

Relationship of Youth Development with Life Satisfaction, Intentional Self-Regulation, Parental Education and Hope

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Abstract

The present research, focused on the realm of Positive Youth Development (PYD), i.e., a youth-centric developmental approach aimed at mitigating problem behaviors through a focus on their innate capabilities and optimistic aspirations. The central objectives of this comprehensive investigation encompassed examining the interplay between intentional self-regulation and hope about PYD and its subsequent impact on life satisfaction. Additionally, the study sought to elucidate the role played by parents' educational level in fostering adolescents' positive development. This study used a sample comprising 385 students from the University of Peshawar, aged between 18 and 21 (mean age = 19.57, standard deviation = 1.05). Data collection involved the administration of four self-report scales, namely the Bridge Positive Youth Development scale (Lopez et al., 2014), the selection optimization and compensation scale (Baltes & Freund, 1999), the hopeful future expectations scale (Lerner et al., 2007), and satisfaction with life scale (Diener et al., 1985). The findings from the regression analysis proved that individuals possessing intentional self-regulation and hope exhibit positive developmental trajectories. Moreover, the correlation coefficient underscored a positive association, revealing that individuals with higher PYD scores tend to experience heightened levels of life satisfaction. Furthermore, the One-way ANOVA analysis results did not reveal any statistically significant differences in positive youth development among individuals based on their parents' educational attainment. These empirical findings hold substantial implications for policy formulation and program design targeted at fostering the positive development of youth. They offer valuable insights to practitioners, enabling them to proactively address issues related to anxiety and depression by infusing a sense of purpose and meaning into the lives of adolescents.

Keywords: Positive Youth Development, Intentional Self-Regulation, Hope.

Introduction

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood from 11 to 21. During this transformative period, they undergo profound psychological and socioemotional changes (Steinberg, 1989). As they aspire to become successful adults, adolescents actively cultivate their identities, chart their future paths, and determine their societal roles (Côté, 2009). Hill (1983) articulated a comprehensive model comprising three fundamental components: biological, cognitive, and social. This model posits that puberty triggers shifts in thought processes, prompting individuals to assume new societal roles (Steinberg, 1989).

In the 20th century, they realized that adolescents need special attention to accomplish successful development. The methods of nurturing and guiding youth have evolved from old historical practices, prompting a need to redefine the approaches to nurturing that can be

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accomplished within educational settings and communities (Weissberg & Greenberg, 1997). Initially, the intervention-based approach was common, providing support when problems arose. However, approximately three decades ago, a prevention-focused approach emerged, emphasizing proactive efforts to avert the likely issues by enhancing the lifestyles of young individuals (Catalano et al., 2015).

Positive Youth Development (PYD) captures a framework for adolescent development that highlights their inherent capabilities. It shifts the focus from adolescents' limitations to their strengths and potentials (Damon, 2004). This perspective views youth as valuable assets needing nurturing rather than problems demanding solutions (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

Operationally, PYD is elucidated through a 5C model, encompassing five core facets: competence, confidence, caring, connection, and character. *Competence* encompasses cognitive, social, and academic competency, while *Confidence* pertains to an individual's self-belief in their abilities and morals. *Caring* relates to empathy and compassion toward others, while *Character* denotes one's moral values and commitment to ethical conduct. Lastly, *connection* reflects an individual's social engagement (Lerner et al., 2005). Cultivating these 5Cs ultimately gives rise to a sixth C: *Contribution*, encompassing contributions to society, family, and self (Kiadarbandsari et al., 2016). Developing these indicators leads to positive life outcomes and reduces the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors (Jelicic et al., 2007).

During adolescence, a concept of personal future starts to develop that integrates with the process of self-regulation (Brandtstadter, 1998). *Intentional Self-Regulation* involves goal setting, selecting appropriate behaviors to achieve those goals, and their diligent execution (Bandura, 2005). The SOC model describes adolescents' intentional self-regulation and the related transformations: Selection, Optimization, and Compensation (Freund & Baltes, 2006). *Selection* entails identifying personal goals, *optimization* involves the strategic choice of behaviors to attain those goals, and *compensation* refers to the ability to adapt behaviors when obstacles impede progress (Baltes, 2006). Within Selection, two essential facets are Elective Selection (ES), where individuals choose personally meaningful goals, and Loss-Based Selection (LBS), where new goals are adopted when challenges disrupt the pursuit of initial objectives (Freund & Baltes, 2002). LBS plays a pivotal role in adolescent development, allowing them to adapt when facing obstacles or resource limitations (Lerner & Johnson, 2015). As an indicator of ISR, the SOC model positively influences PYD while mitigating problem behaviors in individuals. Adolescents with lower ISR levels are more prone to experiencing behavioral issues (Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2007).

Several studies suggest that grade 5 students in the US exhibit ISR skills around ages 12 and 13, which correlate with PYD's 5C model (Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2007; Lerner et al., 2005). In summary, individuals with robust ISR skills learn from challenges, offering multiple solutions to surmount difficulties and enhancing their coping abilities (Trommsdorff, 2012). ISR skills also demonstrate relevance to adolescence in cultures beyond the US, albeit with variations in development and function across cultural contexts (Gestsdottir et al., 2015). Gestsdóttir and colleagues (Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2007; Gestsdóttir et al., 2009) have established that throughout adolescence, ISR interrelates with positive developmental outcomes (Schmid, 2011). Another valuable skill intertwined with positive development and goal management is cultivating hope and positive expectations (Schmid et al., 2011).

Hope is characterized by an individual's belief in their ability to plan and pursue their goals. Within hopeful thinking, two essential elements emerge planning and motivation. According to Snyder (2002), hopeful thoughts have three core components: goals, agency, and pathways. All mental processes revolve around these goals (Snyder et al., 1997). *Agency* signifies individuals' drive and motivation to achieve their goals, while pathways encompass the steps taken to realize these objectives. Those with high hope levels identify multiple routes to attain their desired outcomes. In contrast, individuals with lower hope may struggle to discern even

one viable path (Snyder, 1994a, 1994b, as cited in Snyder, 2002). Positive emotions also significantly influence hope; individuals experiencing positive emotions may find it easier to pursue their goals, whereas those with a less optimistic outlook may falter in the face of obstacles, potentially abandoning their goals altogether.

The concepts of hopeful future expectations and ISR are theoretically intertwined and collectively contribute to PYD. During adolescence, nurturing an optimistic vision of a successful future, coupled with SOC skills in ISR, proves pivotal in yielding positive outcomes and fostering desirable behaviors (Schmid et al., 2011).

Satisfaction with life entails an individual's assessment of their overall quality of life, drawing from evaluations of various facets, including health, family, and societal relationships (Rojas, 2004). It hinges on the subjective evaluation of specific life aspects or life as a whole (Diener et al., 1999). Factors such as optimism, self-control, self-esteem, and extraversion, as well as interpersonal elements like relationships offering emotional support (Konu et al., 2003) and relationships with parents (Shek, 2005a, 2005b), exhibit positive associations with life satisfaction (Ben-Zur, 2003).

Two prominent theories inform our understanding of satisfaction with life: the top-down and bottom-up theories (Diener, 1984). The top-down theory posits that satisfaction across various life domains stems from an individual's overall life satisfaction. Conversely, the bottom-up theory suggests that satisfaction in specific life domains cascades upward to influence overall life satisfaction (Heady et al., 1991).

Rationale

The primary objective of this research endeavor is to explore whether two fundamental concepts, hope and intentional self-regulation (ISR), play pivotal roles in shaping Positive Youth Development (PYD) among late adolescents in Pakistan.

Presently, Pakistan stands as one of the world's youngest nations, boasting a remarkably high fertility rate, which has led to an escalating youth population. Forecasts indicate that in 2040, Pakistan's population under 30 is expected to surge to approximately 148 million. This demographic landscape underscores the urgency and significance of investing in studies that foster positive youth development.

Development, in the context of this research, adheres to a people-centric approach to human development (Korten, 1984). It signifies an opportunity to enhance individuals' lives and well-being (Najam & Bari, 2017).

Positively developed youth have the potential to become valuable assets for a nation, catalyzing political and socioeconomic growth. Conversely, if youth are not nurtured positively, it can lead to unemployment, lack of education, and engagement in risky behaviors (Najam & Bari, 2017). These stark realities underscore the imperative need for dedicated research on youth development in Pakistan.

Cultivating Intentional Self-Regulation (ISR) skills is essential for nurturing positive and healthy development. An individual's ability to pursue their goals hinges on the behaviors instilled by ISR skills (Damon et al., 2003), and the motivation to pursue these goals is derived from harboring positive expectations and hope. ISR and Hope have emerged as predictors of PYD among 5th to 9th graders in the United States (Schmid et al., 2011). This study seeks to ascertain whether ISR and hope influence PYD in late adolescents, shedding light on the interplay between these constructs within the context of Pakistani youth. Furthermore, it has been observed that PYD is closely associated with life satisfaction and the extent to which adolescents achieve positive development.

Recent years have witnessed a concerning rise in suicide rates among adolescents, often attributed to a lack of life satisfaction. Disturbingly, reports indicate that approximately 1,100 college students have tragically taken their own lives (Mayar, 2009). The absence of positive

development may contribute to these distressing statistics. Furthermore, Pakistan has seen a surge in drug addiction, with around 40,000 individuals succumbing to this affliction each year. Notably, a significant portion of these people with an addiction are students in educational institutions under 24 years of age (Qasim, 2018).

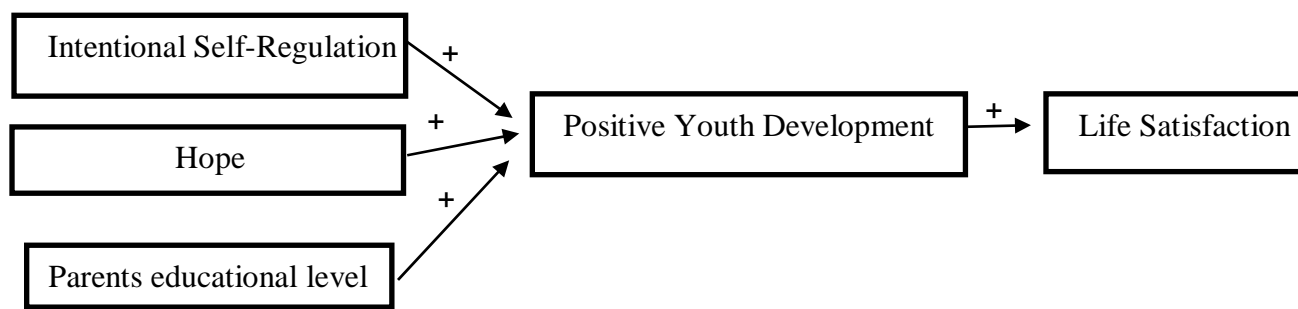
Adolescents may, at times, grapple with a sense of detachment and disconnection, struggling to find meaning in their lives and encountering difficulties in setting and pursuing meaningful goals (Larson, 2000). This emotional disconnection among adolescents can manifest in a range of behavioral and psychological issues, many of which can be traced back to a deficit in positive development. By shifting the focus toward nurturing the positive aspects of individuals, it becomes possible to mitigate the likelihood of their engagement in risky behaviors (Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2007), thereby fostering a healthier and more positive developmental trajectory for youth in Pakistan.

Objectives

Keeping in view the rationale of the study, the following objectives are formed for the study:

1. To investigate how intentional self-regulation and hope impacts positive youth development.
2. To explore the direction of relationship of positive youth development with life satisfaction.
3. To differentiate positive youth development scores on the basis of parental education.

Figure 1: Model of the study



Hypotheses

1. Intentional self-regulation and hope will have an impact on positive youth development.
2. There will be a positive correlation between positive youth development and satisfaction with life scales.
3. Differences in parental education will show different scores on PYD.

Methodology

Sample

Data collection involved enrolling 385 students from various departments at the University of Peshawar using the convenience sampling technique. The selected participants were in the late adolescence age bracket, ranging from 18 to 21 years (mean age = 19.57, standard deviation = 1.05). The sample size was determined using the Raosoft sample size calculator (Raosoft, 2004). Regarding the educational background of the participants' parents, the analysis revealed that 18.4% of the mothers had received no formal education, 38% possessed intermediate-level education, and 43.6% held graduate degrees. Among the fathers, 2.3% were uneducated, 39.7% had intermediate-level education, and 58% were graduates.

Instruments

Data collection involved the use of the following standardized measurement tools:

Demographic Sheet: This comprehensive sheet included participant demographic details, such as gender, age, and the educational background of their parents.

Selection Optimization and Compensation Scale (SOC Scale, Baltes & Freund, 1999): To assess Intentional Self-Regulation (ISR) skills, the SOC Scale (Baltes & Freund, 1999) was administered. A condensed version of the SOC comprising 12 items was used, featuring four subscales: Elective Selection, Loss-based Selection, Optimization, and Compensation, each consisting of three items. Each item presented two scenarios—one involving SOC behavior and the other entailing risky behavior. Participants were required to select the behavior they would adopt in such situations. This scale employed a dichotomous rating system. Given its non-tau equivalence, reliability was assessed using Raykov's composite reliability, which yielded a score of 0.71 (Raykov, 1997). The scale's discriminant and convergent validity was validated through correlations with constructs such as hierarchical thinking styles ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$) and goal pursuit ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, it exhibited a positive correlation with measures of wellbeing (Freund & Baltes, 2002).

Bridge-Positive Youth Development Scale (Lopez et al., 2014): The Bridge-Positive Youth Development Scale, developed by Lopez et al. (2014), was employed to gauge the extent of Positive Youth Development (PYD) among study participants. This scale, based on the 5C's model by Lerner et al. (2005), comprises five subscales: Confidence, Competence, Caring, Character, and Connection. It uses a four-point Likert scale ranging from 'NO!' (1) to 'YES!!' (4), with a polytomous rating system. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated a strong model fit, with high reliability supported by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92 (CFI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.02) (Lopez et al., 2014).

Hopeful Future Expectations Scale (Lerner et al., 2011): The Hopeful Future Expectations Scale (HFE), resulting from a 4H study on PYD (Lerner et al., 2011), was employed to assess hope levels among participants. Comprising 12 items, this scale utilizes a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). It demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94 (Schmid et al., 2011). Convergent and discriminant validity were established through positive correlations with general Self-Concept ($r = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$) and Optimism ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$), as well as negative correlations with depression ($r = -0.26$) and anxiety ($r = -0.18$, $p < 0.01$) (Ivou et al., 2016).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985): Developed by Diener et al. (1985), the Satisfaction with Life (SWL) scale comprises five items, utilizing a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' The scale's convergent and discriminant validity is underscored by positive associations with Psychological Resilience ($r = 0.46$), Subjective Happiness ($r = 0.61$), and Meaning in Life ($r = 0.47$), along with negative associations with Depression ($r = -0.42$), Negative Emotions ($r = -0.26$), and Stress ($r = -0.27$) (Galanakis et al., 2017). It yielded a coefficient alpha of 0.87 (Maroufizadeh et al., 2016).

Procedures

To collect data, students from different departments at the University of Peshawar were approached. Participants were briefed about the study's objectives, and any queries regarding the study or the questionnaires were addressed. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each participant. Comprehensive instructions regarding the employed scales were provided prior to administering the assessments. Following the completion of all data collection tools, participants were thanked for their valuable contributions. In light of the pandemic, online surveys were conducted. The tools were consolidated into a Google Form, and the link was circulated among university students. Subsequently, the data gathered from both physical and online surveys were subjected to

rigorous statistical analysis to examine the research hypotheses.

Results

Table 1: Psychometric properties of the PYD, SOC, HFE and SWL scales

Scales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	Cronbach's/composite reliability
PYD	109.75	14.41	68-160	.85
SOC	11.32	.54	9-12	.71
HFE	47.89	7.044	12-60	.84
SWL	23.25	6.12	5-35	.70

Note: PYD = Positive Youth Development, SOC = Selection, Optimization and Compensation scale, HFE = Hopeful Future Expectations scale and SWL = Satisfaction With Life scale

Table 1 shows high reliability indices i.e., greater than .70 for all the scales.

Table 2: Multiple regression analysis of ISR and, HFE regressed upon PYD

Variables	Model 1		
	B	β	SE
Constant	56.14		13.93
Intentional Self-Regulation	.67	.025	1.19
Hope	.96	.47	.093
R ²	0.22		
ΔR	0.21		

Note: n= 385.

Model 1 shows an overall significant ($P < .001$) regression model with the independent variables ISR and hope predicting 22% of the variance in Positive Youth Development.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients between PYD and SWL scales

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Positive Youth Development	385	23.25	6.12	-						
Satisfaction With Life	385	109.75	14.41	.39**	-					
Competence	385	21.36	4.54	.72**	.22**	-				
Confidence	385	24.68	4.21	.72**	.35**	.43**	-			
Connection	385	18.68	3.45	.702**	.22**	.41**	.36**	-		
Character	385	25.78	4.11	.77**	.29**	.42**	.43**	.49**	-	
Caring	385	19.22	3.91	.62**	.31**	.21**	.31**	.30**	.42**	-

Note: PYD= Positive Youth Development and SWL = Satisfaction with Life ; **p<0.01

Table 3 indicate interscale correlations between PYD and SWL along with their subscales. Findings show a positive correlation between PYD and SWL ($r = .39$). Similarly, among the subscales of PYD, Confidence contributed the most to life satisfaction ($r = .35$) followed by Caring ($r = .31$). Character also showed significant positive correlation with satisfaction with life ($r = .29$). Whereas, Competence and Connection, showed least contribution to life satisfaction (.22).

Table 4: One-way ANOVA showing differences in PYD scores based on difference in education level of father and mother

Measure	Uneducated		Intermediate		Graduate		F	n ²
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Mother PYD	108.24	13.57	110.96	13.78	109.34	15.26	0.97	0.07
Father PYD	107.33	11.13	111.54	14.58	108.62	14.33	1.99	0.10

Note: PYD = Positive Youth Development

Table 4 indicates that parents' qualification levels do not significantly differ from their children's PYD scores.

Discussion

This study used convenience sampling to enroll 385 students from various departments at the University of Peshawar. The sample size determination was based on the Raosoft sample size calculator, ensuring adequate statistical power. Standardized measurement tools provided reliable and valid data, such as the SOC Scale for ISR, the Bridge-Positive Youth Development Scale for PYD, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale.

The primary focus of this study was to probe into the realm of Positive Youth Development (PYD) among adolescents. Recognizing PYD as a pivotal factor in the transition from adolescence to adulthood, it was deemed imperative to identify the intricate web of variables that underpin positive development during this crucial phase. This research endeavored to scrutinize the interplay between Intentional Self-Regulation (ISR) and hope about PYD and investigate the nexus between PYD and life satisfaction. Additionally, it sought to discern the role of parents' educational levels in shaping the PYD trajectory of their offspring.

Hypotheses and Findings

To investigate the first hypothesis, a multiple regression analysis was employed to explore the connection between ISR, hope, and PYD. The outcomes illuminated that ISR and hope collectively accounted for 22% of the variance in positive youth development. These findings support the hypothesis positing that ISR and hope are predictors of PYD. It aligns with prior research highlighting the interconnectedness of ISR skills and PYD throughout adolescence (Gestsdottir et al., 2009). As ISR skills flourish in individuals, their positive development thrives, concurrently mitigating the likelihood of their involvement in problematic behaviors (Freund & Baltes, 2002). Giving youth ample opportunities to nurture their strengths and steer negative behaviors propels them toward a successful transition into adulthood (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Schmid and colleagues' research in 2011 also corroborates this study's results, affirming the interdependence of ISR and hope and their role in steering youth toward positive development. Individuals are adept at setting goals, devising action plans to attain them, and harboring positive expectations or hopes to be poised for a fulfilling life. Hope and ISR skills are imperative drivers for life goal achievement and are robust predictors of PYD (Synder et al., 1997). Low ISR skills amplify adolescents' susceptibility to engage in harmful behaviors (Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2007).

The second hypothesis postulated that individuals scoring high on the bridge PYD scale would also score high on the satisfaction with life scale. This was scrutinized using a correlation coefficient to discern the association between PYD and life satisfaction, and the results affirmatively revealed a positive relationship ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$). In alignment with the 5Cs model of PYD, cultivating the five Cs—competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring—culminates in a sixth C, known as "contribution." Positive development in adolescents hinges on the presence and interconnectivity of these 5Cs (Dukakis et al., 2009). Furthermore,

this study unearthed that PYD substantially contributes to overall life satisfaction, with each PYD indicator individually bolstering life satisfaction. Among these indicators, confidence emerges as the paramount influencer. Confidence encompasses facets such as self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-image, and self-respect. Individuals boasting a positive self-assessment tend to lead happier and more satisfying lives (Hill, 2015). Profound disparities exist between highly confident individuals and their less confident counterparts. Individuals with high confidence levels project faith in their decision-making about goals and the paths chosen to achieve them. Conversely, when confronted with goal-related challenges, those with low confidence tend to experience disappointment and hopelessness and react more negatively, culminating in reduced life satisfaction and overall happiness (McLeod, 2012).

The final hypothesis of the research posited that there would be a significant difference in the scores of participants with different parental education levels concerning positive youth development. One-way ANOVA was employed to scrutinize this hypothesis. Intriguingly, the analysis unveiled that parental education levels did not significantly impact the positive development of adolescents. Several factors may contribute to these results. For instance, highly educated parents often need help with demanding work commitments, leading to limited availability for their children.

Consequently, these parents may be distracted from fulfilling their parenting responsibilities, potentially causing stress in their children (Heinrich, 2014). Children with working parents may also be more prone to engage in problematic behaviors and experience academic underperformance due to the lack of parental supervision (Waldfogel, 2015). Another factor underpinning these non-significant results is the unequal data distribution across the two parental education level categories. Balanced data distribution yielded different outcomes. Additionally, the rapidly increasing use of technology among parents, resulting in increased screen time, may compromise the time spent with their children, subsequently impacting their development. This facet remains ripe for exploration in future research endeavors, shedding light on how parents' technological engagement influences their children's positive development.

Conclusion

This investigation has successfully elucidated the intricate relationship between Intentional Self-Regulation (ISR) and hope with Positive Youth Development (PYD). It has been found that hope and ISR are crucial predictors of PYD, especially during late adolescence. The study also reveals a strong correlation between PYD and life satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of adolescents' ability to set life goals, develop actionable plans, and maintain hope for achieving these goals. Adolescents who possess these attributes demonstrate positive developmental trajectories, which are closely linked to higher levels of life satisfaction.

Additionally, this study highlights that parents' educational levels do not significantly influence their children's positive youth development. This finding underscores that PYD is more strongly associated with personal attributes such as ISR and hope rather than external factors like parental education.

In summary, fostering ISR and hope in adolescents is critical for their positive development and overall life satisfaction. These insights provide valuable guidance for educators, parents, and policymakers aiming to support and enhance positive developmental outcomes in youth.

Suggestions

Future studies in positive youth development can benefit from several recommendations. Future research should encompass participants from diverse regions across Pakistan to enhance the generalizability of findings to enhance the generalizability of findings. Moreover, to yield more nuanced insights into the influence of PYD on life satisfaction, researchers should

diligently control for extraneous variables. Deeper investigations into the impact of different variables on individual predictors of PYD can provide a richer understanding of the underlying dynamics. This study primarily explored the direct relationships between ISR, hope, and PYD, but future research could investigate these variables as potential mediators, shedding light on their indirect effects. Lastly, developing an indigenous theory and scale for PYD tailored specifically to Pakistani youth is a promising avenue for future research, enabling a more precise measurement of PYD in this unique cultural context.

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