

## The Engagement of Youth Transformation Program and its Effectiveness on Self-Motivation and Self-Efficacy

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**Abstract:** This study examines the effects of youth transformation program on self-motivation and self-efficacy of university students. There were 96 youths involved in this program, however, only 66 of them have completed the pre and post-studies, 19 males (28.80%) and 47 females (71.20%) with mean age=22.15,  $SD=.96$ . A set of questionnaire which consists of three sections that measured the demographic profile, self-motivation and self-efficacy were used to measure research variables. A paired-sample t-test showed that the mean for post-test ranks for students' self-motivation was higher than the mean pre-test ranks,  $t=-3.48$ ,  $p=.00$ . We also found that there was a significant difference in the mean pre-test ranks and post-test ranks for self-efficacy,  $t=-2.70$ ,  $p=.00$ . The study showed that the Youth Transformation which was held in three-day have increase youths' self-motivation and self-efficacy. Therefore, it was suggested that this program should be implemented as one way to increase youths' self-motivation and self-efficacy.

**Key words:** Youth • Self-motivation • Self-efficacy • Youth transformation program

### INTRODUCTION

Each country believes that youths are the next generations who will bring positive development and success to their country. In another word, they are the treasure and hopes for each country. The Malaysian youth which constitutes 46.5 percent of the total population is a great asset for Malaysia if they are harnessed and utilized in the right direction [1]. This shows that government and non-governmental agencies should direct and support youths in a right way. This can be accomplished by organizing relevant youth programs and involving them in community works that may help to instill positive elements and soft-skills in dealing with today's competitive world. Youths in today's competitive world, facing and dealing with a social and economic crisis such as the increasing of goods prices, a competitive job in the time of the economic crisis and facing with many social issues (i.e., poverty, unemployment & violence). All these factors may also contribute to psychological problems (i.e., lack of motivation, depression, & anxieties). Therefore, supports and guidance from the society or relevant authorities in helping youths to gain positive youth development are

needed. The governmental and non-governmental agencies showed continuous support to youths by organizing different kinds of youth programs which aim is to instill positive development. This is to ensure that youths have the capability to enhance their social skills (e.g., self-efficacy, leadership, interpersonal, & intrapersonal skills) and psychological elements (self-motivation, self-esteem, & well-being). All these elements contribute to their positive self-development which may help them to adapt to the social, economic and environmental changes.

In regard to university students, we believe that they might face many challenges such as academic problems (e.g., maintaining good results or dealing with academic tasks & exams), social relationships, financial and family problems. These challenges were revealed in past studies that college students face many challenges in their pursuit of higher education [1,2]. Therefore, to meet these challenges, it is important to motivate university students to strive for excellence in academic performance through positive psychological capacities [2]. Students who lack motivation were struggling to meet the social and emotional challenges of the university [4]. University or college students who experienced a lower level of

motivation were more likely to experience higher levels of exhaustion and cynicism compared to those who are higher levels of intrinsic motivation [4,5]. On the other hand, people who are motivated can also experience feelings of incompetence and expectant of uncontrollable [3]. This shows that people can experience incompetency although they are motivated. Therefore, we believe that the two elements i.e. motivation and self-efficacy are two of the psychological elements that need to be instilled in university students. We should not only motivate child and youth to contribute to the community but also focus on their mental wellness such as self-efficacy [6].

In this study, we interested to examine the effects of youth program which named 'The Youth Transformation Program' on self-motivation and self-efficacy. This program was held in three-day with various structured activities were conducted by trained facilitators. We predicted that youths' self-motivation and self-efficacy will be increased after they have completed the three-day program. This study may help us to examine the effectiveness of youth transformation program in enhancing self-motivation and self-efficacy among youths. In addition, it can also help the relevant authority to identify the strength of this program which focuses on youth. There are many programs that have been implemented by youth organizations but there is still a lack of evaluation have been conducted in examining the effectiveness of such youth programs. The findings may help us to understand whether involvement in youth transformation program can enhance self-motivation and self-efficacy. Positive findings might help to support the aim of youth transformation in producing positive youths such as self-motivation and self-efficacy. Involvement in youth programs can help youths to reach their own potential [7]. The objectives of this study are to examine the effects of youth transformation program on self-motivation and also self-efficacy.

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world, facing and dealing with a social and economic crisis such as the increasing of goods prices, a competitive job in the time of the economic crisis and facing with many social issues (i.e., poverty, unemployment & violence). All these factors may also contribute to psychological problems (i.e., lack of motivation, depression, & anxieties). Therefore, supports and guidance from the society or relevant authorities in helping youths to gain positive youth development are needed. The governmental and non-governmental agencies showed continuous support to youths by organizing different kinds of youths programs which aim is to instill positive development. This is to ensure that youths have the capability to enhance their social skills (e.g., self-efficacy, leadership, interpersonal, & intrapersonal skills) and psychological elements (self-motivation, self-esteem, & well-being). All these elements contribute to their positive self-development which may help them to adapt to the social, economic and environmental changes.

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**Self-Motivation:** Motivation, considered to be an internal attribute that can be influenced by outside forces [8]. It is defined as energizing and directing our efforts towards a meaningful goal [9,10]. It is also referred to a desire to accomplish or master something difficult or challenging as independently and successfully as possible. There are two elements of achievement motivation i.e., the desire to succeed and the counteracting fear of failures, fear that a person will be humiliated by the shortcoming. Motivation can direct someone to get started and keep him going as he strives for continued wellness and growth [10]. In our study, motivation refers to self-motivation scale that is measured using the self-motivation scale that consists of 12 items.

**General Self-Efficacy:** Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal capability. It refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments [11]. In regard to academic, self-efficacy is defined as one's ability to produce desired academic results. If a student believes he can complete a task, he will have stronger engagement with the task. Conversely, if students have little confidence that they can complete a task, they will consider the task to be unnecessary and consequently do not want to spend time and energy on it. As a result, they do not engage in such task [12]. Self-efficacy is derived from a social cognitive theory which

represents a measurement of a learner's belief that he or she could successfully organize and perform behaviors that will produce a specific desired outcome [12]. Self-efficacy also defines as one's belief in his or her abilities to successfully execute a specific task within a given context [13]. In our study, self-efficacy focuses on the general self-efficacy which is measured using the perceived self-efficacy scale. In our study, self-efficacy focused on youths and was measured using the General Sense of Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale [14].

**Research Framework:** In this study, Achievement Motivation Theory by McClelland [15] and Self-Efficacy Theory by Bandura [12] are used as guidelines to design the research framework for assessing the effects Youth Transformation Program on self-efficacy and self-motivation.

**Youth Transformation Program:** This program was conducted by one of the governmental agencies which focus on young people as participants. The program which was held in three-day requires each participant to work as a team to reach certain goals and solve problems that were given by the facilitators in a creative and innovative way. All participants engaged in all activities and must follow the schedule and they have to be on time for each activity.

Most of the activities involved group work and team building. Participants in each group have to work together and showed mutual support to solve given tasks. For instance, in one of the challenging activities, participants went for hiking in a group and they have to enter three stations. In each station, the facilitator gave them one task to solve and they only can continue their journey once they have solved the task in each station. In this activity, members in a group showed cooperative work and strive to reach their goal to reach their end point. Cooperative environments such as team building and teamwork are increasingly seen as ideal environments in which to foster young people's engagement. In cooperative situations, students strive to reach their goals through the support and joint focus of others in their group or class. We believe that through all the structured activities may help to enhance participants' self-motivation and self-efficacy [16].

In the three-day program, participants were also required to express their opinions and present their ideas or suggestions to their facilitators. For instance, in one activity, participants in each group has to present their

ideas and thoughts on how to develop their 'imagined dream island'. They also have to response to any questions from another group about their 'dream island'. We assume that this activity can help to boost confidence level and cooperation among the participants. It also motivates them to produce innovative strategies in developing their imagined island.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Study Design:** The design of the study is a quasi-experimental study with a pre and post studies to examine the effectiveness of Youth Transformation Program before and after the program was implemented.

**Participants:** There were 66 youths among under grade students from various academic level that were involved in this youth transformation program, 19 males (28.80%) and 47 females (71.10%) with mean age=22.15,  $SD=.96$ .

**Instruments:** There are three sections in the questionnaire survey. The sections are:

**Section A:** Demographic (age, location, sex): There are 18 items in the Demographic profile that measured age, gender, ethnicity, the level of education and academic performance.

**Section B:** Self-motivation: The self-motivation assessment tool used to measure participant awareness of self-motivation consisted of 12 items [17]. Higher scores corresponded to greater self-motivation. The response scale was: 1 (never) to 4 (very often). Items included statements such as 'I believe that if I work hard and apply my abilities and talents, I will be successful'. The self-motivation scale reliability for the pre-study was  $\alpha=.78$  and for the post-study was  $\alpha=.83$ .

**Section C:** General Self-Efficacy: The self-efficacy scale consisted of ten items regarding perceived competence and confidence in solving tasks and dealing with difficulties (e.g., "If I face any difficulties, I usually can find several solutions", "I am confident I can solve any unexpected things efficiently" and "I can stay calm when dealing with difficulties because I depend on my capability") [14]. The General Self-efficacy scale reliability for the pre-study was  $\alpha=.84$  and for the post-study was  $\alpha=.86$ .

**Data Analysis:** The data were analyzed using descriptive and inference analysis by SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The hypotheses were analyzed using paired-samples t-test.

**Reliability of Self-Motivation and General Self-Efficacy:** The reliability of self-motivation and the internal and external locus of control were acceptable, ranging from .78 to .86.

Table 1: Reliability of Self-efficacy and Self-Motivation

Scale and subscales	N items	Pre	Post
Self-motivation	12	.78	.83
General Self-efficacy	10	.84	.86

## RESULTS

There were 66 youths that were involved in this youth transformation program, 19 males (28.80%) and 47 females (71.20%) with mean age=22.15,  $SD=.96$ . All participants are university students from various academic level. Please see Table 2 for demographic features of participants.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Participants

Variables	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	19	28.80
Female	47	71.20
Have you ever involved Nation building Program?		
Yes	6	8.70
No	58	87.90
Missing values	2	3.00
Academic Achievement (CGPA)		
2.00 - 2.50	26	39.40
2.50 - 3.00	24	36.40
Above 3.00	15	22.70
Missing	1	1.50
Academic Level		
First year	15	22.70
Second year	28	42.40
Third year	23	34.80

Table 3 showed the mean for post-test ranks for students' self-motivation was higher than the mean pre-test ranks,  $t=-3.48, p=.00$ . We also found that there was a significant difference in the mean pre-test ranks and post-test ranks for self-efficacy,  $t=-2.70, p=.00$

Table 3: A Paired-Sample T-test Results for Self-Motivation and Self-Efficacy Between Pre and Post-tests

Variables	N	Mean (SD)	T value	Sig
Self-Motivation				
Pre	66	40.80 (4.20)	-3.48	.00
Post	66	42.17 (4.09)		
Self-Efficacy				
Pre	65	32.63 (4.06)	-2.70	.01
Post	65	33.75 (3.78)		

## DISCUSSION

The study showed that the Youth Transformation Program which was held in three-day have increase youths' self-motivation and self-efficacy. The Youth Transformation Program provides a strong sense of community and belonging through structured activities. All the activities are more to team building and team work which need mutual cooperation from each participant in a group. Our findings were in line with a study that showed through Youth Empowerment program a sense of community which was foster through cooperative climate and mutual support impacts young people's sense of self and efficacy [16].

Other than cooperative work, in the Youth Transformation Program, each participant has to involve and took part in decision making. We believe that this might also help to enhance their self-motivation and self-efficacy. Highly participatory in Youth Empowerment program can help to strengthen positive attitudes, skills and behaviors that improve functioning across a range of life domains [18]. In addition, participatory programming that engages young people in decision-making processes can increase a wide range of potentially malleable protective factors among adolescents in order to help them reach greater well-being [19].

During the three-day program, all participants the group activities might also contribute to participants' self-efficacy and self-motivation. Participation in community activities can also contribute to increasing self-efficacy and motivation as revealed in past study [20]. Both their studies that involved 114 students in study 1 and in study 2 only 10 students found that participation in small-scale also increased students' self-efficacy and motivation. In our study, we focused on motivation and self-efficacy because we believe that the two elements contribute to academic success among university students. Motivation and study habits were mentioned most frequently as the root cause of student failure at the college level. It influences students' attitudes, study

habits and academic readiness [21]. Students with high in motivation tend to have the interest to study and be more responsible [22].

Besides motivation, self-efficacy is also an important element which may help to boost motivation.. Self-efficacy indicates people's beliefs about their ability to perform in different situations. It functions as a multilevel and multifaceted set of beliefs that influence how people feel, thinks, motivates themselves and behave during various tasks [23]. Individuals with a high level of self-efficacy attempt tasks and keep up trying even though tasks might be difficult, while individuals with a low level of self-efficacy most of the times end up giving up easily [24]. People with high self-efficacy tend to take a wider view of a task in order to determine the best plan. Likewise, obstacles often stimulate people with high self-efficacy to greater efforts, where someone with low self-efficacy will tend toward discouragement and giving up [25]. We believe that by joining the three-day program participants who showed high self-efficacy might be more competent and diligent in handling academic tasks and able to confront any difficulties that they might face in academic and extra-academic tasks.

## CONCLUSION

It is suggested that the Youth Transformation Program which was held in three-day has increased participants' self-motivation and self-efficacy. This showed that the structured activities which were conducted by trained facilitators bring positive benefits to participants. These positive elements that each participant gained from this program may help them to battle challenges that they have to deal in academic life as students university. It might be interesting if these positive elements can be sustained in a long run among the participants. Therefore, future studies may take this matter into account to examine whether the positive elements that participants gained from this program is maintained and sustained in their everyday life. We hope that the positive findings from this study may help the relevant authority to understand the strength of the contents of the structured activities and their benefits in increasing participants' motivation and self-efficacy. Therefore, it was suggested that this program should be implemented as one way to increase youths' self-motivation and self-efficacy. In a future study, it would be interesting to examine whether the effectiveness of this program in increasing motivation and self-efficacy can be maintained over time.

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