

## SENSE OF BELONGING: ENHANCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN A CLUB THROUGH CO-CREATION ACTIVITIES

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### ABSTRACT

Despite increasing awareness of the importance of youth development process, therefore participating in club play an essential role. This study examines the co-creation behaviour is the strategies that can be used to enhance the sense of belonging among club members (youth) toward the club so that they will participate in club consistently. Besides that, the present research makes several contributions. First, the scale is not only applicable to academic research but also in practice. Second, the club committee can use the scale to detect the weaknesses and the strengths of youth value co-creation behaviour.

**Keywords:** Sense of belonging, Co-creation, Youth.

### INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, the youth development is mainly managed by the National Youth Consultative Committee, the Youth and Sports Ministry and the Malaysian Youth Council. According to the 1997 youth and sports department report, youth development programs and activities are aimed at youth between the ages of 18 and 25.

Youth is a social and national asset, because they are not only seen as the leaders of the future, and is the foundation of social actors and social, the development process of our great nation has a direct stake. This statement is not a misplaced or wishful thinking. Youth is a group of energetic, creative people. If the group has experienced a healthy, encouraging youth development process, they can translate the benefit of this generation into social, political and economic life.

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But people of this age are vulnerable to adverse externalities because they are easily confused and rebellious.

In this context, the Malaysian government and NGO have put a lot of effort into the youth development process, but youth is still one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Such vulnerability is reflected in the statistics of young people, involving social problems such as juvenile delinquency.

**Table 1.** statistic on the reported juvenile delinquency cases in Malaysia

Juvenile delinquency cases	Number of reported cases (2012)	Number of reported cases (2013)
Violence crime cases	1047	2553
Property crime cases	2352	6151
Total	3399	8704

(Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, Malaysia)

According to table 1, from 2012 to 2013, statistics on juvenile delinquency increased significantly. The high level of youth involvement in crime is not a good sign; it reflects the difficulty of youth. One of Malaysia's juvenile delinquents is violence. The American psychological association defines violence as an extreme form of aggression. There are many factors contributing to violence, such as the impact of the media, substance abuse, bad communities, etc. Youth is the wealth of our society; we need to participate in the prevention of youth violence actively.

In order to overcome this problem, it no longer only stays on the understanding of the problem but applies the actual strategy (Benson, 2003). The study suggests that one way to guide youth becoming better citizens tomorrow is to participate in youth development organizations, such as clubs. The youth development program provides an essential context for the positive and healthy development of youth. But to achieve the desired outcome of a club requires long-term participation and must have sufficient frequency and duration. Their attendance at the club was full of challenges. Because of these challenges, the youth

development organizations have to understand the way youth participate in the club, and it is imperative that they be able to participate in the club consistently.

## **CLUB**

According to the Cambridge dictionary, the club refers to a group of people who have a common purpose or interest, meet regularly and participate in joint activities. The goal of all clubs is to ensure that youth can develop healthily, succeed at school and make a smooth transition to adulthood. As a result, Malaysia's education system, in secondary school, is mandatory for youth to participate in at least one club activity. At university, they were encouraged to join at least one club.

Many researchers have discussed the importance of joining a club (Carter, Swedeen, Moss, & Pesko, 2010; Eime, Harvey, Brown, & Payne, 2010; Paakkari, Kokko, Villberg, Paakkari, & Tynjälä, 2017; Zambon et al., 2010). It can affect a youth's career and student experience in a very positive way. Participating in a club cannot only help youth better understand themselves, cultivate their soft skills, but also help youth improve their abilities. The interaction between clubs will be the best platform for youth practice and learning. In addition, youth will get social opportunities. In a club, youth meet many new friends and connect with different people. This network is valuable because they can share their interests. Finally, youth will gain leadership by joining the club. When a young person is elected to a rotary club committee, they will have the opportunity to speak publicly, plan and organize a rotary club. This process will help youth develop their leadership skills. The main purpose of the organization is to promote the positive development of young people.

## **SENSE OF BELONGING AND CLUB PARTICIPATION**

The club is a weekly meeting organized by the club. The study suggests that the factors that encourage youth to participate in clubs should be the feeling of belonging to the club. Belonging is a human need; it's also one of the basic needs of life, just like the need for food and shelter. In Maslow's Theory, belonging is a higher level of need, which means that belonging is vital because as a person, we need to feel a sense of belonging.

A sense of belonging is defined as a person's experience in a system or environment so that people feel that they are a whole of the system or environment (Choenarom, Williams, & Hagerty, 2005). The sense of belonging to the club is the subjective feeling of a young person, that is, connectivity or cohesion. This sentiment is too essential to be underestimated.

Base on Lambert et al. (2013), He put forward two main characteristics of the sense of belonging. First, people need to interact with others continuously, actively and personally (Lambert et al., 2013). Second, people need to know that the interaction between each other is stable, that they are mutually caring, and that there will be a continuation of this attachment in the future (Lambert et al., 2013). This hypothesis suggests that belonging is not only connected to one another but also the perception of a relationship. Therefore, the regular meeting does not mean that youth will have a complete sense of belonging. The need for belonging is not just the need for special attachment, it is not the need for the relationship, but the cognition of the relationship is as important as it is. A sense of belonging occurs when we accept and appreciate each other. They need to know that the other person cares about his or her happiness and CARES about him or her.

As suggested, one of the critical factors that led youth to join the club was that they felt they were members of the club. According to the above hypothesis, it reflects a sense of belonging club may contain a variety of ingredients, but its core is a kind of feeling, reflects a sense of belonging, a sense of belonging, or is a member of the club. The relationship between club members and clubs is becoming more and more critical, making them feel like members of the club. With this relationship, youth will see them as members of the club, not the club's "nameless". In the other case, when a sense of belonging decreases, it reflects the young members of the club. As for the club's sense of belonging, young people's attendance will be smaller and smaller. Some of them will quit the club too. So when we conceptualize, a sense of belonging that includes a person's personal belief that a person is a member of a recognized club, his presence and contribution is valuable.

If we assume that, the sense of belonging is a key factor of the youth to participate in the club, then we will have a question to answer, that is: what is the actual policy, cultivate young people's sense of belonging to the club.

### **SENSE OF BELONGING AND SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY**

According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), They suggest that when evaluating others, there are three psychological processes, namely "we" (group) or "them" (outside groups). The first is classification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). When youth join clubs, they classify other clubs to understand and identify other clubs. In this process, it's like we categorize the people around us, including ourselves to learn about the social environment. For example, we would classify people of different groups using gender, race, occupation, religion, etc.

The second stage is social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). When youth classify themselves as clubs, we will adopt the club's identity. When a young man attends a badminton club, they will begin to accept the membership of the badminton club and begin to act in accordance with the way they think of badminton players. When they do so, their recognition of a group will have an emotional significance, and their self-esteem will be linked to group members. With this psychological process, it can create a sense of belonging.

The last stage is a social comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Once youth classify themselves as part of the club and identify with the club, they tend to compare the group to other groups. In the process, understanding the comparison with other clubs is crucial to keeping their self-esteem at the club. In the context of this study, youth would classify other clubs with his or her clubs. During the form six studies period, youth will explore many different clubs. Every club has its own characteristics. When a young man decides to join a club, they will start to classify him or herself as a club. In the process, youth will know which category they belong to, which will help youth learn more about the club. When youth classify themselves as a club, they move on to the next process, which is social identity. In the process of social identification, the youth will accept the identity of the club and begin to show their own identity. Finally, youth will start comparing their clubs and other clubs.

According to the discussion of the social identity theory, it shows that, if a club successfully established an identity between club members, it will enhance young people's sense of belonging to the club. In this study, we propose that the strategy of establishing social identity is through co-creation.

## **CO-CREATION BEHAVIOUR**

It is not only the responsibility of the club committee, but also the responsibility of club members to build an environment that strengthens the sense of belonging to the club. In this study, we recommend that youth have a sense of belonging to the club by promoting co-creation in a club. Co-creation is a form of management planning, or economic strategy, that brings together different parties together to produce a mutual evaluation result. Through this management effort, it can be for youth to jointly build the club's experience; to adapt to their environment, but also created an environment experience, let the youth can be a positive dialogue, common to build a personalized experience. In this sense, by activating the co-creation management of a club, it successfully transformed the relationship between club and club members from traditional one-way communication to two-way communication.

According to the research of the early, together create behaviour scale includes two dimensions: customer participation behaviour (role behaviour) and customer citizenship behaviour (new role behaviour), each dimension has four parts (Yi, Natarajan, & Gong, 2011). The elements of customer participation behaviour include information seeking, information sharing, responsible behaviour and personal interaction, while the aspects of customer citizenship behaviour are feedback, advocacy, help and tolerance. Through this effort, a good relationship has been established between the club committee and members of the club. When the relationship between the club and the club members is right, when they care about each other, they create a sense of belonging.

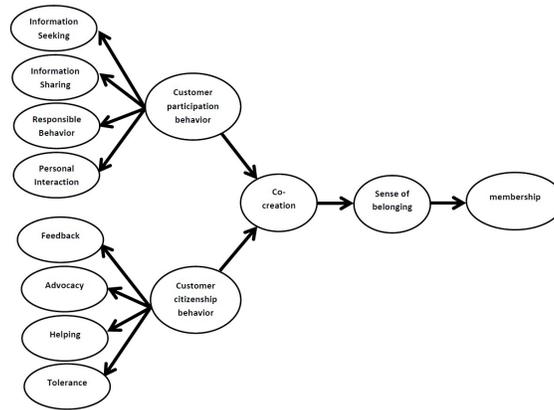
When a young person has a sense of belonging, they feel proud. In this case, they will find differences among groups and similarities among things in the same group. This will make them feel "in-group" at the club, not "out-group".

## **RESEARCH CONTEXT**

Clubs are places of study and socialization. At the weekly meeting, there are different activities, such as personal counselling, games, outdoor activities, sharing, etc. The diversity of club activities will provide youth with a space to explore, dialogue, reflection and action. This experience is right for their future. During seminars or during personal counselling sessions, the mentor is always ready to help them and help them overcome obstacles. In addition, youth are more likely to share their feelings and feelings with club members than their parents, relatives or family members. When they share their emotions, they can quickly get recognition and support from each other, because young people's understanding and experience are more similar than those of others. This understanding and acceptance of their peers, club members and mentors are linked to youth's sense of belonging to the club.

In this study, we will try to understand co-creation behaviour whether can be used to enhance the club members (youth) sense of belonging to the club, so that they can consistently participate in club activities. In addition, current research has made some contributions. First of all, this scale applies not only to academic research but also to practice. Secondly, the club committee can use this scale to discover the weaknesses and strengths of value co-creation behaviour. Third, this scale can be used for all types of clubs. This study provides a new protocol to measure the co-creation of customer value, which can capture all the relevant dimensions of the behaviour of different club customers.

## FRAMEWORK



This framework shows that federated creation is an independent variable. A sense of belonging and subordination is a dependent variable. When co-creative activities are implemented successfully, it will enhance the club's sense of belonging to the club and enable the youth to participate in a club that can be measured by its members.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Co-creation

Co-creation can be viewed from a different perspective. The focus of this study is to examine the co-creation behaviour needed among club members (youth) to co-create to achieve acceptance and belonging. In this study, it will use customer participation behaviour and customer citizenship behaviour as the basic theory to determine the effectiveness of the co-creation activity among young people.

### Co-creation behaviour

According to earlier studies, the co-creation scale includes two dimensions: customer participation behaviour (in-role behaviour) and customer citizenship behaviour (extra-role behaviours), each of which has four elements (Yi & Gong, 2013).

### Customer participation behaviour

Customer participation behaviour refers to necessary (in-role) behaviour, which is necessary for successful value co-creation (Yi & Gong, 2013). It included four elements: information seeking, information sharing, responsible behaviour, and personal interaction.

**Information seeking**

A customer seeks information to clarify service requirements and meet other cognitive needs (Lu, Gursoy, & Lu, 2016). For young people, practical information seeking behaviour is two main reasons. First, information reduces uncertainty, enabling youth to understand and control the co-creation environments. Second, seeking information enables youth to master their roles and integrate them into the process of value co-creation.

**Information sharing**

For successful value co-creation, youth should participate in an active role through the application of knowledge and sharing of information with the club (Boselli, Cesarini, & Mezzanzanica, 2008; Ordanini & Pasini, 2008). Through sharing information with club committee, youth can ensure that the club committee provides the service that meets their particular needs.

**Responsible behaviour**

To be successful in co-creation, customers need to cooperate, abide by rules and policies, and accept employee guidance (Bettencourt, 1997; Navarro, Llinares, & Garzon, 2016). When youth joins a club, he or she must follow the instructions of the club to success the co-creation.

**Personal interaction**

Personal interaction refers to interpersonal relations between youth and club member, which are necessary for successful value co-creation (Ennew & Binks, 1999; Navarro et al., 2016). The more pleasant, congenial, and positive the social environment is, the more likely youth are to engage in value co-creation (Lengnick-Hall, Claycomb, & Inks, 2000).

**Customer citizenship behaviour**

Customer citizenship behaviour refers to voluntary (extra-role) behaviour that provides extraordinary value to the club but is not necessarily required for value co-creation (Bove, Pervan, Beatty, & Shiu, 2009; Groth, 2005; Yi et al., 2011). It included four elements which are feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance. This four-elements clearly constitute an extra-role behaviour, but not mandatory for successful value co-creation.

**Feedback**

In a club, youth are in a unique position to offer guidance and suggestions through feedback to a club, because youth have considerable experience with the service and experts from their perspective (Bettencourt, 1997) to share their feedback to the club. The feedback that provided by youth to the club is includes solicited and unsolicited information. With this information, it manages to help the club to improve the service creation process in the long run (Groth, 2004; Jakobs, Spinuzzi, Digmayer, & Pogue, 2015).

**Advocacy**

Advocacy refers to recommending the club to others such as friends or family (Groth, 2004). In the context of value co-creation, advocacy indicates allegiance to the club and promotion of the club interests beyond the club member's interests. Advocacy through positive word-of-mouth is often an indicator of club member loyalty. Besides that, it contributes significantly to the development of a positive club reputation, promotion of the club's products and services, higher service quality evaluations, and increase in the club member base size (Bettencourt, 1997; Groth, 2004; Merrilees et al., 2017).

**Helping**

Helping refers to club member behaviour aimed at assisting another club member. When in club service co-creation process, club members will usually need help from another club member rather than club committee because the club member may need help behaving in ways consistent with their expected roles (Groth, 2004). This help is different with the help from the club committee because it is giving spontaneous help when others club members in need (Groth, 2004). With this help, the newcomer will feel warm and welcome in this club; this will create the sense of belongingness among the member.

**Tolerance**

Tolerance refers to the club member willingness to be patient when the service delivery does not meet their expectations of adequate service, as in the case of delays or equipment shortages (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2000). Service encounter failure is the second largest cause of member switching behaviour. This will bring damages to the club, but club member tolerance will plausibly help the firm in the aggregate overall (Keaveney, 1995). When youth request for something from a club, it may take some time. With this behaviour, youth will be willing to be patient with it.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology is essential in examining the sets of data that is a suit with the research objectives and research questions. Because researchers were interested in exploring the club's sense of belonging, the study took data from different clubs in Manjung as participants in the study. Manjung is a developing city. In this city, we have found young people living in urban and rural areas, so the results of this study can be more reflected in all young people. Manjung is an ideal laboratory.

### **Participants**

The target group for this study is the youth group. According to the Youth and Sports Ministry, youth development program and activities should be focused on youth aged 18 to 25. In this study, we chose six the form six students as the target group. The form six students are a group of young people aged between 18 and 20. The total sample will be selected to participate in the study with a total of 350 participants. To avoid the gender issues, the study will involve 175 male and 175 female. Only five of the 20 secondary schools offer form six courses (SMK Ayer Tawar, located in Ayer Tawar; SMK Ambrose, locate in Ayer Tawar; SMK Ahmad Boestamam, located in Sitiawan; SMK Methodist ACS, located in Sitiawan; SMK Nan Hwa, located in Sitiawan. Therefore this 5 secondary school will be the target schools for this research.

From the selected 5 secondary school, we will cooperate with the club committee to encourage selected youth to participate in this study. The targeted audience will be asked to complete a survey containing measures of co-creation behaviour and sense of belonging. For each item, participants will rate their agreement on a 6-point, the Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

### **METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

The method of data collection based on systematic sampling method whereby there is no bias in this research. In this study, we will list all the clubs from the five selected secondary school of the alphabet A to Z and then select ten clubs based on the system sampling method. We will collect 35-45 questionnaires from each selected club. The total number of samples the researcher needs to collect is 350. The questionnaire will be distributed during the weekly meeting. After collecting all the data of the participants, the data will be transformed into a SmartPLS software for analysis.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study points out the vital role of co-creative activities in promoting youth's sense of belonging to the club. The overall participation of the club has a positive impact on the development of youth. Co-creation, it successfully captures and attracts young people into the club environment. The study also points to the need for youth to engage in the co-creative behaviour, which refers to participation behaviour and citizenship behaviour.

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