Identifying Components of Positive Youth Development in Multicultural Contexts

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this study was to explore and identify the key components of Positive Youth Development (PYD) as experienced by adolescents and young adults in multicultural contexts.

Methods and Materials: This qualitative study employed a purposive sample of 25 participants aged 15–24 years from Michigan, representing diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews focused on identity formation, resilience, cultural interaction, and future readiness. Interviews, lasting between 45 and 75 minutes, were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo 14 software. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached. To enhance trustworthiness, peer debriefing, member checking, and reflexive memoing were incorporated throughout the research process.

Findings: The analysis revealed four overarching themes and multiple subthemes that collectively represent the components of PYD in multicultural contexts. The first theme, personal growth and identity formation, emphasized self-awareness, resilience, and bicultural identity negotiation. The second, social relationships and support networks, included family support, peer bonds, mentorship, and community engagement. The third, cultural competence and diversity adaptation, reflected intercultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and strategies for balancing heritage with adaptation. The fourth, skills and future readiness, highlighted educational engagement, career planning, life skills, creativity, leadership, and health behaviors. Illustrative quotations demonstrated how youth integrated internal and external assets to foster resilience, belonging, and thriving.

Conclusion: The findings affirm the universality of developmental assets while underscoring their cultural variability in multicultural contexts. By situating PYD within diverse environments, this study highlights the interplay of identity, relationships, cultural competence, and future readiness in shaping youth development. The results provide valuable implications for educators, policymakers, and practitioners in designing culturally responsive and inclusive youth programs.

Keywords: Positive Youth Development; Multicultural Contexts; Developmental Assets; Identity Formation; Resilience

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the field of developmental psychology has increasingly emphasized a shift from deficit-based perspectives on adolescence toward strength-based models that highlight the competencies, assets, and potentials of young people. Central to this shift is the framework of Positive Youth Development (PYD), which focuses on fostering the internal and external resources that allow youth to thrive across different contexts. Unlike traditional approaches that primarily examine risks and vulnerabilities, PYD places emphasis on protective factors, resilience, and the cultivation of developmental assets that support holistic well-being (Beck & Wiium, 2019; Dejenie et al., 2023). This orientation is especially relevant in multicultural societies, where diverse sociocultural conditions shape how youth experience development and where promoting equity, belonging, and opportunity becomes a central challenge (Sam et al., 2021).

The conceptual foundations of PYD derive from ecological systems theory and strengths-based frameworks, which argue that youth development occurs in dynamic interaction with family, community, and cultural environments (Dejenie et al., 2023). Developmental assets, as articulated by scholars in the field, are often categorized into internal assets—such as self-esteem, commitment to learning, and social competencies—and external assets, including family support, community empowerment, and opportunities for participation (Messer et al., 2020). These assets are strongly associated with thriving outcomes such as academic achievement, reduced engagement in risk behaviors, and improved mental health (Beck & Wiium, 2019; Wiium et al., 2021). At the same time, variations across cultural contexts highlight the need to consider PYD as a culturally responsive and adaptable framework rather than a universal model (Fernandes et al., 2021).

One of the significant insights emerging from the PYD literature is the way developmental assets contribute to identity formation, social belonging, and resilience among young people. For example, studies show that assets such as family support and opportunities for participation protect youth against adverse outcomes, including substance use and violence (Manrique-Millones et al., 2021; O'Connor et al., 2025). Similarly, research underscores that identity development, particularly among youth navigating multiple cultural contexts, is strengthened by the presence of supportive social structures and opportunities for self-expression (Dost-Gözkan et al., 2021). These findings suggest that PYD not only contributes to individual flourishing but also plays a role in preventing engagement in destructive or antisocial behaviors.

The multicultural dimension of youth development adds another layer of complexity and importance to the PYD framework. As globalization, migration, and demographic shifts reshape societies, increasing numbers of young people grow up in multicultural environments where they negotiate multiple cultural identities, languages, and social expectations (Kim & Han, 2025; Miconi et al., 2021). For instance, adolescents from multicultural families often develop forms of ego-resilience that help them navigate the demands of dual cultural contexts (Kim & Han, 2025). At the same time, these youth may encounter challenges such as discrimination, marginalization, or conflict between home and host cultures (Sam et al., 2021). Understanding how positive developmental assets function within these contexts is therefore critical for informing inclusive educational practices, community programs, and policy strategies.

Empirical evidence across different countries provides strong support for the universality of developmental assets, while also revealing meaningful cultural variations in how these assets are expressed and utilized. For example, research in Spain found that developmental assets were associated with gender differences in anxiety among adolescents, demonstrating that these assets not only protect against risk but also intersect with broader social categories such as gender (Gómez-Baya et al., 2022). Similarly, studies in Norway and other European countries show that external assets such as social support and positive peer relations strongly predict thriving and mental health outcomes (Delgado et al., 2021; Wiium et al., 2021). These findings

reinforce the robustness of the PYD framework across diverse populations but also call attention to the need for contextual sensitivity.

In non-Western contexts, the application of PYD has illuminated both challenges and opportunities. For instance, Ethiopian youth have been studied from a "surviving to thriving" perspective, highlighting how structural barriers can limit access to external assets while personal resilience and cultural traditions remain strong protective factors (Desie, 2019). Similarly, work in Kosovo has demonstrated how interventions like internal cohesion psychotherapy can build on developmental assets to support youth struggling with depression and anxiety (Uka et al., 2022). In Latin America, the association between substance use behaviors and developmental assets underscores the protective influence of these assets on mental health, especially in college populations (Manrique-Millones et al., 2021). These diverse findings suggest that while the language of PYD is globally applicable, its manifestations are deeply shaped by cultural, social, and political contexts.

The role of developmental assets in buffering against contemporary risks has also been highlighted in several recent studies. For example, research has shown that higher levels of self-control and developmental assets can reduce the risk of internet gaming disorder among adolescents, demonstrating the importance of these factors in addressing emerging challenges of the digital age (Xiang et al., 2022). Other work points to the relationship between developmental assets and reduced involvement in gun violence, offering evidence that PYD has implications not only for individual well-being but also for broader social issues such as safety and community stability (O'Connor et al., 2025). These findings broaden the scope of PYD from a youth-centered model to one with societal and policy-level significance.

The school and community environment plays a central role in shaping developmental assets. For example, research from Slovenia has shown that both contextual and individual factors influence bullying and victimization, with the PYD perspective offering a useful lens to promote protective assets and reduce negative outcomes (Kozina & Pivec, 2020). Similarly, programs designed for vulnerable populations, such as alternatives to detention for adolescents involved in the juvenile justice system, have demonstrated positive effects on developmental assets and subsequent life trajectories (Maggiulli et al., 2019). These studies emphasize that supportive institutional contexts can significantly alter developmental pathways, reinforcing the importance of

designing policies and programs that enhance both internal and external assets for youth.

Despite the robust evidence base supporting the PYD framework, there remain important challenges and gaps. One such challenge is the need for more research in underrepresented regions and populations. Much of the PYD literature is concentrated in Western contexts, while fewer studies explore how assets are conceptualized and mobilized in African, Middle Eastern, or indigenous communities (Desie, 2019; Uka et al., 2022). Another challenge is ensuring that the framework adequately accounts for structural inequalities and systemic barriers that shape youth experiences. As some scholars have argued, while PYD emphasizes resilience and strengths, it must also engage with broader socio-economic conditions that constrain opportunities for many young people (Fernandes et al., 2021). This tension between individual agency and structural context represents an important area for future development of the field.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted both the vulnerabilities and resilience of youth, particularly in multicultural and marginalized groups. Studies among Roma and Egyptian adolescents in Albania during the pandemic found that despite significant stressors, young people identified assets such as family bonds, peer connections, and cultural values as sources of resilience (Miconi et al., 2021). These findings demonstrate the adaptability of the PYD framework even in times of crisis and further affirm the centrality of assets in promoting youth well-being under adverse conditions.

Taken together, the body of research suggests that positive youth development is a versatile and powerful framework with global applicability. By identifying and strengthening developmental assets, youth can be supported in their transitions to adulthood in ways that promote well-being, resilience, and active citizenship (Beck & Wiium, 2019; Delgado et al., 2021). However, to maximize its relevance, PYD must be applied with sensitivity to multicultural dynamics, intersectional identities, and contextual realities (Kim & Han, 2025; Sam et al., 2021). The present study seeks to contribute to this endeavor by identifying the core components of positive youth development as experienced by young people in multicultural contexts. By focusing on qualitative insights from diverse youth in Michigan, the study aims to capture how developmental assets are understood, enacted, and negotiated in everyday life.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore and identify the components of positive youth development in multicultural contexts. Given the exploratory nature of the research aim, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate to capture the diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and contextual nuances of youth development. Participants consisted of 25 individuals residing in Michigan, representing a range of cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds to ensure heterogeneity and richness of the data. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with inclusion criteria requiring them to be adolescents or young adults between the ages of 15 and 24 who had lived in multicultural environments and were willing to share their experiences. Recruitment was conducted through community organizations, youth centers, and educational institutions. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

2.2. Measures

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for both consistency across interviews and flexibility to probe deeper into emerging topics. The interview guide was developed based on the conceptual framework of positive youth development, focusing on themes such as identity, resilience, cultural interaction, social support, and personal growth. Each interview lasted between 45 and 75 minutes and was conducted in person or online depending on participants' preferences and availability. Interviews were audio-recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached, meaning no new themes or insights emerged from additional interviews.

2.3. Data Analysis

The transcribed interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo 14 software. The analysis followed an iterative, inductive coding process. Initially, open coding was conducted to identify meaningful units of text related to positive youth development. Codes were then grouped into categories through axial coding, highlighting relationships and patterns across participants' narratives. Finally, selective coding was employed to integrate categories into overarching themes that reflected core components of positive youth development in multicultural contexts. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, peer debriefing and member checking were employed. Moreover, reflexive memos were maintained throughout the analysis process to ensure transparency in decision-making and minimize researcher bias.

3. Findings and Results

The study included 25 participants from Michigan, consisting of 14 females (56%) and 11 males (44%), with ages ranging from 15 to 24 years (mean age = 19.2). In terms of cultural and ethnic background, participants represented a diverse range of groups, including African American (n = 6, 24%), Hispanic/Latino (n = 5, 20%), Middle Eastern/Arab American (n = 5, 20%), Asian American (n = 4, 16%), and White/European American (n = 5, 20%). Educational status varied, with 10 participants (40%) enrolled in high school, 11 participants (44%) attending college or university, and 4 participants (16%) engaged in vocational training or employment. The socioeconomic backgrounds of participants ranged from lower to middle class, providing a heterogeneous sample reflective of Michigan's multicultural youth population. This diversity was intentional, as it allowed for the exploration of positive youth development across a broad spectrum of cultural experiences and social conditions.

Table 1

Themes, Subthemes, and Concepts of Positive Youth Development in Multicultural Contexts

Category (Theme)	Subcategory	Concepts (Open Codes)
1. Personal Growth and Identity Formation	Self-Awareness	Understanding strengths, Recognizing weaknesses, Reflection on personal values, Self-acceptance
	Goal Orientation	Setting future aspirations, Academic motivation, Career planning, Overcoming setbacks
	Resilience	Coping with challenges, Adaptability, Persistence, Learning from failure, Optimism
	Identity Negotiation	Balancing cultural identities, Exploring heritage, Peer influence on identity, Bicultural competence

	Emotional Regulation	Managing stress, Controlling impulses, Expressing emotions constructively
	Confidence and Agency	Belief in abilities, Initiative taking, Leadership tendencies
2. Social Relationships and Support Networks	Family Support	Parental encouragement, Sibling bonds, Cultural traditions in family, Emotional security
	Peer Relationships	Friendship quality, Shared experiences, Peer mentoring, Social belonging
	Community Engagement	Volunteering, Participation in local events, Role models in community, Cultural festivals
	Mentorship	Guidance from teachers, Support from youth workers, Trusted adults, Faith leaders
	Cross-Cultural Friendships	Intercultural exchange, Learning tolerance, Breaking stereotypes, Respect for diversity
	Social Responsibility	Helping peers, Collective problem-solving, Civic awareness
3. Cultural Competence and Diversity Adaptation	Cultural Awareness	Respecting traditions, Recognizing cultural differences, Learning about other religions
	Language Skills	Bilingual communication, Language as identity, Overcoming language barriers
	Inclusivity	Promoting equality, Valuing differences, Fighting prejudice
	Acculturation Strategies	Integrating new cultural practices, Maintaining heritage, Adapting behaviors in context
	Intercultural Sensitivity	Empathy for other cultures, Avoiding stereotypes, Active listening in diverse settings
4. Skills and Future Readiness	Educational Development	School engagement, Curiosity for knowledge, Academic achievements
	Career Readiness	Internship experiences, Vocational training, Planning career steps, Employability skills
	Life Skills	Financial literacy, Time management, Problem-solving, Digital literacy
	Creativity and Innovation	Artistic expression, Critical thinking, Entrepreneurial mindset, Using technology creatively
	Leadership and Collaboration	Teamwork, Conflict resolution, Leading group projects, Inspiring peers, Responsibility taking
	Decision-Making	Evaluating options, Risk assessment, Independent judgment
	Health and Well-being	Physical activity, Nutrition awareness, Coping with mental health, Work-life balance

Personal Growth and Identity Formation

Self-Awareness. Participants frequently emphasized the importance of developing self-awareness as a foundation for positive growth. Many described recognizing both their strengths and limitations, and how this shaped their self-acceptance. For example, one youth noted, *"Living in a multicultural neighborhood taught me to see both what I am good at and where I need to improve without feeling less than others"* (Participant 7). This reflective process often extended to values and personal beliefs.

Goal Orientation. Setting future goals was another recurring theme. Several participants mentioned the role of academic motivation and career aspirations in shaping their daily activities. One participant shared, *"I know education is my way forward, so even when things get tough, I plan for the next step"* (Participant 14). Overcoming setbacks was described as part of the journey toward long-term objectives.

Resilience. Narratives also highlighted resilience as essential in navigating challenges. Adaptability, persistence, and optimism were emphasized. A participant explained, *"Every time I face discrimination, I remind myself it's not the end—I just need to keep going"* (Participant 11). Experiences of failure were described as opportunities for growth.

Identity Negotiation. Many youth described the process of balancing cultural identities, especially those from immigrant families. They discussed bicultural competence as both challenging and empowering. One young woman stated, *"At school I am American, at home I am Mexican, but I'm learning that I can be both at once"* (Participant 5).

Emotional Regulation. Emotional regulation emerged as another important subtheme. Participants described learning to manage stress, control impulses, and express emotions constructively. A participant reflected, *"I used to get angry fast, but I've learned to talk instead of fight"* (Participant 18).

Confidence and Agency. Several participants discussed growing confidence and agency in their daily lives. Taking initiative and feeling capable of leading peers were viewed as markers of empowerment. As one participant stated, *"When I saw that others followed my lead in group projects, I felt I could actually make a difference"* (Participant 21).

Social Relationships and Support Networks

Family Support. Family support was reported as a cornerstone of development. Parental encouragement and sibling bonds provided emotional security. One youth explained, *"No matter how different the world outside is, my family always keeps me grounded"* (Participant 4).

Peer Relationships. Friendships were also seen as essential to belonging and self-worth. Shared experiences and peer mentoring helped youth feel understood. A participant stated, *"My best friend is like my mirror; we support each other no matter what"* (Participant 9).

Community Engagement. Engagement in community activities, such as volunteering and cultural festivals, was frequently mentioned. Such involvement fostered pride and social responsibility. One participant reflected, *"When I volunteered at the food drive, I felt part of something bigger than myself"* (Participant 20).

Mentorship. The role of mentors—teachers, youth workers, and trusted adults—was highly valued. Many noted mentors as guiding forces in decision-making. A participant emphasized, *"My coach is like a second father, he shows me how to handle life challenges"* (Participant 2).

Cross-Cultural Friendships. Friendships across cultural lines provided opportunities for learning tolerance and breaking stereotypes. One participant noted, *"Before, I only hung out with kids like me, but having friends from different backgrounds taught me respect"* (Participant 13).

Social Responsibility. Participants linked positive development to a sense of responsibility toward others. Helping peers and collective problem-solving were frequently described. A participant shared, *"If someone is struggling, I can't just watch; I feel it's my duty to help"* (Participant 23).

Cultural Competence and Diversity Adaptation

Cultural Awareness. Youth frequently emphasized learning to respect and appreciate cultural traditions. They described this as a way of living harmoniously. As one youth expressed, *"When you respect others' traditions, they respect yours too"* (Participant 6).

Language Skills. Language played a critical role in identity and connection. Bilingual communication was described as both an advantage and a challenge. A participant explained, *"Sometimes I switch between English and Arabic, and it feels like I have two worlds in me"* (Participant 16).

Inclusivity. Inclusivity was expressed as valuing differences and challenging prejudice. Participants stressed the importance of equality. One youth shared, *"I want everyone in the group to feel they belong, no matter where they come from"* (Participant 12).

Acculturation Strategies. Balancing heritage with adaptation was another key theme. Youth described integrating new practices while preserving cultural roots. A participant reflected, *"At home I follow traditions, but outside I adapt—both are part of me"* (Participant 8).

Intercultural Sensitivity. Developing empathy and listening skills across cultures was commonly noted. A participant highlighted, *"Instead of judging, I try to understand why people think differently"* (Participant 19).

Skills and Future Readiness

Educational Development. School engagement and curiosity were emphasized as fundamental. Participants connected their educational progress with future opportunities. One youth explained, *"I push myself in school because I know it opens doors later"* (Participant 15).

Career Readiness. Youth stressed the importance of internships, vocational training, and planning career steps. As one participant said, *"I think about the skills I need for a job, not just grades"* (Participant 1).

Life Skills. Skills such as time management, problem-solving, and digital literacy were described as vital. One participant reflected, *"Learning how to manage money early is something I value"* (Participant 22).

Creativity and Innovation. Many youth expressed the role of creativity in shaping their identity and aspirations. They highlighted critical thinking, technology use, and artistic expression. A participant noted, *"Drawing helps me express what I can't always say in words"* (Participant 10).

Leadership and Collaboration. Leading and working in teams were repeatedly discussed. Participants expressed pride in collaborative efforts. One youth explained, *"When I worked with others on a project, I felt like I could inspire people"* (Participant 3).

Decision-Making. Developing independent judgment and evaluating options were key aspects of autonomy. A participant stated, *"I like making my own choices, even if I make mistakes—it teaches me"* (Participant 17).

Health and Well-being. Physical and mental health were central to readiness for the future. Youth emphasized exercise, nutrition, and coping with stress. One participant shared, *"When I take care of my body and mind, everything else falls into place"* (Participant 25).

Figure 1

Themes, Subthemes, and Concepts of Positive Youth Development in Multicultural Contexts
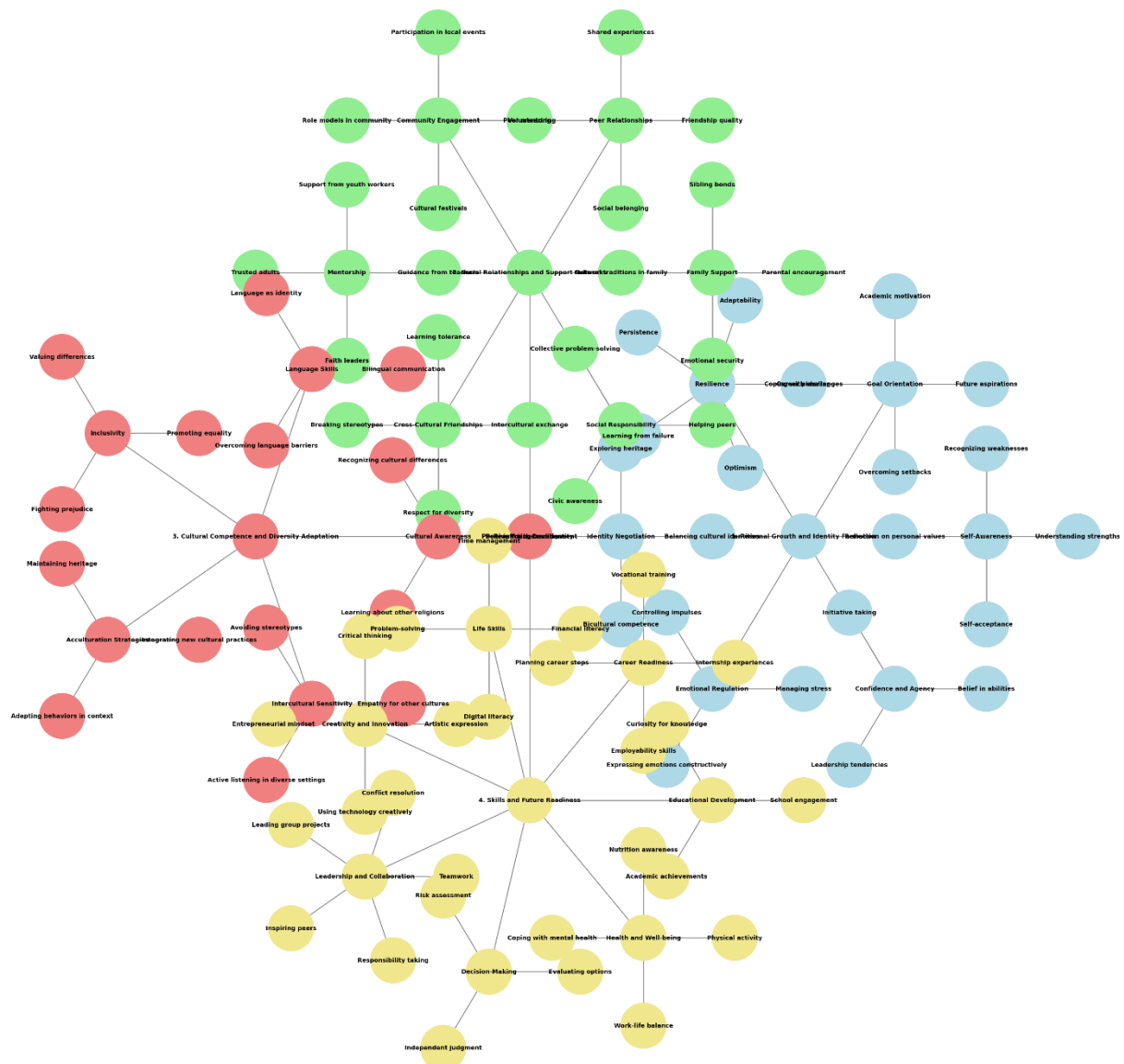
4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the core components of Positive Youth Development (PYD) in multicultural contexts, drawing on qualitative insights from youth participants in Michigan. The results revealed four broad themes—personal growth and identity formation, social relationships and support networks, cultural competence and diversity adaptation, and skills and future readiness. Within these themes, youth articulated a variety of subthemes such as resilience, bicultural identity negotiation, cross-cultural friendships, mentorship,

inclusivity, creativity, and decision-making. These findings align strongly with existing PYD scholarship while also extending understanding by situating developmental assets within culturally diverse environments.

A central finding of the present study was the role of personal growth and identity formation in shaping positive developmental outcomes. Participants highlighted self-awareness, resilience, and bicultural identity negotiation as vital to their experiences. This finding resonates with earlier work emphasizing the centrality of internal developmental assets to thriving outcomes (Dejenie et al., 2023). For example, resilience and adaptability were key mechanisms

through which youth navigated challenges, echoing findings from studies in Ethiopia that highlighted the transition "from surviving to thriving" when young people were able to mobilize personal strengths in adverse conditions (Desie, 2019). The negotiation of bicultural identity, reported by many participants, also reflects prior research on multicultural adolescents' ego-resilience (Kim & Han, 2025). In this sense, the findings confirm that identity work is a critical developmental task of adolescence and that multicultural contexts both complicate and enrich this process.

The emphasis on social relationships and support networks as central to development further supports established evidence within the PYD framework. Participants identified family support, peer relationships, and mentorship as foundational assets. These results converge with studies from Europe and Latin America, where supportive social contexts were linked to thriving, reduced substance use, and enhanced mental health (Manrique-Millones et al., 2021; Wiium et al., 2021). In particular, the protective role of family and mentors mirrors findings from Norway, Romania, Slovenia, and Turkey, where external assets were significantly associated with the development of positive identity (Dost-Gözkan et al., 2021). Community engagement and social responsibility, as highlighted in this study, also align with evidence from global comparisons of developmental assets, which show that opportunities for contribution to society are consistently linked with higher levels of youth flourishing (Fernandes et al., 2021). These findings collectively underscore the relational foundation of PYD and the importance of building strong support networks across family, peers, mentors, and community institutions.

Cultural competence and diversity adaptation emerged as distinctive features of youth development in multicultural contexts. Participants stressed the value of intercultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and acculturation strategies that allowed them to balance cultural traditions with integration into wider society. These narratives resonate with previous studies examining Roma and Egyptian youth in Albania, where cultural values and social bonds acted as protective assets during the COVID-19 pandemic (Miconi et al., 2021). Similarly, findings from Roma youth development research emphasize the necessity of situating developmental assets within cultural and contextual realities (Sam et al., 2021). The recognition of inclusivity and respect for diversity expressed by participants also reflects findings from Spanish youth, where developmental assets influenced not only

mental health outcomes but also shaped how young people navigated gendered experiences of anxiety (Gómez-Baya et al., 2022). Thus, the current findings add to this body of work by showing that cultural competence is not merely an external demand but an active skill and identity resource for youth living in multicultural environments.

The findings also highlight the importance of skills and future readiness, including educational engagement, career readiness, creativity, and health behaviors. Participants reported valuing educational development and career planning as key pathways to future opportunities. This mirrors evidence that developmental assets play a significant role in promoting academic achievement (Beck & Wiium, 2019). Life skills such as financial literacy and digital literacy reported in this study align with broader frameworks of thriving that emphasize competence in navigating contemporary challenges (Dejenie et al., 2023). The emphasis on creativity and innovation resonates with research on the protective role of developmental assets against risk behaviors, suggesting that youth who are equipped with skills for problem-solving and self-expression are less likely to engage in maladaptive behaviors (Messer et al., 2020). Moreover, health and well-being as described by participants echoes findings from Norwegian youth where mental health outcomes were directly associated with levels of developmental assets (Wiium et al., 2021).

One particularly notable contribution of the present study lies in linking developmental assets to contemporary risks and protective mechanisms. For example, participants described how resilience and supportive networks shielded them from risky behaviors and promoted constructive engagement. This aligns with longitudinal evidence from China, where developmental assets and self-control were shown to protect against internet gaming disorder (Xiang et al., 2022). Similarly, the recognition of mentorship and community support in preventing engagement in antisocial activities echoes findings linking developmental assets to reduced gun violence (O'Connor et al., 2025). In this way, the study demonstrates that developmental assets are not only protective at an individual level but also contribute to wider social stability and safety, reflecting the broader societal relevance of PYD frameworks.

The role of institutional contexts, particularly schools and justice-related programs, also finds support in prior literature. Participants described the significance of school engagement and extracurricular opportunities for shaping their developmental trajectories. This parallels findings from Slovenia, where contextual and individual predictors of

bullying and victimization were studied through a PYD perspective (Kozina & Pivec, 2020). Furthermore, the recognition of structured programs in supporting vulnerable youth mirrors findings from the United States, where alternative to detention programs positively influenced developmental assets among adolescents involved in the juvenile justice system (Maggiulli et al., 2019). These comparisons highlight the necessity of institutional supports as integral external assets that can either enhance or hinder youth development.

While this study underscores the universality of developmental assets, it also demonstrates their cultural variability. For example, youth in Michigan described cross-cultural friendships and inclusivity as particularly salient, reflecting the multicultural context of the study. This finding is consistent with research that highlights cultural and contextual adaptations of PYD, such as differences in how assets are prioritized across countries (Fernandes et al., 2021). Similarly, findings from Latin American and African contexts emphasize that assets must be understood in relation to structural inequalities, economic realities, and cultural traditions (Desie, 2019; Manrique-Millones et al., 2021). The present study adds nuance by illustrating how multicultural youth integrate and mobilize assets to navigate identity and opportunity in contexts characterized by diversity.

The convergence of this study's findings with a broad range of previous research demonstrates the robustness of PYD as both a theoretical and practical framework. It also extends the literature by providing qualitative depth to the ways in which assets are experienced and enacted by youth in multicultural environments. By doing so, the study contributes to a growing recognition that developmental assets are not static categories but lived resources that interact dynamically with cultural, relational, and institutional contexts.

5. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the sample was limited to 25 participants from Michigan, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or geographic contexts. Second, while efforts were made to capture a diverse set of voices, the reliance on voluntary participation may have introduced self-selection bias, favoring those already engaged in positive developmental activities. Third, the qualitative design, while rich in depth, does not allow for statistical generalization or testing of causal relationships. Additionally, the use of self-reported interviews may be subject to social desirability bias, with participants potentially framing their experiences in ways they perceived as favorable.

Future studies could expand on this work by including larger and more diverse samples across different regions and cultural settings. Comparative studies across countries or cultural groups would deepen understanding of how developmental assets are mobilized in varying contexts. Mixed-methods designs could also provide complementary insights by combining qualitative depth with quantitative rigor, allowing for the testing of associations and mediating pathways. Furthermore, longitudinal studies are needed to trace how assets evolve over time, particularly in relation to critical developmental transitions such as moving from adolescence to adulthood. Exploring the intersection of PYD with digital and technological contexts, which increasingly shape youth experiences, would also be an important direction for further inquiry.

In practical terms, the findings suggest that educators, community leaders, and policymakers should prioritize the strengthening of developmental assets across multiple domains. Schools can foster personal growth and resilience through curricula that emphasize self-awareness, emotional regulation, and leadership. Community organizations should invest in mentorship programs and opportunities for cross-cultural engagement to build supportive networks and promote inclusivity. Policies should aim to provide equitable access to resources, ensuring that youth from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds have opportunities to thrive. Finally, practitioners should adopt culturally responsive approaches to youth development that recognize the strengths embedded within multicultural identities and contexts.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed in this article.

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