Positive Youth Development through Sport: A Narrative Review

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Abstract

The global issue of the importance of positive youth development has become an interesting topic to be studied more deeply. This is evidenced by the number of research results discussing positive youth development (PYD) in the sports context. This research generally aimed to examine the critical role of sport in forming PYD through the study on the research result development from time to time and strengthen the results of previous studies. The research was conducted using a literature review method with the narrative type. The article search was conducted to identify PYD through sports research results. The publication period of articles was quoted from 2000 to 2019. Database search was conducted through Google Scholar, Tailor and Francis, Elsevier, Science Direct, and Sage using positive youth development and development through sports keywords. All articles found as primary data were analyzed using critical appraisal analysis techniques, namely the process of analyzing relevant articles related to the results and theoretical basis being studied. The analysis and synthesis results show that sports, in general, can develop positive youth development, such as physical fitness development, social development, and life skill development, as the benchmarks for the country's success with youth as agents of change in the future. Therefore, it is important for a country to use sport to develop positive youth through sports activities.

Keywords:
development through sport, life skills, positive youth development (PYD)
INTRODUCTION

Mental A sports approach has a contribution to a person's social and personal development (Ha et al., 2015), one of which is to provide meaningful developmental experiences for adolescents (Escarti et al., 2010) and participates in programs relevant to positive youth development perspectives (PYD), such as increased self-control, goal setting, and leadership skills (Fraser-thomas et al., 2007). In addition, research results generally believe that, through the participation in sports, children and youth learn values and skills that would serve them to prepare for the rest of their lives (Danish et al., 2004) and have the potential to facilitate positive development outcomes (Turnnidge et al., 2014).

One of the research results shows a relationship between a high-performance sports environment and PYD (O’Connor et al., 2019). The increase in self-confidence evidenced the cognitive abilities possessed by athletes at high-performance levels, a strong coach-athlete relationship, and a higher level of pro-social behavior compared to anti-social behavior (O’Connor et al., 2019). The study results prove that sport is important for youth development in various aspects, especially in the social aspect; even sports intervention is sometimes seen as a solution for social problems related to adolescents (Armour et al., 2013).

Basically, PYD is a developmental concept considering the strengths because children and adolescents are believed to have resources to develop themselves based on the problems they solve (Lerner et al., 2005) to encourage the acquisition of life skills in adolescents through the activities and sports programs they carry out (Kochanek & Erickson, 2019). Therefore, the PYD concept has been widely implemented to study the involvement of children and adolescents in various sports program activities (N. Holt & Neely, 2011; Rismayadi et al., 2020; Anira et al., 2021).

Based on the inductive metadata analysis results, there are three categories of PYD climate, including relationships with adults, relationships with peers, and parental involvement (N. L. Holt et al., 2017). The three PYD climate categories illustrate what happens in sports because sports participation positively impacts physical fitness at a practical level (Prabowo & Soenyo-to, 2020). The most significant impact on the development of social skills (Ding & Sugiyama, 2017; Nugraha et al., 2018; Opstoe et al., 202; Slamet et al., 2021) and life skills as the variables that become the focus of assessing the PYD program (Bean & Forneris, 2017; N. L. Holt et al., 2017; Gould & Carson, 2008).

PYD is a picture of a paradigm shift from the development of the sport to development through sport in a socio-political context. Therefore, development through sports is one of the indicators of becoming a developed country in the field of sports (Ha et al., 2015). In the positive youth development context, many studies related to the importance of sport have been carried out. However, the results of these studies still emphasize the general impact of the research results. Therefore, this study would strengthen the conceptual study of the importance of sports activities in evoking cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social aspects, especially for adolescent development, through sports activities.

Global Issues of the Importance of Youth Potential Development

The importance of developing the youth potential in the current era has become one of the topics discussed globally, especially the shift from the development of sports paradigm to development through sports paradigm in the field of sports in some developed countries. One of the countries that have received international recognition in recent decades in South Korea. South Korea has gained maximum achievements in various international sports competitions and hosted various Sports Mega Event (SME) events. In recent years, the South Korean government policy has begun to show interest in development through a sports approach to become a truly developed sports country (Ha et al., 2015).

Several studies regarding PYD have been conducted, one of which is the research conducted by O’Connor et al. (2019), which proves a positive relationship between a high-performance sports environment and positive youth development. It was evidenced by the level of self-confidence and cognitive skills, positive youth experiences of the athletes at high-performance levels, a strong relationship between coaches and athletes, and a higher level of pro-social behavior than anti-social behavior (O’Connor et al., 2019). In addition, the results of research conducted by Armour et al. (2013) indicated that positive youth development and physical activity interventions lead to sustainable impacts after carrying out these activities. The study
shows that the six main features inculcated in the physical activity design are positive youth development programs (Armour et al., 2013). It means that physical activity instilled in children, adolescents, and students becomes one of the impacts of PYD development.

The global issues previously explained become exciting issues that we need to study because the paradigm shift in thinking from development of the sport to development through sport must be based on relevant studies supported by existing research results. Therefore, conducting this study is essential to convince academics and practitioners of the importance of development through sports, especially the development of PYD through sports participation.

**Positive Youth Development through Sports**

PYD is an integrative framework considering the cognitive, social, emotional, and intellectual skills needed by youth to play an active role in society (Larson, 2000). From a sports perspective, Petitpas (2005) applies a conceptual framework to arrange a sports-specific framework (Petitpas et al. 2005). The framework distinguishes youth development through sports and youth development in general; youth development focuses on the process of teaching youth life skills and their physical competencies, while youth sports development explicitly refers to the acquisition of sports skills (N. Holt & Neely, 2011; Petitpas et al., 2005).

As discussed earlier, sport plays an important role as a social and human personality builder; hence PYD program can be one of the programs implemented by the government to promote sports in a country. The primary literature on positive developments concerns how sports programs are implemented based on two main approaches, namely explicit and implicit approaches (Turnnidge et al., 2014). Theoretically, there are three PYD climate categories: the relationship with adults, the relationship with peers, and parental involvement. One of the variables becoming the focus in assessing the PYD program is life skills (N. L. Holt et al., 2017). The literature review of research results describes that the formulation of the PYD program can refer to the model shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 explains how PYD conceptual framework relates to social context through sports participation. Specifically, the PYD climate is defined as a social environment that allows young people to gain experiences that contribute to three categories. First, the climates refer to an implicit approach that leads directly to PYD outcomes and an explicit approach by first implementing a focused life skills program. It becomes a moderator variable that affects PYD outcomes (personal, social, and physical outcomes) (N. L. Holt et al., 2017; Turnnidge et al., 2014).

The formulation in Figure 1 is one of the formulations having a significant impact if it is carried out as a

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**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of PYD through Sports**

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media for positive youth development through sports in a country. Therefore, government policy is important for realizing the program. The sports policy process can be understood as a chain of interrelated legitimacy actions, where six elements of legitimacy action that are interrelated and intertwined in the process are identified as sports policy, namely 1) legitimacy-seeking organizations, 2) subjects, 3) sources, 4) strategies, 5) the base upon the legitimacy, and 6) the scenario (Strittmatter et al., 2018). Each of the six elements must be carried out according to the correct phase or stage.

METHODS

The method used in this study was a literature review method using a narrative review type (Closs et al., 2020; Snyder, 2019). In addition, this research tried to map the development of research fields related to PYD from time to time (Snyder, 2019) and to strengthen the results of previous studies related to PYD in the sports context.

The literature search was conducted from February to December 2021 to identify studies of positive youth development through sports. The publication period of the cited articles was from 2000 to 2019. The article search database included Google Scholar, Tailor and Francis, Elsevier, Science Direct, and Sage. The keywords involved positive youth development (PYD) and development through sport, which was also used as the criteria set in the article search because the authors wanted to examine the role of sport in the PYD context.

All articles found as primary data sources were used as references for analysis and synthesis using critical appraisal analysis techniques, namely analyzing relevant articles related to the theoretical basis to be studied (Hutchison, 1993).

RESULT

From the data search, 190 articles were found as sources that became the reference for analysis and synthesis. PYD through sports and development through sport was used as criteria set in the article search. It was because the authors tried to examine the role of sport in the PYD context. Based on the study results of the 190 articles, 27 articles were identified for analysis and synthesis.

The analysis and synthesis results showed that the sports approach contributed to developing cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social, and life skills. The concept of PYD emphasizes how to develop youth through sports. In this case, the coaching process focused on the process of teaching life skills along with their physical competencies to prepare their life and apply the skills in real life.

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DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the important role of sport in forming PYD. Several reference sources state that PYD is a picture of a paradigm shift from the development of the sport to development through sport in a socio-political context in a country. In this case, PYD is one of the programs that can be implemented to develop positive youth through sports activities. PYD leads to the important role of sports activities in building supportive relationships obtained by adolescents through their sports activities so that it can be implemented in real life (Jones & Lavallee, 2009; Weiss et al., 2013), for example, cognitive skills (creativity), emotional skills (managing anxiety), or social skills (teamwork). In addition, PYD programs through sports can contribute to the ability to cope with stress, communicate, receive feedback, set goals, solve problems, and deal with success and failure (Papacharisis et al., 2005).

To be successful in encouraging youth to develop positive behavior, the sports program must be defined in a clear strategy so that the aspects contained in sports activities can be carried out in real life, although the program to gain an impact on the aspects of skills that can be implemented in real life is still in a topic of discussion (Petitpas et al., 2005). In addition, research results show that exercise impacts many aspects, such as increasing motivation and self-concept (Fernández-rio et al., 2014; NRCIM, 2002). In addition, people who participate in regular physical activity are more effec-
tive in maintaining body function and psychosocial health (Fernández-rio et al., 2014).

The National Research Council and Medical Institutions (NRCIM) suggests four main areas in adolescent development, including physical, intellectual, psychological/emotional, and social areas. Of these four areas, the NRCIM outlines eight regulatory features to promote positive development for positive youth development (NRCIM, 2002). The eight of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of Positive Development Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Program Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Physical and psychological safety</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Appropriate structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Supportive relationships</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Opportunities to belong</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Positive social norms</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Support for efficacy and mattering</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Opportunities for skill-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Integration of family, school, and community efforts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The paradigm shift from the development of the sport to development through sport is one of the indicators of the development of the sport in a country; another term is called Sport for Development (SfD), referring to sport-based interventions designed to support and achieve goals other than sports, such as gender empowerment, health promotion, peace and conflict resolution, and positive youth development (Darnell et al., 2019). The role of the government is needed to make a policy. The sports policy process can be understood as a series of interrelated legitimacy actions involving six interrelated legitimacy elements in the identification process of sports policy, namely 1) legitimacy-seeking organizations, 2) subjects, 3) sources, 4) strategies, 5) the base upon the legitimacy, and 6) the scenario (Darnell et al., 2019). The research results conducted by MacIntosh, Parent, & Culver (2019) showed that the participation of young athletes in the Youth Olympic Games had a significant influence, especially in terms of gaining competitive experience in sports and social skills both planned and unplanned during these activities. In addition, young athletes developed their confidence in the more prominent Olympic Movement (MacIntosh et al., 2019). In principle, sports development is related to the development or improvement of the sports system through improving the skills of athletes to support achievements, while development through sports is related to attractive social outcomes, such as education, social development, and good public relations (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Kidd, 2008). Sport development focuses on the intrinsic value of sport, while sport for development focuses on the instrumental value of sport in a broader sense to pursue social and political goals (Giulianotti et al., 2016).

Positive youth development and social development are the most widely used theories within the Sports for Development framework (Dao & Smith, 2019). There is a new trend in youth sports participation, particularly the growing popularity of non-competitive, informal, and non-institutionalized 'action sports' (such as skateboarding, surfing, snowboarding, and parkour). The study proves that participation in the activity can make a valuable contribution to the sport for the development context and peace (SDP) (Thorpe, 2016).

The SDP conceptualization suggests two phases involving children and youth to influence the contextual system. The first phase requires the athlete to be influenced by the sport, while the second phase implies that the positively impacted athlete is an agent of change (Richelieu & Webb, 2019). Another finding showed a positive relationship between the sports environment and adolescent development (O’Connor et al., 2019). In the gender and sports performance context, the results showed that males scored significantly higher than females in terms of confidence, self-efficacy, self-competence, antisocial behavior towards friends and foes, relationships with their coaches, and cognitive skills (O’Connor et al., 2019).

Besides the results of PYD research in sports environments, comparable results were found in PYD research in the education and school contexts; one of the most significant impacts was found in student leadership and social-emotional learning (Kramer et al., 2020). The results of the literature review on the impact
of PYD through sports activities in school development and education contexts are in line with the principles of the PYD framework. Therefore, research in this area provides a relevant context for implementing PYD in the school environment and related outcomes.

According to studies in various literature, development through sports is considered an indicator of becoming a truly developed sports country (Ha et al., 2015). Therefore, a country needs to make the sport a vehicle for positive youth development through sports. The PYD perspective is a theoretical framework that can improve understanding of the youth sports experience. It is assumed that the youth has great potential to develop positively, where youth is seen as a resource to be nurtured rather than a problem to be solved (Damon, 2004). In addition, the main goal of this approach is to engage the younger generation in more productive activities to build their strengths and abilities (Turnnidge et al., 2014). Although PYD-oriented program guidelines have been proven to provide benefits in terms of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and social aspects, at the implementation level, it is not yet in line with the stakeholder conceptions in preparing and implementing the program in some countries (Palheta et al., 2020).

The results of this study strengthen the assumption that PYD through sports activities positively impacts adolescent development; physical fitness and social and cognitive aspects are also obtained in these activities. Therefore, one of the main focuses of research on PYD is to examine how sports activities contribute to the development of social, emotional, and behavioral skills in social life (Lerner et al., 2005). This study hopes that it can give a theoretical contribution related to the importance of sport to increase the positive youth, not only in terms of sports achievement but also a significant impact on the country.

**CONCLUSION**

Fostering positive youth through sports is a must in a country. Therefore, the development of PYD is the primary key to the country's progress, specifically in the field of sports. The research results proved that sport could contribute to developing cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social, and emotional aspects of community life. Therefore, it is expected to be a benchmark for the success of a country where youth becomes the agent of change in the future through sports activities.

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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