via 20 questions; this combined questionnaire was used before in the study of Bloomquist (2010).

1.6.5 Parenting Style

Conceptual definition: Darling and Steinberg (1993) defined parenting style as the emotional climate in which parents bring up their children. Parenting style has been discussed based on two significant components, namely, responsiveness and demandingness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Baumrind, 1991).

Operational definition: The scores of 10 questions in the five-point Likert-type scale, which is called PSI–II (Parenting Style Inventory II; Darling, Cumsille, & Peña-Alampay, 2005; Darling & Toyokawa, 1997).

1.6.6 Spirituality

Conceptual definition: This concept pertains to the attitude of people toward seeking a meaning in their lives based on self-transcendence or the need to be related to something greater than the individual self (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999).

Operational definition: The score of DSES (Daily Spiritual Experience Scale) is designed as a 16-item self-report for evaluating the usual experiment of linkage with the transcendent in daily life that contains some concepts, such as awe, gratitude, mercy, sense of associating with the transcendent, and compassionate love. This scale

also measures the consciousness of discernment/inspiration and the feeling of profound internal peace (Underwood, 2011).

1.7 Limitation of the study

Similar to other investigations, this study has several limitations. The first limitation refers to the type of data collection method. The data will be collected with self-report questionnaires; thus, numerous data might be missed by the respondents. The usage of this type of instrument may also miss the benefits that can be obtained from conducting interviews.

The second limitation of this study is the usage of cross-sectional design. The longitudinal design of data collection can provide more reliable results that can be valid for a long time.

The third limitation concerns the location of the investigation. This study will be conducted in Selangor, a district of Malaysia. Accordingly, the results of this study may be inappropriate to be generalized to other samples or to larger populations from other regions of Malaysia or even other countries.

1.9 Summary of the chapter

This chapter began with the introduction of the study, which discussed the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, objective of the study, and research hypotheses. The introduction was then followed by the discussion of the theoretical background, conceptual framework, definitions of terms, and limitations of the study.

This research aims to explore PYD as a new model of developmental system theory, which focuses on the strength of adolescents and the context for improving the healthy development of individuals within the Malaysian context. This study also seeks to measure the effects of important variables pertinent to PYD, including life satisfaction, peer relationships, self-image, parenting style, and spirituality. The respondents will be selected from different national secondary schools of Selangor. The subsequent chapter discusses the previous research related to this study.

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