

Character Development and Youth Leadership Mentoring

Mohd Mursyid Arshad^{1*}, Ismi Arif Ismail¹, Siti Feirusz Ahmad Fesol² and Azman Ismail³

¹Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, 43400, Serdang, Malaysia

²Faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics, Universiti Teknologi Mara (Melaka), Jasin Campus, 77300 Merlimau, Melaka, Malaysia

³Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600, Bangi, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

One approach that promotes Positive Youth Development (PYD) among youth is being involved in leadership activities. Focusing on the mentoring process in a leadership development program serves as the foundation for cultivating these positive aspects for the young generation. The purpose of this study is to explore the character development process in promoting developmental assets through youth leadership mentoring. The study was conducted using qualitative research informed by the case study paradigm that involved 13 informants through in-depth interview, participant observation and document analysis as data collections. Empirical findings from the study show that mentoring process such as the display of prudent characteristics, integrity development and preferred leadership style among youth leaders lead to character development. In conclusion, the data indicated that mentoring clearly had the potential to constitute the process of character building among youth. This youth leadership mentoring process contributes to the development of their capabilities in leadership and enhances the implementation of effective youth leadership mentoring processes.

Keywords: Character development, ecological asset, leadership, mentoring, individual asset, youth

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E-mail addresses:

m_mursyid@upm.edu.my (Mohd Mursyid Arshad)

ismi@upm.edu.my (Ismi Arif Ismail)

feys88@gmail.com (Siti Feirusz Ahmad Fesol)

azisma12@ukm.edu.my (Azman Ismail)

*Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

The Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach, which provides the theoretical basis for developing youth potential (Lerner et al., 2015), essentially requires empirical investigations to understand the character development of youth leaders by mentoring.

Researchers and practitioners concur that the involvement of young leaders in nation-building can be strengthened through wider exposure and professional training, as well as through mentoring. As a learning process, mentoring has been shown to enhance youth development outcomes such as raising the competence of youth leaders. Notwithstanding the challenges of mentoring, policy-makers of youth development programs should highlight its benefits (Woodman & Wyn, 2013).

In Malaysia, youth leadership development is a primary focus in Malaysia's development agenda as outlined in the Malaysian Youth Policy 2015 initiative. In line with Malaysia's vision of becoming a developed nation, the policy aims to strengthen the leadership development process among youth so that the nation will rank among the top countries in the world in terms of economic development, citizen well-being and innovation (Malaysian Youth Policy, 2015).

According to Hastings et al. (2011), youth leaders often do not see themselves as decision-makers because some adult leaders fail to adequately pass on the skills, experience, opportunities and motivation needed to lead. Moreover, the process of nurturing youth leadership, if not well-planned, may inhibit young leaders from actively participating in the community development process, thus resulting in youth leaders lacking a sense of connection to their communities (Christens & Dolan, 2011; Tepus, 2018).

The development of youth leadership is a priority area of Malaysia's development agenda as outlined in Malaysia's Youth Policy (2015) and Youth Societies and Youth Development Act 668 (2019). The situation is compounded by the fact that the government through policy and act has formally re-classified youth as those between 15 to 30 years, compared to the previous range of 15 to 40. With a younger cohort of youth leaders taking on formal leadership roles within the country in the near future, there is much concern regarding the leadership readiness of this group.

Scholars contend that youth leadership development requires participative learning and role models that can be emulated (Franklin & Nahari, 2018; Lerner et al., 2007). According to Li and Wang (2009), youth involvement in leadership activities is one of the approaches in the PYD concept and youth involvement in leadership activities is central to the youth development process. The focus on PYD is the basis to developing positive youth elements (Ward & Ellis, 2008), which principally requires empirical understanding to uncover youth mentoring potentials in PYD development through leadership. For decades, leadership has always been seen as a vital factor in organisational effectiveness and also in the youth development process (Aziz, et al., 2020; Rami, et al., 2020a, 2020b).

However, youth leadership development requires facilitated learning and exemplary role models. Findings from the most recent Malaysian Youth Index (2017) in

self-potential domain indicate that this is currently the situation in Malaysia, i.e. youth's readiness to lead is decreasing to 66.39 from 71.94 in 2017. In addition, there are concerns about the ability of Malaysian youth to lead. Therefore, mentoring-based leadership development programs is one of the intervention strategies to increase youth's readiness to lead. Kay and Hinds (2012) suggested that mentoring had the potential to provide such a learning process. According to Cote (2019), the development of a proactive youth identity has to do with self-regulation, self-discipline and self-reflection. These three elements are important in the development of the cognitive capacities, tendencies, attitudes and social relationships of youth embodied in the development of youth identity.

Therefore, this study was conducted to explore how mentoring-based leadership development programs could promote developmental assets in positive youth development. Through mentoring, youth are given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and build relationships with their mentors. The advantage obtained by the youth through leadership mentoring is associated with the criteria of effective youth development (Meltzer et al., 2019). The mentoring process investigated in this study involved input from mentors and the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia as the program planner and mentoring provider.

Adopting a qualitative approach, we used the case study paradigm to examine youth's ability to conduct social activities,

their exposure to community program planning, and their mastery of soft skills as a result of mentoring. We investigated whether mentoring had the potential to develop various competencies among youth, especially leadership qualities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) rests on two main concepts. The first is that youths possess inherent strengths or assets that form the foundation of their cognitive, emotional, social and behavioural development (Gestsdottir et al., 2011; Phelps et al., 2009). Second, their well-being will be enhanced when their strengths are compatible with, and facilitate, appropriate behavioural reactions to their surroundings (Benson et al., 2006), resulting in positive development. The individual development process in the PYD context involves adaptation of developmental regulations between youth strengths and asset development within a particular ecology (Phelps et al., 2009).

The PYD perspective stems initially from a positive psychological concept, the result of comparisons made by psychologists and biologists studying plasticity in the human development process. Specifically, the PYD perspective may be encapsulated in the term 'plasticity'. The term 'plasticity' implies potential for more systematic changes in human development (Lerner et al., 2005; 2007). The process requires internal and external support. According to Theokas et al. (2005), the combination of internal and external situations for the development of

PYD elements mentioned above are known as individual and ecological assets (Lerner et al., 2012).

The internal asset is an element that guides youths to make choices related to their strengths, hopeful future expectations, internal self-regulation and positive school engagement. Meanwhile, the external assets are ecological assets mostly related to positive experiences obtained from others, and the institutions they are involved with (Lerner et al., 2012). Joint benefit can arise from the individual and ecological assets in the context of their relationship with PYD through five elements ('5 Cs') (Lerner et al., 2005), as illustrated in Figure 1.

Theoretically, the ecological assets are associated with the developmental process of positive youths, consisting of the '5Cs' (confidence, competence, character, caring, connection) that encourage positive behaviour among youths (Lerner et al., 2007). When plasticity in human development is acknowledged, this will directly lead to building positive development of the individual's potential (Larson, 2006). Therefore, developmental system theory is also embedded in the youth development process, which is linked to positive youth development (Theokas et al., 2005).

Internal assets guide youth to make choices related to their strengths, such as future expectations, internal self-regulation and positive school engagement. External or ecological assets in one's environment include positive experiences with others, and the institutions with which

youth are involved (Lerner et al., 2012). As earlier stated, when individual and external assets are maximized, the result is a positive, thriving individual with five core PYD outcomes referred to as the '5Cs' (competence, confidence, character, connection and caring) (Lerner et al., 2005; 2015).

An interesting study by Årdal et al. (2018) examined the mediating effect of the '5Cs' towards the PYD on the relationship between students' perceived school empowerment and school satisfaction. A cross-sectional survey conducted among 997 students highlighted that apart from the '5Cs' elements of PYD, only three (3) elements, which were competence, confidence, and connection factors were fully mediated through the effect of school empowerment and school satisfaction. The other two 'Cs' seem to require more emphasis among the youth for them to be well rounded with positive youth development. From a PYD perspective, the role of a mentor is to collaborate with, encourage, and support the capacity of their protege to success (Larson, 2006). When youth are actively involved in the mentoring process, they are more likely to sustain positive growth and development. Therefore, the beginning of mentoring is needed to apply PYD elements in mentoring by employing the approach as suggested by Delgado (2002). This approach is in line with Lerner et al. (2013) who recommended PYD as an approach to develop youth potential.

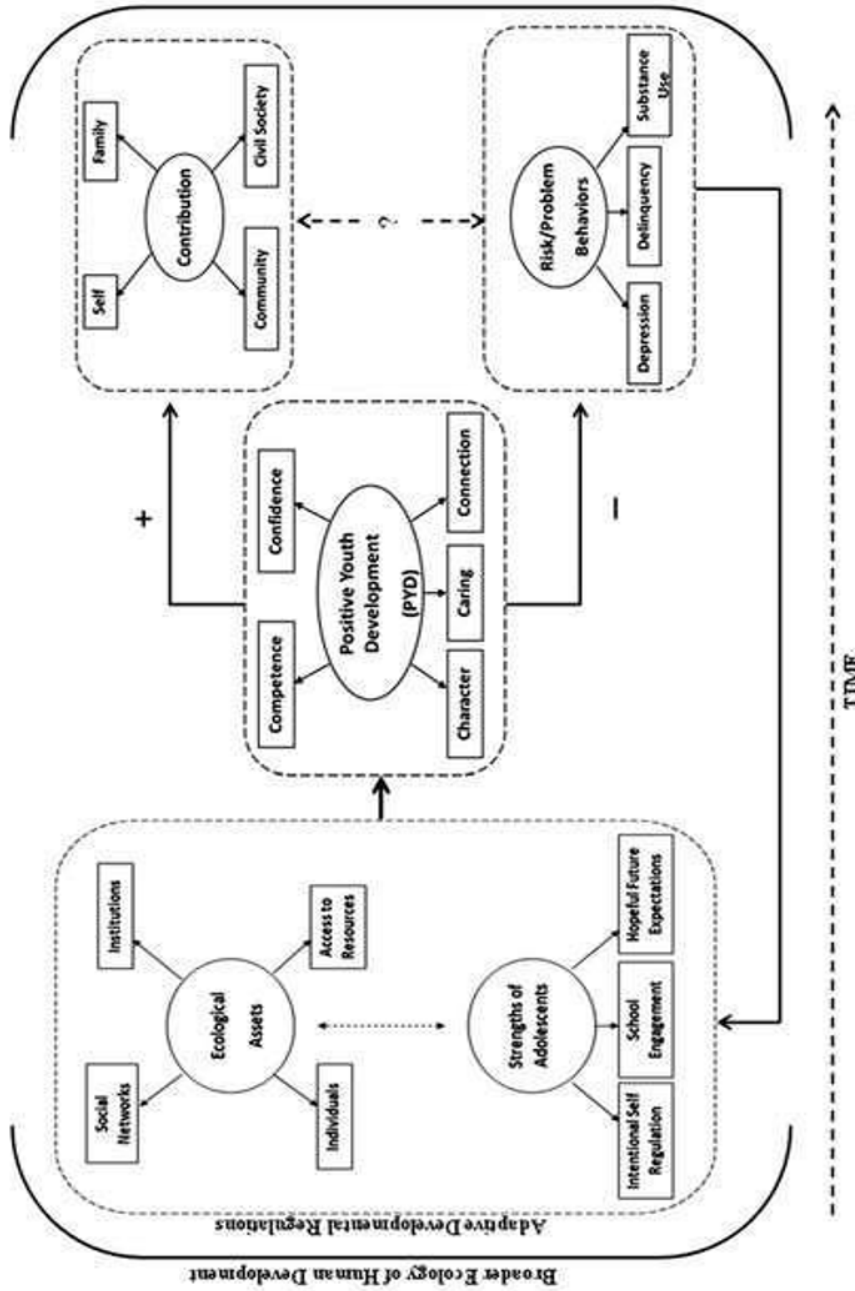


Figure 1. The relational, developmental systems model of positive individual involved in PYD (Lerner et al., 2005)

Mentoring and Leadership Development

Generally, mentoring is a relationship between two parties, in which one party (the mentor) guides the other (the mentee) through a period of change and towards an agreed objective, or assists him or her to become acquainted with a new situation (Kay & Hinds, 2012). Furthermore, leadership mentoring highlights the learning process of a one-to-one relationship, especially in traditional mentoring (Reagan-Porras, 2013), with the more senior and experienced individual as the mentor who supports the protege's career development (Eller et al, 2013; Ragins & Kram, 2007). Chaudhuri and Ghosh (2012) asserted that traditional mentoring built normative impression towards the process in which a mentor helped a mentee through a period of change.

Mentoring may take place in two situations, namely, formal and informal mentoring (DuBois et al., 2011; Hezlett, 2005), both with differences in learning development (Parise & Forret, 2008; Pryce & Keller, 2011). In addition, mentoring provides the opportunity for youth to gain access to ecological assets in the community in which they are involved. This will lead to the further attainment of the '5C' outcomes, which eventually would be reflected in contributions made by the youth (Lerner et al., 2013).

The mentoring approach makes use of an enabler to encourage innovation, learning and continuous development (Kiltz et al., 2004). The dynamic mentoring theory contends that the principle of mentoring

learning involves a close relationship between mentor and protege, whereby the latter learns by observation and demonstration by the mentor (Balcazar & Keys, 2013). Through mentoring, opportunities for gaining new experiences are made available at an exclusive level, by placing the protege under another individual's supervision (Flores, 2011; Greeson, 2013).

According to Lerner et al. (2013), positive learning outcomes from mentoring is influenced by the support given by the mentor and experiences gained by the protege. As such, youths require good role models to follow (Garcia, 2009). Hence, mentoring is a developmental process that requires involvement and commitment from both mentors and proteges (DuBois et al., 2011).

Mentoring may take place in two situations, namely, formal and informal mentoring (DuBois et al., 2011; Hezlett, 2005), both with differences in learning development (Pryce & Keller, 2011). Kram's mentoring theory in Ragins and Kram (2007) asserts that informal mentoring encourages protege to learn to develop naturally towards what is known and based on priority. Meanwhile, in formal mentoring, protege and mentor work together through a few processes with the support of an organization (Eby et al., 2013; Ragins & Kram, 2007). According to Balcazar and Keys (2013), youth mentoring relationships become stronger when mentor and protege consistently spend time together for a significant duration.

Rhodes and DuBois (2008) asserted that positive experience from the socio-emotional aspect in mentoring relationships might encourage youths to interact with others with an increased perception towards their parents, peers and adults within the proteges' social network more effectively. Besides that, the environmental factor between an individual, family and his/her surrounding also impacts the mentoring relationship and the process of nurturing positive youths (Rhodes, 2005). Therefore, youth leadership development through mentoring is relevant to positive youth development.

To cultivate and encourage both elements of PYD characteristics and positive youth contribution in youth development process, mentors need to play their roles in managing their interaction with proteges when mentoring so as to mirror three important aspects, namely skills development, youth leadership development, and relational continuity between adults and youths (Lerner et al., 2007). Learning from mentors includes emulating the behaviour or actions of mentors, inculcating charismatic values, and making a commitment towards positive transformation (Blass & Ferris, 2007; Eby et al., 2013; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Sanfey et al., 2013). Effective mentoring enables the development of youth potential by providing opportunities for youths to build up various skills, especially leadership skills that will assist in their positive development (Lerner et al., 2013).

Character Development through Leadership Mentoring

From the mentor-based youth leadership program perspective, positive behaviours and attitudes (as a result of the knowledge formation process) are indicators of successful positive youth development through the knowledge formation process, behaviour and positive attitude of the participants cultivated from the systematic program development (Lerner et al., 2005; 2011; Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007). It is important to take into account the current needs of youth when planning youth development programs (Cullen et al., 2012). A proper planning of a developmental program should explain in detail the learning outcomes based on the objectives. Leadership mentoring gives youth leaders the opportunity to make themselves worthy through their contributions to the community, based on the application of PYD elements (Benson et al., 2011). In mentoring, the protege can potentially acquire knowledge and leadership skills from his or her mentor, both formally and informally.

Concrete research by Garringer et al. (2017) led to the largest data collection effort to examine the prevalence and practices of youth mentoring programs across America. The national survey involved an information gathering from 1,271 mentoring agencies, 1,451 distinct mentoring programs, 413,237 youth served by 193,823 mentors and supported by 10,804 staff members (Garringer et al., 2017). The final results reported that there is an increasing need

for effective youth mentoring programs, creating more accessible tools and guidance, and better support and integrated “informal” mentors in order to cultivate towards positive behaviours and attitudes of successful positive youth development (Garringer et al., 2017).

Based on theoretical perspectives about mentoring and positive youth development, effective mentoring enables the development of youth potential by providing them with the opportunity to develop life and leadership skills; positive youth development will, therefore, be enhanced (Lerner et al., 2013). Besides that, the environmental factor also impacts the mentoring relationship as they interact with others in their surroundings (Rhodes, 2005). Therefore, the current study was conducted to explore the process of mentoring toward the realization of positive youth development and how the protege’s sense of contribution to the community and youth stakeholders would be enhanced through the mentoring process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A case study paradigm was used in this research that adopted a qualitative approach. The data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and supported with relevant information from group discussions, participant observations, document analysis, and field notes. Using the Malaysian National Youth Leadership Development Mentoring Program as the source for data collection, a total of 13 informants were involved in this study. They included mentors, proteges, the

program organizers and training providers, all of whom were identified by purposive sampling. The purposeful sampling of the study was based on the following criteria: a) informants were either proteges, mentors, organizers or training providers; b) proteges had achieved high scores on their assessments throughout the mentoring process; c) informants were willing to share learning experiences related to mentoring; and d) mentors were experienced in managing the mentoring processes. Snowball sampling was also carried out when participants introduced their friends to the study. Ultimately, the sample comprised those who were able and willing to provide the necessary information on the issues under study as suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) for purposive sampling strategy in qualitative research.

Initial data analysis was done immediately after the first interview. Various categories and themes were identified before the second interview was conducted. To foster a professional relationship between researchers and informants, the former established rapport to develop trust. First, the lead researcher moved into the field and identified several potential informants to be involved in the study. In several meetings, the researcher introduced the objectives of the study and sought the informants’ consent to be involved in a series of in-depth interviews. To strengthen the reliability of data obtained from the informants, the researchers sought their permission and cooperation to carry out observations of their activities.

A total of 13 informants were involved in the study and the duration of each interview was between 50 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes. As suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018), data were collected until saturation point or data redundancy was achieved. Transcriptions of the interview sessions were examined several times to capture features of talk such as emphasis, speed, tone of voice, timing and pauses during the interview. The data were further analysed through coding and categorizing of themes using NVivo software.

Trustworthiness is a concept for determining whether this study is valid and reliable and whether the study set out to investigate what it is supposed to. This study consisted of four main aspects, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. As suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), validity can be achieved by making a comparison between the descriptions and explanations, and whether these explanations fitted the description perfectly. Validity is a hallmark of qualitative research, determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, participant, or reader (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In this study, validity was achieved through the use of audit trail, member checks and peer examination. An audit trail refers to the steps adopted by the researcher at every stage of data collection and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, the researcher needs to document the preparation of the proposal, construction of interview protocol and questions, data

collection as well as the process of analysing the data. Member checks are used to reconnect the researcher to the informants to verify consistency in interpretation of the data (Silverman, 2013). The informants are subsequently contacted for clarification of facts of findings. As suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018), peer examination was also used to obtain feedback and consultation from several youth experts to verify data analysis and interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From verbatim transcripts and significant statements extracted, the findings showed how proteges developed their identity through the mentoring process. In this study, the mentoring process was found to be helpful in three ways: 1) displaying prudent characteristics; 2) promoting integrity development and; 3) shaping preferred leadership style among youth leaders.

Displaying Prudent Characteristic

The process of leadership mentoring that the protégé goes through has proven to be prudent. The experience of learning through the efforts made by the mentor will help in changing the nature of the protégé's to be humble and prudent. Working with community can give the protege the opportunity to develop the positive effect that builds on the protégé's character. Protégé 2 stated that:

“... I learned what it means to be humble. The first lesson from mentoring is being prudent. When I have no power,

I feel like I have power. But when I was empowered, I never used my power. My mentor never showed his autocratic style, conquered everything. If he can do it, how about me. Many people I have seen misused the power that had been given to them. ... ”

The value of prudent characteristic built through mentoring enables the protege to adapt that learning directly from mentor's appearance. Based on the works of Lerner et al. (2005), there are several specific steps that could be taken by mentors to develop all the five 'C' traits within their protege. The theory of developmental systems posits that the changes in protege development are assisted by mentors who prioritize positive development as a process whereby the individual and the context (related environment) are dynamically combined throughout the mutually beneficial interaction (DuBois et al., 2011; Lerner, 2004). This means that researchers study things in their mentoring settings, attempting to interpret protégé's passion in terms of the leadership meanings to them. Protege 4 stated that:

“... But when I saw my mentor who was so passionate about the leadership of these young people, so I started to engage. I started to meet, I felt I needed to go through this local youth leader. No matter what I say I have a great idea, they have a way... any idea or thing, easily through a local youth leader. ... ”.

A sense of accountability to the person being led is always instilled by the mentor. The responsibilities of good leaders must be based on prudent ways and approaches. Protégé 6 stated:

“... I can understand how people approach it. How to tackle people of different races. By the way the term is called grassroot approach, with humility. The way we approach people of different ages. He doesn't see a gap. When there's no gap, people like it. Even when I see my mentor, I don't care what the people call him. He has no gap. He treats everyone. People came and saw that people liked him so much...”.

Prudent leadership is shared with mentors and also helps in improving PYD. To enhance PYD characteristics and youth contribution, mentors need to interact with protégé to determine effective youth development programs (Agans et al., 2014), where mentors can ensure that youth gain access to community-based ecological assets and develop '5C'. Based on the contextual discussion of Lerner et al. (2013), mentoring works to ensure that protégés follow the mentor's personality. Indirectly, youth will make their mentors an example to follow (Meltzer et al., 2019).

Promoting Integrity Development

The application of integrated leadership has been an important aspect of the protégé in the pioneer process of character development. The value of integrity implemented during the tenure affects the value of the protégé's

leadership. This is acknowledged by Protégé 1 who stated:

“...in terms of the value of integrity I always think about before I do anything. What the mentor emphasized to me and what he learned through his treatment really deepened in me. It is my integrity that makes me appreciate what I do. We don't have to do it because someone else is watching. Indirectly, those values of integrity are embedded in myself... ”

The process of building the protégé's inner strength in mentoring is also coupled with the value of honesty by the mentor in strengthening the protégé's stand in the matter of abuse. This was acknowledged by Mentor 1 who sought to ensure the value of honesty was applied to the protégé. Through mentoring, youths are given the opportunity to develop and hone youth leadership skills, as well as maintain the relationship between youth and adults as mentors. The advantage obtained by youths through leadership mentoring is associated with the criteria of effective youth development. Other than that, it provides the opportunity for youths to gain wide access and connection using the ecological assets in the community they are involved in. Protege 5 told:

“... From an integrity standpoint, principles are important, values are important for developing young leaders. To teach them leadership, in governance for example, young leaders should be the spokesmen for the people on leakage, on abuses so that they are aware that integrity is a practice and culture. ... ”

Mentor-based integrity also shaped the protégé's stand and directly prepared young leaders for the future. The mentor emphasized that integrity begins with what is said. Rhodes (2005), Rhodes and Dubois, (2008) and DuBois et al. (2011) suggested that learning through mentoring might contribute to the protege's social-emotional, cognitive and identity development. This element is important in producing leaders who have principles. Protégé 5 stated:

“...What I learned indirectly, as a leader, we must take care of what we say. It is our integrity in what we say. It really makes the preparation, although it looks simple. Sometimes it looks like it's ok, but he still screws up. Every time whenever he goes for delivering speech, with what we say, it is our intention to do it. ... ”

Youth character development involves respect for social and cultural rules, good manners, good and bad judgment and integrity (Agans et al., 2014). According to Lerner et al. (2013), youth characters also include youths who respect social and cultural norms, maintain attitude, morality, and integrity. Youth is considered to have a positive attitude when it comes to maintaining that quality all the time even when no one else sees it (Geldholf et al., 2015). This will directly lead to the formation of the '5Cs' which are essential in developing youths who can contribute positively to the community (Lerner et al., 2007).

Shaping Preferred Leadership Style

Mentoring has shaped the way of protégé's leadership. Proteges, who can easily adapt to any environment, including the mentoring environment, are viewed as individuals with the potential to elevate their self-development. Eventually, the supportive ecosystem will contribute towards positive development of family, the community and civil society (Theokas et al., 2005). Hence, mentoring is an important intervention to develop the potentials of youth. Protege 6 acknowledged:

"... I appreciate the mentor leadership style that is more friendly and approachable to the community. As I said earlier, if anyone wants to complain, he'll be a good listener. The way he acts to solve problems is so efficient. I've even been asked to contact a specific person to resolve the issue. ..."

Leadership qualities that a mentor provides as an approachable leader enable informants to reflect on the characteristics of leaders that are needed and can be modelled. According to Cote (2019), the development of a proactive youth identity has to do with self-regulation, self-discipline and self-reflection and these are important in the development of youth identity. The matter was stated by Protégé 3

"... My mentor character, he respects everyone he meets. He's hard to tell the truth. Who wants to meet her, no matter what, sometimes eh, is the Minister's networking? If he can fulfil it, he will. I

can learn how to mentor and I think this leader is the people's right. ..."

Based on protégé's past experience, the protégé is able to employ mentors to showcase their leadership to subordinates. The mentor has encouraged the protégé to adapt in the same way that he now plays. Protégé 6 acknowledged:

"... It's not easy to get in her area. There are places to go by helicopter, pick-up trucks along timber trails, and there are hours to go by boat. But the spirit of the mentor's approach to the people really impressed me. I'm so impressed. So I'm more committed to helping her and I also tend to be closer to the people, especially those living in the interior. I'm enjoying what I'm doing now. ..."

Based on these findings, the function of a leader as a mentor in a social system is to prioritize the needs of the people. The mentoring method has been shown to be an effective platform to develop youth leadership through access to networking with role models, as well as expand social networks, and access to resources which are the elements in the ecological asset as discussed by Lerner et al. (2005). According to Silbereisen and Lerner (2007), these changes have to do with the development of cognitive capabilities, tendencies, attitudes and social relationships. Therefore, effective youth mentoring programs are creating more accessible tools and guidance, and better support to cultivate towards positive behaviours and attitudes of successful positive youth development (Garringer

et al., 2017). Indirectly, mentoring has increased the social capacity of youth by connecting youth with institutions and society (Lerner et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to explore how youth who participated in leadership programs that incorporate mentoring, are nurtured to inculcate positive traits promoted by PYD. The study findings indicated that character development occurred not only during mentoring, but also in the locus of the mentor's organizational community. Previous studies suggest that mentoring can assist in the grooming of youth leaders, but few studies have explored how this occurs. Thus, character development through youth leadership mentoring was not limited only to what occurred within the one-to-one mentor-protégé dyad. This study also found that traits characterised by the '5Cs' in Positive Youth Development (PYD) were developed and strengthened through mentoring. It involves identifying the needs of protégés and then building up the competencies needed to become successful adults by not dismissing them as individuals without potential. Mentors can delve into their protégés' ability as a resource that can be developed and strengthened, whereby their protégés should be nurtured to become effective leaders. With current technology, several well-known personality inventories that are available online can be used by mentors to easily analyse the needs and required character development traits of their protégés.

The utmost priority is to ensure effective mentoring is incorporated in the character development of youth leadership so that the process of producing new leadership talents among youths can be implemented accordingly. The effectiveness of youth mentoring programs is also directly dependent on the planning of leadership development programs. The ability of mentoring techniques in developing character of youth leadership can be seen more clearly if the process of knowledge development, attitude and practice are cultivated to engender a deeper understanding in a case study. However, the mentoring process is not just a simple or easy knowledge transmission to measure in the form of skills, since it also focuses on how far true leadership quality incorporates the PYD elements in youth development processes. The youth are encouraged to take initiatives to enrol into online youth mentoring and leadership programs either offered by their institutions or other organizations in order to improve their leadership quality.

Mentors need to play their responsibilities by providing their protégés some space for themselves to easily adapt to different environments and situations. This mentoring ecosystem can build up the leadership developmental process where both parties, namely the mentors and protégés, collaboratively decide on the potentials to be developed and supported. Mentors should ensure that the form of interaction with their protégé in mentoring mirrors three aspects, namely skills development,

leadership development, and relationship continuity, even after they have ended their formal mentoring. The influence that mentors have on their protégé's character during the mentoring process allows youths to be seen as individuals with the potential to develop themselves and contribute to the community and society.

FUTURE WORKS

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has forced the education sector to fully utilise the e-mentoring and online learning (e-learning) platform to support the continuity of mentoring, teaching and learning. For future works, this study is interested to further explore the youth's perception towards the implementation of the youth e-mentoring programs using an online learning platform and its effectiveness in the development of youth leadership character.

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