



The Potential of Pencak Silat from the Perspective of Positive Youth Development (PYD)

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History Article

Received April 2026

Approved April 2026

Published vol 13 no 1 2026

Keywords

Pencak Silat; Youth Development; Character Development; Extracurricular Activities; Educational Sport

Abstract

This study investigates the effect of Pencak Silat extracurricular activities integrated with the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework on adolescent development. The research is motivated by the growing need to promote character formation and life skills among youth through structured, sport-based educational interventions. A quantitative method employing a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group format was utilized. The sample consisted of 26 adolescents aged 14–18 years, divided equally into an experimental group, which received PYD-integrated Pencak Silat training, and a control group, which participated in conventional training without explicit PYD components. Data were collected using the Positive Youth Development Inventory (PYDI), a validated and reliable instrument measuring six core PYD dimensions: competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, and contribution. Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($p < 0.05$), with the experimental group demonstrating superior posttest outcomes. Additionally, the normalized gain (N-Gain) analysis yielded a mean score of 0.4258, categorized as moderate, indicating a measurable improvement in PYD dimensions following the intervention. These findings suggest that the integration of PYD principles within Pencak Silat training contributes significantly to adolescents' holistic development. Beyond its role as a physical activity, Pencak Silat represents a culturally embedded pedagogical medium capable of fostering character education and social competence. The study underscores the potential of value-based traditional sports programs in educational contexts and recommends further research with larger sample sizes and extended intervention durations to enhance generalizability and robustness of findings.

How to Cite

Fiqri, F. A., Carsiwan., & Ilsya, M. N. F. (2026). The Potential of Pencak Silat from the Perspective of Positive Youth Development (PYD). *Journal of Physical Education, Health and Sport*, 13 (1), 414-421.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, global trends have shown that young people face increasingly complex challenges, related not only to socio-economic changes but also identity crises, decreased physical activity, and increased risks of negative behavior. According to the World Health Organization WHO (2023), more than 81% of adolescents worldwide do not meet recommended levels of physical activity, which has significant implications for physical and mental health. Low levels of physical activity have been linked to increased stress, obesity, and weakened social competence among adolescents (Kim & Cogswell, 2020). In response, many countries are beginning to recognize sport as a strategic medium for fostering life skills and character development through the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a strengths-based approach that emphasizes youth potential and dynamic interactions between individuals and their environment (Lerner, 2018). The PYD framework highlights five key components Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring (5C) as important dimensions of healthy adolescent development (Holt et al., 2017). Programs that explicitly integrate life skills tend to produce more consistent developmental outcomes in adolescent groups (Muhamad et al., 2024). Research has shown that structured exercise programs can serve as an effective context to promote this dimension if supported by appropriate guidance and value-based coaching (Hambali et al., 2022). In addition, martial arts activities, including traditional forms, have been found to contribute significantly to the development of behavior, self-control, and social skills among adolescents (Alif et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, the role of sports as a medium of character education has been officially recognized in national policies, such as the Regulation of the Ministry of Education No. 62 of 2014 concerning extracurricular activities. However, the challenges of youth development remain substantial. Data from the Youth Development Index of Bappenas (2023) shows that Indonesia ranks fifth among ASEAN countries, with a score of 59.78, still below countries such as Singapore and Malaysia. Meanwhile, the Central Statistics Agency's BPS (2024) reports that 27.9% of the population is between 10 and 24 years old, highlighting the strategic importance of youth development

in national human resource planning. These conditions reflect significant opportunities and an urgent need to strengthen programs that systematically develop the physical, social, and character capacities of adolescents.

One of the promising paths for youth development is school-based sports, especially extracurricular activities. Such activities provide a platform for youth to develop discipline, leadership, and social skills. Leadership development is one of the results that is beginning to be seen from sports-based youth programs (Halizsa et al., 2025). Empirical findings suggest that participation in traditional sports activities contributes positively to student responsibility and behavioral development (Azizah et al., 2025). In this context, extracurricular sports programs can serve as an effective medium for applying PYD principles in educational settings.

Pencak Silat, as a traditional Indonesian martial art recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2019, offers a unique context for youth development. Pencak silat as a cultural sport encourages character development through the philosophical values contained in it and structured exercises (Mulyadi et al., 2026). Beyond physical training, it integrates moral, spiritual, and social values such as respect, discipline, responsibility, and self-control. Previous research has shown that participation in Pencak Silat improves students' discipline and leadership qualities (Supriyanto et al., 2025). In addition, research shows that martial arts can foster key outcomes of PYD, including resilience, empathy, and social responsibility (Akbar et al., 2025). However, existing studies in Indonesia have mostly focused on the technical or descriptive aspects of the sport, with limited empirical investigations of its relationship to the PYD dimension, mainly using quantitative approaches.

Despite Pencak Silat's recognized potential, there is still a gap between the ideal goals of character-based education and the actual implementation of extracurricular programs, which are often oriented towards competitive achievement rather than holistic development. Limited integration of life skills in the context of training often results in suboptimal developmental impacts (Triansyah, 2025). In addition, there is a lack of systematic evaluation tools to measure the extent to which such activities contribute to leadership and character development among students. This gap underscores the need for empirical research that bridges theory and practice by examining the role of traditional sport

within the framework of PYD.

This study offers a novel contribution by systematically integrating the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework into a Pencak Silat training program and examining it through a rigorously designed quasi-experimental approach. Furthermore, this research bridges the gap between the theoretical foundations of PYD and the practical implementation of traditional sports within educational contexts, while introducing an evidence-based model of implementation and evaluation that remains rarely applied in Pencak Silat studies in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of adolescents' participation in Pencak Silat extracurricular activities on their development within the framework of Positive Youth Development (PYD). By integrating the cultural values inherent in Pencak Silat with contemporary development theory, this research seeks to contribute both practically and theoretically to the field of sports-based youth development, especially in the Indonesian.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group format. This design was selected to empirically examine the effect of participation in Pencak Silat activities on Positive Youth Development (PYD) by comparing changes before and after the intervention between experimental and control groups. Such an approach is widely applied in educational and sport research to establish causal relationships through repeated measurements (Liu et al., 2025).

The study began with the identification of participants, consisting of adolescents aged 14–18 years who actively participated in Pencak Silat training at Paguron GRB Aji Putih Bandung. The sample consisted of 26 participants selected using total sampling, which were then divided into two groups: an experimental group (n=13) receiving PYD-based Pencak Silat training and a control group (n=13) participating in regular training without explicit PYD integration. Group allocation was conducted proportionally to ensure comparable baseline characteristics.

The next phase involved conducting a pretest using the Positive Youth Development Inventory (PYDI) to assess baseline PYD dimensions, including competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, and contribution. The experimental group then received a structured intervention integrating PYD principles into Pencak

Silat training over a specified period, while the control group continued standard training. At the end of the intervention, both groups completed a posttest using the same instrument to measure changes.

Data were collected through a survey method using the PYDI questionnaire Risma et al. (2021), which has demonstrated high validity and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.981), meeting the standards of social science measurement. The data were analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to describe PYD profiles, while inferential analysis included normality and homogeneity tests followed by paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-tests to examine differences and treatment effects. This analytical approach is commonly used in experimental educational research (Field, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the data analysis in a systematic manner, including prerequisite tests such as normality and homogeneity, as well as hypothesis testing using inferential statistical analysis, thereby providing findings that serve as the basis for addressing the research questions and achieving the objectives of the study.

Table 1. Test of Normality

Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest Eksperiments	.130	13	.200	.941	13	.468
Post-Test Eksperiments	.156	13	.200	.912	13	.198
Pretest Control	.152	13	.200	.898	13	.124
Post-Test Control	.190	13	.200	.892	13	.103

Based on **Table 1.** (Test of Normality), the normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests with the assistance of SPSS statistical software. Given that the sample size was relatively small (n = 26), divided into two groups of 13 respondents each, the Shapiro-Wilk significance value was used as the primary reference.

The results indicate that the significance values for all data groups were greater than 0.05, namely 0.468 for the experimental pretest, 0.198 for the experimental posttest, 0.124 for the control

pretest, and 0.103 for the control posttest. Based on the decision criteria for normality testing (Sig. > 0.05), it can be concluded that all data in both the experimental and control groups are normally distributed. Therefore, the data meet the assumption of normality, allowing for further analysis using parametric statistical methods.

Table 2. Test of Homogeneity

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	1.598	3	48	.202
Based on Median	1.066	3	48	.372
Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.066	3	41.459	.374
Based on trimmed mean	1.497	3	48	.227

Based on **Table 2.** (Test of Homogeneity of Variance) using Levene's test, the significance value (Sig.) in the "Based on Mean" row was 0.202. According to the decision criteria (Sig. > 0.05), this indicates that the variances between groups are homogeneous. Thus, it can be concluded that the data meet the assumption of homogeneity of variance, allowing the use of parametric statistical analysis, specifically the t-test.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test eksperimentis	13	201.5385	5.88239	1.63148
Post-test Control	13	157.000	10.29563	2.85549

Table 4. Independent T Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	Sig.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Equal variances Assumed	.051	13.54	.000	44.53	37.75	51.33

Based on the results of **Table 3** and **Table 4** (the Independent Samples t-test), the mean posttest score for the experimental group was 201.5385, while the control group had a mean of 157.000. Descriptively, this indicates that the average learning outcomes in the experimental group are higher than those in the control group. The homogeneity test using Levene's test showed a significance value of 0.051, which is greater

than 0.05, indicating that the variances of both groups are homogeneous. Therefore, the t-test analysis was conducted under the assumption of equal variances assumed.

Furthermore, the t-test for equality of means showed a t-value of 13.543 with a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates a statistically significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the experimental and control groups. The mean difference value of 44.53846 indicates that the experimental group achieved higher scores than the control group. Additionally, the 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges from 37.75091 to 51.32602, which does not cross zero, further confirming that the difference is statistically significant. Thus, it can be concluded that the treatment applied to the experimental group had a significant effect on learning outcomes compared to the control group.

Table 5. N-Gain Score

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ngain Score	26	.00	.95	.4258	.40133
Ngain Percent	26	.00	94.64	42.5798	40.13286

Table 6. N-Gain Interpretation Criteria

Value g	Category
$g \geq 0,7$	Height
$0,3 \leq g < 0,7$	Medium
$g < 0,3$	Low

Based on **Table 5**, the N-Gain Score analysis involved 26 respondents. The results show that the minimum N-Gain value was 0.00 and the maximum was 0.95, with a mean of 0.4258 and a standard deviation of 0.40133. When converted into percentage form (N-Gain Percent), the mean value was 42.58%, with a maximum of 94.64% and a standard deviation of 40.13%.

Based on **Table 6** the N-Gain interpretation criteria proposed by Hake as cited in Hidayat (2025), a mean N-Gain score of 0.4258 falls into the moderate category ($0.3 \leq g < 0.7$). This indicates that the program integrating PYD values with Pencak Silat training was moderately effective in improving the six dimensions of PYD (Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Caring, and Contribution).

The Effect of Pencak Silat on Positive Youth Development (PYD)

The results of this study showed significant differences between the experimental group

that received the PYD-based Pencak Silat training program and the control group. This is supported by the results of the independent sample ttest, which yielded a significance value of 0.000 (Sig. < 0.05), which means that the research hypothesis (H1) is accepted. Therefore, participation in PYD-based Pencak Silat activities has a significant influence on adolescent development, especially in the 5C dimensions: competence, confidence, connection, character, care, and contribution. These findings are in line with previous research that suggests that exercise-based PYD programs can improve various aspects of adolescent development (Bruner et al., 2021). Positive developmental outcomes are more likely to be achieved if structured guidance is integrated into the training program (Opstoel et al., 2019). The results are consistent with the theory of Positive Youth Development (PYD) proposed by Lerner (2018) which states that adolescent development results from the interaction between individual potential and a supportive environment. Participation in structured sports programs has been shown to improve entrepreneurial mindset and adaptability among adolescents. In this study, Pencak Silat functions as a social educational environment that provides a meaningful learning experience, facilitating the simultaneous development of PYD values.

This is further supported by Holt et al. (2017), who argue that organized sport can effectively promote social competence, character, and self-confidence when applied with a values-based approach. Involvement in sport has been linked to the development of a sense of responsibility and commitment among young athletes (Cómez-mármol et al., 2017). The higher average scores observed in the experimental group compared to the control group showed that the integration of PYD values in Pencak Silat training improved competence and confidence through skill mastery and successful training experience. These findings are in line with Marín-Gutiérrez et al. (2024), who report that competence and self-confidence are key factors in reducing stress and improving adolescent psychological well-being. Furthermore, social interaction during training reinforces the dimension of connection and care, as supported by Tomé et al. (2020), who emphasize the importance of positive social relationships in fostering empathy and social engagement among adolescents.

From a character development perspective, Pencak Silat, as a traditional martial art, embodies moral values such as discipline, responsibility, and respect for others. This is in line with

the theory of character education put forward by Lickona and supported by Risyanto et al. (2022), who found that Pencak Silat contributes to the development of integrity and moral values in adolescents. Thus, this study strengthens the argument that Pencak Silat functions not only as a physical activity but also as a culturally based medium for character education.

Effectiveness of the PYD-Based Pencak Silat Program

Based on the results of the N-Gain Score, the average score of 0.4258 was in the moderate category, indicating that the PYD-based Pencak Silat training program has a moderate level of effectiveness in improving adolescent development. The concept of normalized gain (N-gain), introduced by Hake in cite Hidayat (2025), is used to measure improvement by considering the maximum potential that can be achieved. The moderate category indicates that even though the program has produced positive effects, there is still room for improvement. One of the contributing factors is the quality of program implementation. For trainers, integrating PYD into Pencak Silat training is relatively new, requiring an ongoing and in-depth understanding to ensure that the program is not only technical but also reflective and value-oriented.

Previous studies have shown that exercise programs are more effective when they intentionally incorporate life skills development rather than focusing solely on physical activity (Bean et al., 2018). Another influencing factor is participant engagement, as not all participants show the same level of engagement. This variation is influenced by the individual's motivation, interest in Pencak Silat, and attendance during the training session. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation plays an important role in improving engagement and learning outcomes. Ryan & Deci (2020) emphasize that individuals with higher intrinsic motivation tend to show greater engagement and achieve more optimal developmental outcomes.

In the context of the PYD-based Pencak Silat program, strong interest increases enthusiasm, focus, and active participation. Uğraş et al. (2024) found that interest in sports activities was positively associated with adolescents' active participation and social development. The intensity of participation is also a key indicator of engagement. The higher the attendance rate, the greater the opportunity for participants to gain learning experience, practice skills, and internalize the PYD Values consistently. Involvement in sports

has a significant positive impact on the development of social skills in adolescents (Jones, 2024).

Other factors that affect the effectiveness of PYD-based programs are the social environment, including peer support, coaching roles, and training climate. The social environment in sports greatly influences the mastery of life skills and behavioral outcomes (Mahmud et al., 2024). Tomé et al. (2020) show that a positive social environment in sport promotes character development and social relationships among adolescents. A supportive coaching environment plays an important role in social and emotional development in youth sports (Bates et al., 2021). Positive interactions between peers can increase character formation and a sense of social responsibility among adolescents (Palheta et al., 2022).

According to PYD theory, development results from person-context interactions, which means that individual differences affect outcomes. Hambali et al. (2022) concluded that the effectiveness of exercise in supporting PYD is highly dependent on how the program is designed and implemented. The development of coaches in community-based youth sports is an important factor in improving the quality of participants' experiences and supporting the sustainability of participation in sports (Pill et al., 2024). Programs that focus only on the physical aspect tend to generate lower impact compared to those that adopt a holistic approach that integrates social values and character. Sports-based programs are increasingly recognized as an effective means of teaching life skills that can be applied in daily life to young people (Quinaud et al., 2022). The long-term success of PYD programs depends on consistent program design and evaluation strategies (Piggott et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that adolescents' participation in Pencak Silat extracurricular activities integrated with Positive Youth Development (PYD) values has an influence on adolescent development in the dimensions of competence, confidence, connection, character, care, and contribution. This is supported by statistical findings showing differences between the experimental and control groups, as well as higher average scores in the experimental groups. In addition, the results of N-Gain, which falls into the moderate category, show that the PYD-based Pencak Silat program is quite effective in promoting positive youth development, although further optimization is still needed.

From both theoretical and practical perspectives, this study highlights that Pencak Silat serves not only as a physical activity but also as a culturally grounded medium for character education that supports holistic youth development. The prospects for further development include improving program implementation through enhanced coaching capacity and the development of structured curriculum-based training models. Meanwhile, the application prospects involve expanding PYD-based Pencak Silat programs within school extracurricular activities and youth organizations, as well as conducting future research with larger samples, longer intervention durations, and additional psychosocial variables to generate more comprehensive findings.

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