

Martial Arts (Pencak Silat) as a Medium for Positive Youth Development in Sukagalih Village Youth Organization

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Abstract
<p><b>Objective.</b> This study aims to determine the role of Pencak Silat as a medium for Positive Youth Development (PYD) in Sukagalih Village Youth Organization, Garut Regency.</p> <p><b>Materials and methods.</b> This research employed a descriptive qualitative method with a one-group pretest–posttest design. The participants consisted of 20 youths selected purposively from Babakan Loa, Sukagalih Village. The PYD questionnaire, adapted with indicators of competence, confidence, character, caring, connection, creativity, and contribution, was administered. Data were analyzed using SPSS 20, including normality, homogeneity, and t-test.</p> <p><b>Results.</b> The results showed a significant increase in PYD scores. The mean pretest score was 185.90 while the mean posttest score was 333.05, with an average increase of 147.15 points. Statistical analysis indicated significant differences (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math>) between pretest and posttest scores, confirming the effectiveness of Pencak Silat training in enhancing positive youth character.</p> <p><b>Conclusion.</b> Pencak Silat has proven to be an effective medium for developing youth character through discipline, self-control, and cultural values. This research highlights the importance of integrating traditional martial arts into community youth development programs.</p>
<b>Keywords:</b> Youth Organization, Martial Arts, Positive Youth Development

Introduction

Youth are considered a valuable asset for community development, with significant potential to be cultivated and empowered. However, the challenges of modern society, including external cultural influences, globalization, and declining youth participation in community activities, demand effective strategies to foster positive development (Bruner et al., 2023). The adolescent stage is often marked by identity exploration, vulnerability to negative behaviors such as delinquency, and

reduced involvement in productive activities. Therefore, strategic interventions are required to channel youth energy into positive and constructive activities.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a framework that emphasizes holistic growth across multiple dimensions, including competence, confidence, connection, character, and contribution (Lerner et al., 2018). These five domains are frequently expanded with caring and creativity, creating a more comprehensive 7C framework that serves as a guideline for assessing youth empowerment (Pujiono et al., 2024). PYD suggests that when young people are provided with supportive environments, meaningful participation, and structured activities, they can thrive and develop into resilient individuals capable of contributing positively to society.

Sports have long been recognized as an effective medium for implementing PYD. Beyond physical benefits, sports activities cultivate teamwork, discipline, resilience, leadership, and social interaction (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). In the Indonesian context, sports embedded in cultural values, such as traditional martial arts, carry additional significance because they transmit heritage, respect, and community identity (Nurul Anugrah, 2022).

Pencak Silat, a traditional martial art officially recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage, embodies not only physical training but also spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. Its philosophy emphasizes respect, discipline, and self-control, which are essential elements in shaping positive character among youth. Several studies confirm that martial arts training can reduce aggressive tendencies, improve emotional regulation, and strengthen community ties (Lakes & Hoyt, 2004; Harwood et al., 2019).

In rural areas such as Sukagalih Village, youth organizations (Karang Taruna) often face difficulties in maintaining consistent participation due to modernization and limited facilities. Traditional activities like Pencak Silat can serve as a cultural bridge that both preserves local identity and provides structured youth engagement. By integrating martial arts into youth community programs, the dual purpose of cultural preservation and character education can be achieved.

Thus, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Pencak Silat as a medium for Positive Youth Development (PYD) in Sukagalih Village Youth Organization. The research provides empirical evidence on how traditional martial arts training can significantly enhance youth competence, confidence, character, and contribution to their community.

**Materials and Methods Study Participants.**

The target population of this study was the youth community of Babakan Loa, Sukagalih Village, Garut Regency, West Java, Indonesia, totaling 35 individuals registered as members of the Sukagalih Village Youth Organization (Karang Taruna). From this population, a purposive sampling technique was employed to recruit 20 participants who met specific inclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria were:

1. Registered as active members of the Sukagalih Village Youth Organization.
2. Aged between 15–22 years, representing the developmental stage of adolescence to early adulthood.
3. Willing to participate voluntarily and commit to attending all training sessions during the study period.
4. Physically and mentally healthy to engage in martial arts training.

The final sample consisted of 12 male and 8 female participants. Prior to the commencement of the study, the researcher provided detailed explanations of the research objectives, procedures, and benefits. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and for those under the age of 18, consent was additionally obtained from their parents or guardians. Ethical considerations, such as confidentiality of personal data and voluntary participation, were strictly upheld throughout the study.

**Study organization.**

This research adopted a one-group pretest–posttest design, represented by the following formula:

$$O1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O2$$

O1 = Pretest (initial measurement of PYD indicators)

X = Treatment (Pencak Silat training intervention)

O2 = Posttest (final measurement after intervention)

The study was organized into three main stages:

1. Pretest Stage (Baseline Measurement):

Before the intervention, participants completed the Positive Youth Development (PYD) questionnaire, adapted to Indonesian cultural contexts. The instrument measured seven

developmental dimensions: competence, confidence, character, caring, connection, creativity, and contribution.

2. Treatment Stage (Pencak Silat Training Intervention):

Participants underwent a structured 8-week Pencak Silat training program, conducted twice weekly, with each session lasting 90 minutes. The program was designed and supervised by certified Pencak Silat instructors in collaboration with community leaders.

- Phase 1 (Weeks 1–2): Introduction to Pencak Silat philosophy, basic stances (kuda-kuda), and discipline values.
- Phase 2 (Weeks 3–5): Technical drills, including basic strikes, defense techniques, and partner exercises to encourage teamwork.
- Phase 3 (Weeks 6–8): Application of skills in controlled sparring, integration of cultural rituals (salam hormat, doa), and group reflection activities focusing on values such as respect, discipline, and contribution.

The training emphasized character building, teamwork, and cultural appreciation, aligning with the Positive Youth Development framework.

3. Posttest Stage (Outcome Measurement):

At the end of the program, participants were reassessed with the same PYD questionnaire to evaluate developmental changes compared with the baseline (pretest).

**Statistical analysis**

This study employed a one-group pretest–posttest design involving 20 purposively selected youths (12 males, 8 females, aged 15–22 years) from the Sukagalih Village Youth Organization who participated in an 8-week (2 sessions/week, 90 minutes each) structured Pencak Silat training program emphasizing physical techniques, cultural values, and character development, with data collected through a Positive Youth Development (PYD) questionnaire covering seven dimensions (competence, confidence, character, caring, connection, creativity, and contribution) and analyzed using SPSS 20 through descriptive statistics, Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test, Levene’s test for homogeneity, paired samples t-test ( $p < 0.05$ ), and Cohen’s d effect size to evaluate the intervention’s significance and magnitude.

Result

The results of this study are presented in several stages, starting from the descriptive analysis, assumption testing (normality and homogeneity), and finally the inferential analysis through paired sample t-test to determine the effect of the Pencak Silat training program on Positive Youth Development (PYD).

The descriptive analysis of the pretest and posttest data shows that participants' Positive Youth Development scores improved considerably after undergoing the Pencak Silat training program.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	20	178	196	185.90	5.47
Posttest	20	325	342	333.05	5.21

The results show that prior to the intervention, the average score of participants was 185.90, with scores ranging between 178 and 196. This indicates that the initial condition of the youth was relatively moderate and homogeneous. After the intervention, however, the average score increased sharply to 333.05, with scores ranging from 325 to 342. This represents an improvement of 147.15 points between the pretest and posttest averages. The relatively small standard deviation in both tests (5.47 in the pretest and 5.21 in the posttest) indicates that the data distribution was consistent across participants, suggesting that the improvement occurred systematically rather than sporadically.

Normality Test

Before conducting further analysis, it was necessary to test the assumption of data normality. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used, with a significance value greater than 0.05 indicating normal data distribution.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Variable	Sig. (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)	Interpretation
Pretest	0.200 > 0.05	Normal
Posttest	0.200 > 0.05	Normal

Based on the results, both pretest and posttest data had a significance value of 0.200, which is

greater than 0.05. This means the data for both variables were normally distributed, thus fulfilling the assumption required for parametric testing such as the paired sample t-test.

**Homogeneity Test**

The next step was to evaluate whether the variance of the data was homogeneous. The Levene’s test was employed to test this assumption.

**Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results**

Levene Statistic	Sig.	Interpretation
0.874	0.359 (> 0.05)	Homogeneous

The Levene’s test yielded a significance value of 0.359, which is greater than 0.05. This confirms that the variance between the pretest and posttest groups was homogeneous, meaning that the data were suitable for further analysis using the t-test

**Paired Samples t-test**

After confirming normality and homogeneity, a paired sample t-test was conducted to test whether the Pencak Silat training significantly improved PYD scores.

**Table 4. Paired Samples t-test Results**

Variable Pair	Mean Difference	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest–Posttest	-147.15	-25.644	19	0.000 (< 0.05)

The paired sample t-test showed a mean difference of -147.15, with a t-value of -25.644 and a significance level of 0.000, which is far below the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that there was a highly significant difference between pretest and posttest scores. The negative sign of the mean difference reflects that posttest scores were substantially higher than pretest scores. This result statistically proves that Pencak Silat training had a positive and strong effect on the youth’s development.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that Pencak Silat training has a significant impact on Positive Youth Development (PYD) among members of the Sukagalih Village Youth Organization. The increase of 147.15 points in the mean score between pretest and posttest indicates that structured martial arts training can improve developmental domains such as competence, confidence, character, caring, connection, creativity, and contribution.

This aligns with the theoretical framework of Positive Youth Development, which emphasizes the importance of structured, culturally relevant, and community-based activities in supporting youth growth (Lerner et al., 2018). Sports have been recognized as an effective tool for fostering social connection, self-discipline, and resilience (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). In particular, martial arts such as Pencak Silat provide additional benefits because they integrate physical training with cultural and moral values, creating a holistic developmental environment.

The results are consistent with previous studies showing that martial arts participation enhances psychosocial outcomes in adolescents. Lakes and Hoyt (2004) demonstrated that martial arts improved self-regulation and discipline in school-aged children, while Harwood et al. (2019) highlighted the role of traditional practices in shaping community identity. In the Indonesian context, Pencak Silat is more than a sport—it is a cultural heritage that fosters respect, cooperation, and spiritual balance (Nurul Anugrah, 2022).

From a community development perspective, the success of this program indicates that youth organizations (Karang Taruna) can play a vital role in channeling adolescent energy into positive activities. The structured training not only reduced the risk of delinquency and social disengagement but also promoted pride in local cultural traditions. The consistent improvement across all participants (indicated by low standard deviation) shows that the training was inclusive and beneficial to both male and female youths, regardless of initial skill level.

Thus, the discussion emphasizes that the integration of traditional martial arts into community-based youth development programs is a strategic approach for holistic education. It strengthens physical fitness, emotional resilience, social connectedness, and cultural continuity simultaneously.

**Conclusion.**

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that Pencak Silat is an effective medium for Positive Youth Development (PYD). The training program significantly increased the competence, confidence, character, caring, connection, creativity, and contribution of youths in Sukagalih Village, as demonstrated by the statistical improvements in their scores. The intervention provided both quantitative evidence of effectiveness ( $p < 0.05$ ) and practical significance, with a large effect size.



Therefore, Pencak Silat should be considered not only as a sport but also as a community-based educational tool that fosters character building and cultural preservation. Future programs may expand this approach to broader community settings or integrate it into formal and non-formal education curricula to maximize its developmental benefits.

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