



The theory of positive youth development – Polish adaptation of the PYD-SF and PYD-VSF questionnaires

Teoria pozytywnego rozwoju młodzieży – polska adaptacja kwestionariuszy PYD-SF i PYD-VSF¹

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Abstract: The article presents the theory of positive youth development, its main assumptions and practical implications for work with youth. At the same time, the publication is a report on the adaptation of the PYD-SF-PL questionnaires and the shortened version of PYD-VSF-PL, used to measure the five main indicators of adaptation to adulthood (5 Cs). The study involved 573 people aged 14 to 25 ($x = 18.5$; $Sd = 2.7$). The questionnaires in the Polish version are characterized by good psychometric properties: they are reliable (alpha of the full version = 0.905; alpha of the shortened version = 0.843) and accurate, correlations with the level of perceived social support, the level of life satisfaction and mental resilience were observed.

Keywords: adolescence, positive youth development, PYD-SF adaptation, PYD-VSF adaptation.

Abstrakt: W artykule przedstawiono teorię pozytywnego rozwoju młodzieży, jej główne założenia oraz implikacje praktyczne dotyczące pracy z młodzieżą. Jednocześnie publikacja stanowi raport z adaptacji kwestionariuszy PYD-SF oraz wersji skróconej PYD-VSF (Geldhof i in. 2014), służących do pomiaru pięciu głównych wskaźników adaptacji do dorosłości (5 Cs). W badaniu walidacyjnym uczestniczyło 573 respondentów w wieku od 14 do 25 roku życia ($x = 18,5$; $Sd = 2,7$). Kwestionariusze w wersji polskiej cechują się dobrymi właściwościami psychometrycznymi: są rzetelne (alfa wersji pełnej = 0,905; alfa wersji skróconej = 0,843) oraz trafne, zaobserwowano korelacje z poziomem odczuwanego wsparcia społecznego, poziomem satysfakcji z życia oraz prężności psychicznej.

Słowa kluczowe: adolescencja, pozytywny rozwój młodzieży, adaptacja PYD-SF, adaptacja PYD-VSF.

Introduction

Adolescence is marked by the search for one's own identity (Bakiera, 2013; Obuchowska, 2009, Senejko, Łoś, 2015), a period of rebellion (Oleszkowicz, 2006, Oleszkowicz, Senejko, 2011; Senejko, Oleszkowicz, 2013) and the intensity of physical and psychological changes, as well as in the closest social relations (Gurba, 2013, 2020).

The literature on adolescence describes difficulties in risky behaviors, early sexual contacts, or potentially developing addictions or criminal behaviors at this time (Bee, 2004; Imacka, Balsa, 2012; Ponczek, Olszowy, 2012; Siudem, 2013). A classic approach to work with young people

at risk of these difficulties focuses on teenage deficits (Keyes, 2005, 2006; Lerner et al., 2011; Shek, Sun, Merrick, 2013; Worker et al., 2019) and searching for ways to eliminate undesirable and risky behaviors (Siudem, 2013; Ostaszewski, 2014). In addition to research focusing on the difficulties of this developmental period, in the mid-twentieth century, the concept of resilience/resiliency appears in the literature on the subject, describing the phenomenon of good functioning of an individual and adaptation to adulthood, despite experiencing inappropriate environmental conditions and family (Ogińska-Bulik, Juczyński,

¹ Artykuł w języku polskim: <https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2023-1Barl.pdf>

2011; Ostaszewski, 2014). Researchers are looking for protective factors and factors that threaten the mental resilience of an individual (Ostaszewski, 2014). There are two main approaches to understanding the phenomenon of mental resilience. According to the first category of definition, mental resilience is understood as the property of an individual to flexibly cope with merging challenges, i.e. the ability to adapt to the prevailing environmental conditions and solve the difficulties faced by the individual (resiliency, e.g. Block, Kremen, 1996, Kaczmarek, 2011; Ogińska-Bulik, Juczyński, 2011). In the second approach, mental resilience is understood as a process (resilience, e.g. Ostaszewski, 2014), in which individual factors, the functioning of the family and the further social environment are important. We can distinguish both protective factors—conducive to mental resilience, and risk factors—limiting the possibility of proper adaptation to adulthood (Borucka, Ostaszewski, 2012; Ogińska-Bulik, Juczyński, 2011; Ostaszewski, 2014; Ryś, 2016, 2020; Ryś, Trzęsowska-Greszta, 2018). For example, in a family addicted to alcohol, protective factors may include: late onset of addiction in the family, lack of addiction of one of the parents, good relationships with a non-drinking parent, or positive relationships with other role models, e.g. grandparents (Junik, 2012).

In the following years, the question of how a child, despite growing up in inappropriate care and educational conditions, can achieve success in adulthood becomes an important element of work with youth. In opposition to theories focusing on deficits, the theory of positive youth development (PYD) is emerging, pioneered by Richard M. Lerner (Lerner, 1978; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2011; Lerner et al., 2013; Lerner, Chase, 2019). This theory becomes the basis for many prevention programs targeted at young people (Harris, Cheney, 2015; Feenstra, 2015; Flanagan, Zaff, Varga, Margolius, 2020; Lewis i in. 2016; Lobenstein, 2018; Lopes i in. 2018; Newman, Lower-Hoppe, Burch, Paluta, 2021; Norton, Watt, 2014; Taylor i in. 2017; Povilaitis, Tamminen, 2018; Smith, Witherspoon, Osgood, 2017; Worker i in. 2019).

Looking at the headlines of newspapers, everyday reality, the headlines of websites and social media, we often notice people with great artistic, scientific, business or sports success, who did not have a “comfortable” childhood, but managed to reach a place where they are, although professional successes are not always accompanied by satisfaction in private life. For effective adaptation to adulthood, it is important to design solutions in accordance with the main ideas of positive youth development (Benson et al., 2006). The basic issue is the belief that each individual has the potential for positive functioning and development. Unlocking this potential is possible if the child’s mentors (parents, teachers, trainers or tutors) provide appropriate environmental conditions that stimulate development. These conditions can only be ensured in the case of proper communication and positive relationships between mentors and the teenager, this sense of community is one of the main sources for positive youth development. Equally important is the teenager’s own activity, whether they engage in appropriate relationships and social activities, then the individual is the main subject of their development, social activities and behaviors constitute the main context of PYD. The literature also points out that there are general factors conducive to adaptation to adulthood, but some may be dependent on specific cultural and environmental conditions (Benson et al., 2006).

These issues of shifting perspective from teenagers’ deficits to their strengths are extremely important because people tend to interpret events and experiences according to patterns and attitudes they know (Aronson, Wilson, Akert, 2006). The cognitive component is important here (whether the information is consistent with what we think about the world?) and as well as the affective component (how do we feel in a given situation?). For example, if a girl grows up in difficult care and educational conditions (e.g. in a family with alcohol addiction and violence accompanying the addiction) may grow up believing “I am not worth anything “. As an adult, she will make decisions about building a relationship with a man who does not care about her, instead of choosing a man who adores and cares

about her well-being—the cognitive component prevails over the affective one (Swann, after: Pervin, 2002). Therefore, it should be important in working with youth to look for the teenager's strengths, so that both the cognitive and emotional spheres are consistent with each other. An activity that perceives potential of a teenager, can be, for example, football. The teenager believes that he is a good athlete and feels good during training (both the cognitive component—ok; and the affective component—ok). An important role then is the role of the mentor, he should build an appropriate relationship with the teenager, and with the deepening mentor-student relationship and growing commitment, the boy can learn what behaviors are accepted in the team and what are not, and in this way football training becomes training of social competences, which in the long run may be transferred to other spheres of functioning, and ultimately will be conducive to adaptation to adulthood.

Supporters of the theory of positive youth development define five main indicators of effective adaptation to adulthood (five Cs; Bowers, Kiely, Brittan, Lerner, Lerner, 2010; Lerner et al., 2005; Phelps, Zimmerman, Waren, Jelacic, von Eye, Lerner, 2009; Ostaszewski, 2014):

- *Competence* – life skills,
- *Confidence* – a positive attitude towards oneself,
- *Connection* – ties with the immediate environment,
- *Character* – state of moral development,
- *Caring* – attitudes towards other people.

Competence is manifested primarily in cognitive activity and social behavior of adolescents. *Confidence* is expressed not only as self-esteem, but also faith in one's own abilities, along with a sense of agency. *Connection* refers to the quality of a teenager's social relationships with their immediate surroundings. *Character* is about moral reasoning and professed moral values and knowledge of social norms, principles and rules, including the ability to distinguish between good and evil. *Caring* can be expressed through respect, empathy, or attitudes full of kindness (Ostaszewski, 2014).

The PYD-SF and PYD-VSF questionnaires (Geldhof et al., 2014) were created to measure the described indicators of adaptation to adulthood (Geldhof et al., 2014), which are being validated in other countries (Amaral, 2022; Gaspar de Matos et al., 2018; Tomé et al., 2019) and their validation for Polish conditions is the subject of this article.

1. Research method

1.1. Study group

573 people ($x = 18.5$; $Sd = 2.7$) participated in the study, including 261 minors and 312 young adults in emerging adulthood. The study group consisted of out of 291 women (50.8% of the group) and 281 men (49% of the group), one person did not specify gender (0.2% of the group). In the case of minors, parents gave written consent for their child to participate in the study. Consents were collected at school during parent-teacher conference, and the examination of students took place during the lesson – educational hour.

1.2. Research tools

The PYD-SF questionnaire (Geldhof et al., 2014) consists of 34 questions that allow the measurement of adult adaptation indicators (Five Cs). The scale allows you to determine the overall result of positive development (all 34 items) and in individual areas:

- competence,
- confidence,
- connection,
- character,
- caring.

The Polish version of the questionnaire was translated by two philologists with the validation procedure (translation and reverse translation), and after translation, the items of the questionnaire in the Polish version were assessed by competent judges. All 34 test items formed the final research version of the PYD-SF-PL.

2. Results

In order to conduct factor analysis, Keiser-Mayer-Olkin and Bartlet tests were initially performed, which turned out to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), and based on counter-image analysis, all test items were subjected to cluster and model matrix analysis using the Oblimin method. Detailed results for individual test items that make up the final subscales of the PYD-SF-PL questionnaire are presented in Table 1.

The reliability of the entire test is high ($\alpha = 0.905$), and the reliability of the distinguished scales is also satisfactory: Confidence ($\alpha = 0.887$); Caring ($\alpha = 0.870$) Competence ($\alpha = 0.689$) Character ($\alpha = 0.729$); Connection ($\alpha = 0.707$). Similarly to the English-language version, it was decided to develop a shortened version of the questionnaire, in which, as in the English-language original there are 17 test items, in the Polish version these are the following items: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, 23, 26, 28, 34; the reliability of the short version is also highly satisfactory for the general scale ($\alpha = 0.843$) and for the subscales: Confidence ($\alpha = 0.873$); Caring ($\alpha = 0.877$); Competence ($\alpha = 0.774$); Character ($\alpha = 0.707$); Connection ($\alpha = 0.707$).

Then, the time stability of the test was analyzed. For this purpose, 31 people aged 20 to 24 were examined ($\bar{x} = 21.13$; $Sd = 0.81$). The subjects completed the test twice, the interval between the first and second measurement was 2 weeks. The analyzes were performed using a correlation test, the results indicate very high correlations, both for the basic version ($r = 0.808$; $p < 0.001$) and the shortened version ($r = 0.781$; $p < 0.001$).

2.1. Construct validity of PYD-SF-PL

The theoretical validity of the questionnaire was verified by conducting correlation tests between the PYD-SF-PL questionnaire and the following tools:

SWLS Life Satisfaction Questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of five questions on the scale of answers 1-7, the scale has high psychometric properties, in the Polish version, $\alpha = 0.86$ (Jankowski, 2015; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, Griffin, 1985).

Table 1. Factor structure of the PYD-SF-PL questionnaire

Confidence	
Item 7	0.811
Item 4	0.776
Item 15	0.758
Item 23	0.727
Item 6	0.674
Item 2	0.630
Item 24	0.613
Item 33	0.595
Item 18	0.555
Caring	
Item 13	0.851
Item 12	0.825
Item 28	0.821
Item 30	0.784
Item 29	0.618
Competence	
Item 3	0.643
Item 31	0.574
Item 19	0.525
Item 20	0.492
Character	
Item 27	-0.596
Item 10	-0.571
Item 26	-0.541
Item 9	-0.476
Item 8	-0.377
Item 11	-0.357
Connection	
Item 17	-0.694
Item 34	-0.677
Item 1	-0.345

SPP-18 questionnaire by N. Ogińska-Bulik and Z. Juczyński (2011). The tool is used to measure mental resilience understood as an individual's individual predisposition to flexibly cope with difficulties. The questionnaire allows for the measurement of general mental resilience as well as

Table 2. Correlation analysis between individual scales of the Polish version of the PYD questionnaire

	Full version				
	Confidence	Caring	Competence	Character	Connection
PYD- SF overallscale	0.814**	0.542**	0.656**	0.634**	0.664**
	Short version				
	Confidence	Caring	Competence	Character	Connection
PYD- VSF overallscale	0.650**	0.584**	0.629**	0.737**	0.715**

* statistical significance at a level less than or equal to 0.05; ** statistical significance at a level less than or equal to 0.01.

Table 3. Correlation analysis between individual scales of the PYD-SF-PL questionnaire and the short version PYD-SF-PL and the perception of social support and the level of life satisfaction

	General support	Support significant person	Support Family	Support Friend	Life satisfaction
PYD	0.496**	0.353**	0.425**	0.406**	0.546**
Confidence	0.443**	0.207**	0.568**	0.265**	0.701**
Caring	0.242**	0.267**	0.080	0.244**	0.044
Competence	0.224**	0.158**	0.196**	0.182**	0.334**
Character	0.217**	0.172**	0.155**	0.193**	0.172**
Connection	0.564**	0.485**	0.228**	0.658**	0.377**
Short version PYD	General support	Support significant person	Support Family	Support Friend	Life satisfaction
PYD	0.477**	0.373**	0.331**	0.443**	0.467**
Confidence	0.388**	0.176**	0.514**	0.219**	0.714**
Caring	0.214**	0.258**	0.035	0.234**	-0.003
Competence	0.240**	0.152**	0.221**	0.199**	0.360**
Character	0.240**	0.216**	0.134**	0.231**	0.154*
Connection	0.564**	0.485**	0.228**	0.658**	0.377**

* statistical significance at a level less than or equal to 0.05; ** statistical significance at a level less than or equal to 0.01.

in selected areas: optimistic attitude and energy, perseverance and determination to action, sense of humor and openness to new experiences, personal competence and tolerance of negative affect. Reliability of the alpha test = 0.82 (Ogińska-Bulik, Juczyński, 2011).

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support in the Polish adaptation by K. Buszman and H. Przybyła-Basisty (2017). The scale is used to measure perceived social support and allows you to determine the general level of perceived support, and support from a significant other, family and

friend. The scale has high psychometric properties, the reliability of the general scale is alpha = 0.893 (Buszman, Przybyła-Basista, 2017).

The questionnaires were completed by 371 secondary school students (age: $x = 16.8$; $Sd = 1.29$). The analysis of correlations between the individual scales of the questionnaire shows that they are strongly related (high or very high correlation). Detailed results are presented in table 2.

Then, the correlation between the individual scales of the PYD-SF-PL questionnaire (and the short version), the level of perceived social support

Table 4. Analysis of correlations between individual scales of the PYD-SF-PL questionnaire and the short version PYD-SF-PL and the level of mental resilience of teenagers

	Resilience	Optimistic attitude and energy	Persistence and determination in action	Sense of humor and openness to new experiences	Personal competence and tolerance of negative affect
PYD	0,484**	0,460**	0,428**	0,397**	0,341**
Confidence	0,578**	0,563**	0,442**	0,427**	0,506**
Caring	0,013	0,036	0,086	0,070	-0,143**
Competence	0,387**	0,320**	0,326**	0,290**	0,359**
Character	0,268**	0,269**	0,255**	0,228**	0,148**
Connection	0,281**	0,225**	0,266**	0,274**	0,186**
Short version PYD	Resilience	Optimistic attitude and energy	Persistence and determination in action	Sense of humor and openness to new experiences	Personal competence and tolerance of negative affect
PYD	0,438**	0,400**	0,400**	0,378**	0,295**
Confidence	0,566**	0,531**	0,434**	0,453**	0,487**
Caring	-0,029	-0,001	0,058	0,014	-0,169**
Competence	0,419**	0,344**	0,351**	0,309**	0,399**
Character	0,230**	0,235**	0,228**	0,215**	0,097
Connection	0,281**	0,225**	0,266**	0,274**	0,186**

* statistical significance at a level less than or equal to 0.05; ** statistical significance at a level less than or equal to 0.01.

and the level of life satisfaction were analyzed. Most of the correlations are statistically significant and have a positive direction, the scales of positive youth development are positively related with perceived social support and the level of satisfaction with life. The results are presented in table 3.

The relationship between the scales of the Positive Youth Development Questionnaire and the level of mental resilience was also checked. There were statistically significant positive correlations between the distinguished scales of the questionnaire for measuring the positive development of youth and the intensity of individual spheres of mental resilience.

The negative, though weak, relationship between attitudes towards other people (caring) and the sense of personal competence and tolerance of negative affect seems interesting, which requires further research, especially since the discussed caring correlates positively with the general level of felt support, support received from a significant person and from a friend.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the PYD-SF-PL and PYD-VSF-PL questionnaires are reliable and accurate, statistically significant correlations were observed between the selected scales of positive youth development and perceived social support, the level of mental resilience and life satisfaction. The tools are also stable in time. The described results are consistent with the theoretical assumptions of the PYD concept. The basis of the PYD concept is the theory of U. Bronfenbrenner (1979) indicating that the development of an individual takes place through the individual's own activity, in the closer and further social environment, such as the family or school environment (Ettedal, Mahoney, 2017). The presented research confirms that positive development is related to individual characteristics (mental resilience) as well as the functioning of the environment (the level of perceived social support).

The adaptation allows for conducting international research and verification of one of the main assumptions of the theory of positive youth development, regarding the issue of universality, i.e. the assumption that there are general principles of PYD, but specific to a particular culture or group of youth. The first of the PYD cross-cultural studies was conducted

by a team from Iceland and the USA (Gestsdottir, Geldhof, Lerner, Lerner, 2017). At the same time, the adaptation carried out in this research will allow the measurement of adaptation indicators to adulthood to be used in longitudinal studies—at the beginning and at the end of preventive programs based on the idea of positive youth development.

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