

The 5Cs of positive youth development and life purpose among Roma and Egyptian minority adolescents in Albania

Las 5Cs de Desarrollo Positivo Juvenil y el Propósito Vital entre Adolescentes de las Minorías Romaní y Egipcia en Albania

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ABSTRACT

The 5Cs model of Positive Youth Development focuses on thriving adolescents who develop positive qualities, which are known to help them deal with challenges, tasks, and psychological concerns. Life Purpose acts as a protective factor in relation to the general well-being of adolescents and supports the 5Cs through this process of growth. The aim of this study is to examine the role of the 5Cs of PYD, namely Competence, Confidence, Connection, Caring, and Character, and how Life Purpose is explained by the 5Cs. There is no precedent study on the 5Cs model of positive youth development in Albania. In specific, this study investigated the 5Cs of PYD for the two most marginalized minority groups in Albania, the Roma, and Egyptian communities. Data were collected from 201 participants from the three most populated cities with Roma minority (N=100) and Egyptian minority (N=101), aged between 14-20 years old. Association between the 5Cs and purpose in life was found. Life Purpose has an association with Character, Caring, and Connection. In interaction with 5Cs, Life Purpose provides a framework for systematic behavior in life by motivating adolescents to plan and make efforts to achieve in decision-making and performance.

KEYWORDS

Albanian Minority, Adolescents, Competence, Confidence, Caring, Connection, Character, Life Purpose

RESUMEN

El modelo de las 5Cs de Desarrollo Positivo Juvenil se enfoca en adolescentes que desarrollan cualidades positivas, que les ayudan a enfrentarse a los desafíos, tareas y preocupaciones psicológicas. El propósito vital actúa como factor protector en relación con el bienestar general de los adolescentes y apoya a las 5Cs a través de este proceso de crecimiento. El objetivo de este estudio es examinar el papel de las 5Cs de Desarrollo Positivo Juvenil, es decir, Competencia, Confianza, Conexión, Cariño y Carácter, y cómo estas 5Cs explican el propósito vital. No existe un estudio precedente sobre el modelo 5Cs de desarrollo juvenil positivo en Albania. En concreto, este estudio investigó las 5Cs para los dos grupos minoritarios más marginados de Albania, las comunidades romaní y egipcia. Se recogieron datos de 201 participantes de las tres ciudades más pobladas con minoría romaní (N=100) y minoría egipcia (N=101), con edades comprendidas entre los 14 y los 20 años. Se encontró una asociación entre las 5Cs y el propósito en la vida. El propósito vital tiene una asociación con el carácter, el cariño y la conexión. En interacción con las 5Cs, el propósito vital proporciona un marco para el análisis sistemático de la conducta al motivar a los adolescentes a planificar y hacer esfuerzos para lograr una mejor toma de decisiones y desempeño.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Minorías albanas, Adolescentes, Competencia, Confianza, Cariño, Conexión, Carácter, Propósito vital.

Introduction

The 5Cs of Positive Youth Developmental have a direct impact on the purpose of life of young people (Abdul Kadir & Mohd, 2021; Linver et al., 2021). Being competent helps young people have a realistic approach to their personal abilities and know how to take actions that promote success (Gomez-Baya et al., 2022; Bowers, Larson, & Parry, 2021). Young people who have a more consolidated self-concept tend to show higher levels of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy (Linver et al., 2021). Perceived support, given by family, friends, school, community, and society plays an important role in how young people form a safety circle that allows them to take initiative and be motivated to take an active role in relation to various issues with personal and social interest (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2021; Shek & Chai, 2020; Zhou, Shek, & Zhu, 2020). The supportive and safe climate provided by the environment where young people grow up is one of the basic elements for their positive development. After a successful interaction with this context, young people not only feel part of it, but they take more responsibility regarding their role in society (Gomez-Baya et al., 2019). A society that gives all members the opportunity to feel represented, has more chances to develop in them stronger feelings of respect for morality and human values. On the other hand, this increases the sense of responsibility and involvement of young people to take care of themselves, others, and society. All of this supports young people to develop a clear vision regarding the direction they want to give to their life and future (Fernandes et al., 2021).

Life Purpose acts as a protective factor in relation to the components of the 5Cs and general well-being (Abdul Kadir & Mohd, 2021). In addition, it has an important role in developing the 5Cs during the process of personal growth and the transformation of young people into mentally mature adults capable of responding effectively to all life's challenges (Kabir, Doku, & Wiium, 2021; Bøhlerengen, & Wiium, 2022).

A challenge for the prospect of positive development is the focus on the young people of the Roma and Egyptian minority living in Albania. These two minorities are among the most discriminated against and stigmatized in Albania as well in other countries of the Balkans and Europe (Miconi et al., 2021; Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Due to the lockdown, the COVID-19 pandemic endangered the health and threatened the existence of these minorities (Dervishi et al., 2021; Miconi et al., 2021; Onyeka et al., 2021), in most cases striving to survive meeting basic needs such as providing food, drinking water, income and work (Miconi et al., 2021; Dervishi et al., 2021). In the face of the global challenge that affected all people, it is worth considering the negative impact on the mental health of young people (Zhou et al., 2020; Chi et al., 2020).

A variety of factors were brought about due to the isolation, such as the disruption of the daily routine, the lack of social interactions outside the home, and the unfiltered information about the pandemic that was continuously received from a variety of information sources. These factors and more resulted in young people becoming more vulnerable and increasing feelings of insecurity, and hope-

lessness, while mental health problems were dominating lives (Shek et al., 2021; Mohamad et al., 2021). Disruption of the fragile balance of young people's mental health as a result of the pandemic causes quite a few problems in their lives and puts the future at risk, showing the consequences in almost all aspects of life (Kozina et al., 2021; Gomez-Baya et al., 2022;). It would also have a direct impact on the positive development of young people.

The mental health of young people based on Benson's positive perspective is seen as related to the power to develop and realize their full potential if a supportive climate in the family, school, community, and society is provided (Benson, 2007). Young people of the Roma and Egyptian minority are lacking support resources in school, and the community, and they are facing exclusion, discrimination, stigmatization, and segregation (Taylor, 2022; Dervishi et al., 2021; Miconi et al., 2021). In this climate, undertaking a study on the presence of the Five Cs of positive development among young people of these two minorities and the impact on the purpose in life remains challenging.

Regarding the Albanian context, studies on the perspective of the positive development of young people are missing. Referring to the two minorities, they are often excluded from participating in studies, based also on the social-cultural dynamics where a part of young people leave school too early, especially girls, even though the number of school drop-out from both sexes is high (Miconi et al., 2021; Wium, & Uka, 2021). This makes their inclusion and participation in studies more difficult (Dervishi et al., 2021; Maguire et al., 2016; Miconi

et al., 2021; Mezzina et al., 2022). Based on the existing data, members of the minority, mainly Egyptians, do not identify as such, as a way to escape discrimination and exclusion (Dervishi et al., 2021; Miconi et al., 2021).

The context of Roma and Egyptian minorities in Albania

Official reports on minority groups in Albania estimate between 18,276 and 120,000 Roma and presumably over 200,000 Egyptians (Egyptian Association "Vëllazërimi", 2018). Roma and Egyptians face direct and indirect barriers in accessing public services, stemming from eligibility criteria they cannot fulfill, lack of information or understanding of administrative procedures, as well as stigma and discrimination. Long-term exclusion has affected Roma and Egyptians' living conditions. Studies show that the level of poverty in these groups is twice of the general population, while their unemployment rate is three times higher than the average (Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, 2013). Thirty - nine percent of dwellings inhabited by Roma and 21 percent of those inhabited by Egyptians do not have access to drinking water (World Bank, 2005) Roma community die on average at least ten years younger than non-Roma and have higher rates of infant mortality (European Commission, 2014). Roma and Egyptians on average complete 5-6 years of education, compared to the national average of 10 years.

The main official source of information on Roma's socio-demographic characteristics is the Population and Housing CENSUS 2011 (INSTAT, 2022), whose results have been con-

tested by Roma and Egyptian civil society organizations for a non-accurate representation of their reality. The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians in the Republic of Albania, 2015-2020 is a document developed recently by the Government of Albania and coordinated by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth. The Action Plan was developed in close consultation with the respective ministries, local government units, related governmental institutions, representatives of Roma and Egyptian communities, civil society organizations, experts, international organizations, and others stakeholders. Following the nomination as EU candidate country status in 2014, the Government of Albania intensified the reform processes, including the promotion of equal access to services and rights to all citizens. In this context, special attention was paid to actions that can eliminate barriers that Roma and Egyptians face in accessing services; improve their living conditions and promote intercultural dialogue.

The government of Albania has identified six (6) priority areas for Roma and Egyptian inclusion, namely: (a) civil registration, (b) education and promoting intercultural dialogue, (c) employment and vocational education and training (VET), (d) healthcare, (e) housing and urban integration, and (f) social protection.

Based on the Strategy on Education in Albania 2021-2026, there is an increased percentage, of Roma and Egyptian children, enrolled in compulsory education (from 48% in 2011 to 66% in 2017). However, organizations of Roma and Egyptian minorities, have contested these findings; cases like children who stop going

to school, are not considered as dropouts, because registers and official documents are not updated with the new information (Dervishi et al., 2021).

The 5Cs as a dimension of the PYD model

Young people have extraordinary potential within them which should be highlighted (Ettinger et al., 2022; Wiium et al 2021). Each young person possesses certain strengths which, if identified and developed through education and mentoring, help them to be empowered and reach their full potential (Sheehan et al., 2022). Under this lens, the theoretical base of the components, otherwise called the 5Cs of positive youth development, has been developed (Lerner et al., 2005). At the core of this model are 5 components, - competence, confidence, connection, caring, and character. Each of these components is an important mediator of how development in a positive climate occurs by highlighting strengths and efficiently utilizing the resources available to them in order to get the most out of what the environment has to offer (Lerner et al., 2011). *Competence* refers to how we view our actions by focusing on demonstrated abilities. *Confidence* represents the positive internal feeling of the person in relation to three important components of oneself: self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy. *Connection* refers to a person's positive relationship with family, friends, and the wider community with which they interact such as school, neighborhood, and society.

Caring encompasses a person's sense of love and concern for others, and *Character* which

refers to a person's sense of respect for morals and values (Lerner et al., 2005 cited in Conway et al., 2015). Under a supportive climate, these components interact with each other providing youth with a healthy developmental environment (Sharma, & Yukhymenko-Lescroart, 2022; Patrick et al., 2016; Bøhlerengen & Wiium, 2022). Furthermore, increased levels of the 5Cs components have a direct impact on the youth's life purpose (Linver et al., 2021; Lund et al., 2022; Heng et al., 2020).

Referring to the 5Cs it is hypothesized that young people who manifest high levels of the 5 components during their growth process are more likely to have a clearer idea about their life purpose, and feel clearer and more oriented about the focus they want to give to their future and life (Fernandes et al., 2021; Shek & Chai, 2020; Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2021; Lund et al., 2022). All this goes in line with their need to include in this purpose their own life, their family, community, and society where they belong (Heng et al., 2020; Luster et al., 2022). Such an approach is considered an important element that helps young people stay away from risk factors related to dropping out of school, using alcohol, tobacco, and narcotic substances, engaging in criminal behavior as well as developing mental health issues at an early age (Kang et al., 2021; Sharma & Yukhymenko-Lescroart, 2022; Kozina et al., 2021; Mohamad, et al., 2021). Referring to numerous types of research, the findings suggest that the 5Cs have a positive impact on the development of young people and on increasing their quality of life, general well-being, and mental health

(Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2021; Årdal, et al., 2018; Kabir, Doku & Wiium, 2021).

Research on 5Cs of Positive Youth Development and Life Purpose

Studies investigating the relationship between the components of the 5Cs and life purpose are limited. Moran (2000) stated that "a life purpose projects an anticipated life trajectory of youths' individual desired future effect of their lives in the world" (Moran, 2000, pg 39) a definition which the author claimed does not go towards a final state, but that it is dynamic and in continuous development. Life purpose serves as a constant motivator, an indicator of the clarity with which the person builds his objectives for the future and through long-term strategies, tries to achieve them (Emmons et al., 1998; Pintrich 2000; Rothes et al., 2022). Also, life purpose is considered as an important element of general well-being that contributes positively towards good mental health (Schaefer et al., 2013; Ruggeri, et al., 2020; Hernández-Torrano et al., 2020). In a recent study investigating the 5Cs of PYD, and life purpose, well-being, and hope in a group of young people in Malaysia (Abdul Kadir & Mohd, 2021), it was found that the relationship between the two components of the 5Cs such as Confidence and Connection with Life Purpose has special importance for the general well-being perceived by young people. It appears that high perceived levels in the components of the 5Cs are reflected directly in a better-perceived quality of well-being, and mental health and indirectly in a fuller sense of meaning in life which is facilitated by life pur-

pose (Abdul Kadir & Mohd, 2021; Gomez-Baya et al., 2022; Holsen et al., 2017; Eriksson et al., 2019).

A person with a life purpose is able to self-discipline in terms of maintaining focus throughout time, channeling efforts and energies in the direction of improvement strategies that lead to that goal. The person leads a more conscious and active life thus increasing the chances of success (Fredrickson, 2001; Hellison et al., 2000; Husni, 2020; Cunha & Silva, 2015; Scales & Syvertsen, 2022). Life Purpose as a protective factor of young people's mental health not only helps young people feel happier, and enjoy a high sense of well-being but also feel more focused on tasks, enjoy a higher level of self-confidence and self-esteem, and are easily motivated in achieving their goals (Yu et al., 2021; Pickett et al., 2018; Conger et al., 1997; Gomez-Baya et al., 2022). Furthermore, Kang and colleagues (Kang et al., 2021) focused on the protective role that life purpose plays as an important part of a person's overall well-being in relation to health, increased resilience, and promoting healthy behaviors throughout the pandemic. It was concluded that life purpose has a direct impact on reducing feelings of loneliness, increasing resilience, and increasing people's intentional engagement in healthy behaviors for themselves as well as their overall well-being. In addition, life purpose has a supporting role in terms of connecting with others and receiving the necessary support from others important to them, such as family or friends, in order to cope with difficulties in a more resilient way (Luster et al., 2022). More so, Life Purpose results in a positive impact on

mental health, general well-being, personal self-efficacy, academic achievement, engagement in learning, and career success (cited in Sharma et al., 2022; Caraway et al., 2003; Capone et al., 2020).

It is believed that a strong sense of life purpose increases resilience in young people, which then results in a stronger sense of life purpose able to use their strengths more effectively and make better use of the opportunities offered by the environment in order to better manage the situations of daily life and move forward (Sharma, & Yukhymenko-Lescroart, 2022). However, as the literature review indicates, data related to the 5Cs and life purpose for the Albanian youth, majority, and minority, communities are lacking. This study strives to provide a contribution on this matter focusing on the Roma and Egyptian minorities.

Adapting an approach that focuses on creating a structure that supports, educates, teaches, and guides young people facilitates their process of self-knowledge, identification of personal skills, and full development. This enables young people to be clearer about their internal and external assets, to be more mature in how they manage these resources, finding their rightful place in life, thus contributing to clarity that they have for the future, having a goal in life that they will commit to fulfilling throughout their existence. To summarize, the study attempts to understand how this process is carried out unsupported by other external structures, and how self-awareness can occur naturally even when there is a lack of help and guidance from other adults with whom the young people of these minorities

interact every day such as family, school, community and society where they belong.

The present study

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between the 5Cs and Life Purpose, as indicators of overall well-being in life. Referring to the Albanian context, there is no study focused on the youth of these two minorities. This is the first study of its kind to focus on investigating the relationship between the 5Cs and life, thus its contribution to the field of psychological development amongst under-represented youth is unquestionable.

These are the hypotheses and the research question that we address in this study:

1. H1 –The 5Cs are deeply compromised on both minority youth in Albania
2. H2 – The 5Cs of PYD are positively associated with a life purpose.
3. RQ – How much of the variance in Life Purpose is explained by the 5 components of Positive Youth Development?

Method

Procedure and participants

The data were collected as part of a larger project on mental health and well-being among Roma and Egyptian adolescents in Albania during the Covid-19 pandemic: in a total sample of 201 adolescents.

Participants were selected through a random cluster sampling procedure from three major cities located in the north, center, and south of Albania: Shkodra, Elbasan, and Berat.

Participants were recruited through four non-profit community organizations working

with the Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Recruitment took place via personal contacts within the organizations through cultural mediators known to the community. The first contact for participants under the age of 18 was made with the participants' parents. If parents consented to their child's participation, they were asked to sign a parental consent form.

Selected young people were then contacted and asked to participate in the study. The community-based recruitment strategy allowed for the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian youth who had dropped out of school and who had been excluded from most research and interventions in the country, particularly during the pandemic. Participants aged 18 years and over were asked directly for their interest and signed informed consent.

Data were collected outdoors by two well-trained research assistants from each minority youth (Roma and Egyptian, male/female), between August 1st and September 5th, respecting the social distance and the safety of the participants when austerity measures against the Covid-19 pandemic were released. An incentive was offered to all participants. The project received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Bergen in Norway (reference number: 612969).

Participants completed a questionnaire in the form of an individual interview with a trained research assistant. The interview schedule lasted between 30 and 35 minutes, depending on how comprehensive the participants' answers were. We focused on young people aged 14 to 20, consisting of 53.2% boys

and 46.8% girls. Of the total sample size, 49.8% were from the Roma minority and 50.2% from the Egyptian minority. Out of the total size, 88.6% were single and 11.4% were married. Approximately 32.8% attended school, about 13.9% had completed primary school, and 50.2% of them had dropped out of school. Based on the highest level of education, 3% had no school education, 74.6% had primary school education, 20.9% had secondary school education, and 1.5% were attending university.

Measures

Sociodemographic questionnaire

Demographic data included information on age, sex (i.e., male or female), civil status (single, or married), and ethnicity (Roma or Egyptian). These variables were used as control variables as they have been found to have links to the experience of 5Cs (Wium et al., 2018).

The 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

The 5Cs short form (34 items) measure Competence, by six items indexing academic, social, and physical competence. Confidence was measured by six items indexing self-worth, positive identity, and appearance. The connection was measured by eight items indexing positive bonds with family, neighborhood, school, and peers. Caring was measured by six items indexing sympathy and empathy. The character was measured using eight items indexing social conscience, valuing diversity, conduct morality, and personal values. The questionnaire is based on 5 points Likert - type scale rating from (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. The Cron-

bach alpha has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties for the total scale of .89).

Life Purpose

Life Purpose (short form) is a brief measure developed by Hill et al. (2016), which consists of four items (5-point Likert scale). Examples of these items are: "There is a direction in my life," "My plans for the future match my true interests and values," "I know which direction I am going to follow in my life," and "My life is guided by a set of clear commitments." The total score ranged from 4 to 20, with a higher total score presenting a greater life purpose. The Cronbach's alpha for this measure in the present study was .96.

Data analysis

The distribution and descriptive analysis statistics were obtained through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The data were screened for outliers and assumptions for parametric tests. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were used to explore the associations between variables. Then, a multiple regression was performed to determine how much variance could be explained by each variable.

Results

Descriptive statistic for the 5Cs of PYD is presented in Table 1. The components of the 5Cs score for Connection, Competence, Character, Confidence, and Caring show a higher level of care compared to other components of the 5Cs. Followed by confidence and character which do not differ more from one other.

Based on the 5Cs of PYD will be considered the low presence of the 5 components is a direct consequence of insufficient resources in the adolescent's context and a lack of personal strengths. Referring to differences between demographic data such as ethnicity, sex, civil status, and education with some of the components of the 5Cs of PYD. A significant relationship is evidenced between Egyptian minority youth and two components of the 5Cs, Competence ($M=1, SD=0$) and Confidence ($M=3.12, SD=.53$). Furthermore, the Egyptian minority youth experiences more competence and confidence compared to the Roma minority youth. More so, referring to civil status, it results that single young people present perceived levels for the connection component ($M=2.67, SD=.45$) compared to married young people. In addition, a statistically significant difference is shown in terms of the level of education of young people and the 5Cs, where it presents that for the character ($M=3.18, SD=.51$) and connection ($M=3.04, SD=.36$) of young people who are in school have higher levels than others. Regarding the statistically significant differences between the 5Cs and sex, it turns out that for competence ($M=1, SD=0$) and confidence ($M=3.17, SD=.48$) males present higher levels compared to female young people.

The above relationship shows that higher levels of the 5Cs are present for the Egyptian minority youth compared to the Roma in competence and confidence. Young people who are single have higher levels of connection compared to married people, and higher levels of character and connection are experienced by youth who are currently in school compared

to those who have dropped out of school, are illiterate, or have completed basic education. Regarding sex, it is evident that men experience higher levels of 5Cs in competence and confidence compared to women.

In terms of purpose in life and the demographic data, a statistically significant relationship results for young people of the Roma and Egyptian minority who are married ($M=2.82, SD=.06$), who present higher levels of high perceived values related to the purpose in life. Further, regarding the level of education, it results that those young people who are in school ($M=2.74, SD=.59$) present higher values regarding the purpose in life compared to young people who have dropped out of school, illiterates, or those who have completed compulsory basic education.

With regards to the levels of the 5Cs for the subscales (**Table 3**) low levels are reported: Competence: 0.97, ($SD=0.17$); Confidence: 3.10 ($SD=0.53$); Connection: 2.65, ($SD=0.44$); Character: 3.07, ($SD=0.50$); Caring: 3.15, ($SD=0.77$), and Life Purpose: 2.55, ($SD=0.59$). To explore the relationship between the 5Cs and Life Purpose, the Bivariate Pearson's correlations were used. Referring to the variables of the study, it is evident that some of them correlate among themselves in the expected direction. This relationship between life purpose and some of the components of the 5Cs shows a relationship ranging from weak to moderate. Referring to hypothesis 2, a significant positive relationship is indicated between life purpose and some of the components of the 5Cs, namely Character ($r=.295, p\leq.01$), Caring ($r=.198, p\leq.01$), and Connection ($r=.346, p\leq.01$). This means that

Table 1
 Relationship between demographic data and the 5Cs of PYD

	N	TOTAL-Cs of PYD			1. Competence			2. Confidence			3. Character			4. Caring			5. Connection		
		M	SD	p	M	SD	p	M	SD	p	M	SD	p	M	SD	p	M	SD	p
14	36	2.92	0.38		0.94	0.23		3.09	0.54		3.03	0.46		3.05	0.82		2.61	0.43	
15	19	3.01	0.46		1.00	-		3.11	0.50		3.06	0.57		3.41	0.78		2.70	0.49	
16	35	3.02	0.35		0.97	0.17		3.26	0.52		3.11	0.46		3.21	0.71		2.67	0.46	
Age	17	46	3.02	0.40	.708	0.21	.692	3.05	0.53	.449	3.13	0.48	.867	3.30	0.77	.272	2.72	0.50	.504
	18	38	2.90	0.34		1.00	-		2.98	0.55		3.02	0.49		2.96	0.74		2.67	0.35
	19	12	2.89	0.43		1.00	-		3.17	0.47		2.93	0.45		3.03	0.76		2.47	0.49
	20	15	2.95	0.33		0.93	0.26		3.11	0.56		3.13	0.69		3.05	0.78		2.51	0.28
Ethnicity	Roma	100	2.90	0.33		0.94	0.24		3.08	0.52		3.04	0.48		2.98	0.74		2.56	0.40
	Egyptian	101	3.03	0.41		1.00	-		3.12	0.53		3.09	0.51		3.31	0.76		2.74	0.46
					.011		.014		.050		.711		.131						.656

N	TOTAL-Cs of PDY																			
	1. Competence			2. Confidence			3. Character			4. Caring			5. Connection							
	M	SD	p	M	SD	p	M	SD	p	M	SD	p	M	SD	p					
Status																				
Sin- gle	178	2.98	0.38	0.97	0.18	.374	3.12	0.53	.068	3.06	0.48	.519	3.16	0.77	.565	2.67	0.45			.005
Ma- rried	23	2.87	0.33	1.00	-	-	2.91	0.50	-	3.13	0.63	-	3.06	0.75	-	2.48	0.25			
No edu- ca- tion	6	2.87	0.39	-	-	-	3.00	0.72	-	3.02	0.35	-	2.95	0.88	-	2.57	0.26			
Educa- tion																				
At school	66	3.17	0.38	1.00	-	-	3.15	0.49	.449	3.18	0.51	.042	3.27	0.81	.382	3.04	0.36			.000
Finis- hed	28	2.95	0.29	1.00	-	-	3.18	0.44	-	3.15	0.46	-	3.16	0.74	-	2.55	0.28			
Drop- ped out	101	2.84	0.34	1.00	-	-	3.04	0.56	-	2.97	0.49	-	3.07	0.74	-	2.42	0.34			
Sex																				
Male	107	2.99	0.36	1.00	-	-	3.17	0.48	.050	3.08	0.49	.711	3.07	0.80	.131	2.66	0.45			.656
Fe- male	94	2.94	0.40	0.94	0.25	.374	3.02	0.57	-	3.05	0.51	-	3.24	0.72	-	2.63	0.43			

Table 2
Relationship between demographic data and Life Purpose

		N	Life Purpose		
			M	SD	p
Age	14	36	2.43	0.60	.390
	15	19	2.33	0.47	
	16	35	2.57	0.61	
	17	46	2.57	0.62	
	18	38	2.68	0.58	
	19	12	2.53	0.66	
	20	15	2.64	0.61	
Ethnicity	Roma	100	2.49	0.55	.160
	Egyptian	101	2.60	0.63	
Status	Single	178	2.51	0.59	.017
	Married	23	2.82	0.60	
Education	No education	6	2.22	0.40	.005
	At school	66	2.74	0.59	
	Finished	28	2.58	0.56	
	Dropped out	101	2.43	0.59	
Sex	Male	107	2.53	0.59	.714
	Female	94	2.56	0.60	

when one of the variables increases in value, the other variables also have an increasing tendency in their values.

Referring to the correlation, a hierarchical (stepwise) regression analysis was performed in order to determine the importance of confidence, competence, connection, character, and caring with life purpose (Table 4). The demographic data such as age, sex, ethnicity, education, and civil status were treated as factor covariates. The demographic variables are included in Step 1. In Step 2, the 5Cs, competence, confidence, character, caring, and the connection was included. Hierarchical regression produced 3 models showing that connection, character, and age, variables are significantly predictive of life purpose.

An examination of the standardized regression coefficients revealed that character ($b = 0.207$, $p < 0.05$), age ($b = 0.051$, $p < 0.05$), and connection ($b = 0.378$, $p < 0.001$) were significantly associated with a life purpose. The interpretation, therefore, was that changes in character, connection, and age were positively related to changes in life purpose. This indicates that changes in connection, character, and age are positively related to life purpose. This means that the final regression model explains 13% of the variance for life purposes. These results show that connection, character, and age are important to explain the variance in life purpose.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics and correlations between the study constructs (N = 201).

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Competence	0.97	0.17	1					
2. Confidence	3.10	0.53	.033	1				
3. Character	3.07	0.50	.018	.393**	1			
4. Caring	3.15	0.77	.045	.182**	.596**	1		
5. Connection	2.65	0.44	.032	.249**	.434**	.345**	1	
Life Purpose	2.55	0.59	.097	.022	.295**	.198**	.346**	1

** p < 0.01 (2-tailed)

Table 4

Hierarchical regression analysis (Stepwise): Life Purpose relation to 5Cs of PYD (N = 201).

	Model	B	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tolerance	VIF
Model 1	(Constant)	1.307	5.408	.000		
	5. Connection	.468	5.194	.000	1.000	1.000
R ² = 0.119; F (1,199) = 26.977, p < 0.001						
Model 2	(Constant)	.931	3.282	.001		
	5. Connection	.362	3.672	.000	.812	1.232
	3. Character	.214	2.457	.015	.812	1.232
R ² = 0.145; F (2,198) = 16.848, p < 0.001						
Model 3	(Constant)	.065	.141	.888		
	5. Connection	.378	3.861	.000	.808	1.238
	3. Character	.207	2.401	.017	.811	1.234
	Age	.051	2.332	.021	.995	1.005
R ² = 0.156; F (3,197) = 13.296, p < 0.001						

Discussion and conclusion

This study aimed to explore the relationship between the 5 components (5Cs) of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and life purpose, as a fundamental element of general well-being and mental health in a group of Roma and Egyptian minority youth in Albania. The study also focused on the role of demographic factors such as age, ethnicity, sex, education, and civil status in relation to the 5Cs and life purpose. Referring to the first hypothesis, the results showed that the Egyptian minority

youth revealed higher levels of perception of competence and confidence compared to the Roma minority youth. This finding confirms a previous study of these two minorities in Albania during the pandemic as part of the same project (Miconi et al., 2021). Through the use of focus groups, the study showed that the young people from the Egyptian minority scored higher levels in the Development Assets profile compared to the young people of the Roma minority. These results seem to suggest that between the two minorities there are

differences regarding the perceived levels of the 5Cs. Their presence is also seen as related to the changes that these two minorities have in terms of problems related to education, employment, and living conditions. Competence related to the appreciation of personal abilities and internal resources in the direction of fulfilling personal goals and confidence related to higher levels of self-concept support a more positive and optimistic approach to life and the future. In addition, the findings indicate that young people who are in school have higher perceived levels of connection and character compared to other categories. In line with Lerner and colleagues, young people who have a stronger sense of trust in people and institutions and greater respect for social rules and cultural values tend to be more engaged in school and motivated easier to achieve their goals (Lerner et al., 2005; Manstead, 2018; Osterman, 2000). Another interesting finding is related to sex differences in terms of the components of the 5Cs showing that male youth have a stronger perceived sense of competence and confidence compared to females. This finding may also be influenced by the lifestyle they lead, the greater freedom given to men, and the social roles and cultural norms of these two cultural groups. In general, the cultural norms of these two minorities tend to limit women's space to make decisions about their future and their lives, to leave school early, and push them toward early marriage (Miconi et al., 2021; Dervishi et al., 2021).

As hypothesized, the life purpose is related to the youth's status and their level of education. Young people who have assumed roles

and responsibilities as a result of premature growth that is imposed by the social group they belong to (i.e., through early marriage) have an impact on their motivation to give a purpose to their life and their future. Furthermore, it is evident that young people who are in school have a clearer vision of their life purpose compared to other groups of young people, those who have dropped out of school, those who have finished a cycle of compulsory education, or those who have never experienced school. Based on our findings, it appears that education is an influential factor both in terms of the components of the 5Cs and the life purpose. Our findings are also in line with the theoretical model of the 5Cs of PYD by Lerner (2013), regarding the impact that the 5Cs have on the positive development and mental health of young people.

Referring to our hypothesis regarding the relationship between the 5Cs components of PYD and life purpose, there is a positive relationship between the latter and some of the 5Cs components, such as character, connection, and caring. Our findings are partially supported by other studies. Considering the study conducted by Abdul Kadir and Mohd (2021), the connection has a positive impact on life's purpose. Further, the components of the 5Cs have an important role in terms of positive development, general well-being, and life (Mercier et al., 2019; Gomez-Baya et al., 2022; Fernandes et al., 2021). Thus, high levels in the components of the 5Cs, such as character, connection, and caring, have a significant positive relationship with life purpose and greater clarity for the young people's perspective for

the future. Young people who have a strong sense of social conscience, and personal values and are more open to diversity, tend to show greater confidence in relation to themselves and the future, having a clear purpose for their lives. This is related to the character component, which results in greater clarity of life purpose. What turned out to be significant in terms of how the 5Cs of PYD can predict life purpose is related to the other component, connection, which again directly predicts life purpose in young people participating in this study showing that young people who have a stronger sense of belonging and connection with family, community and peers experience a higher certainty about their life purpose and their goals for the future. Caring was another component that had a positive relationship with life purpose, showing that young people with a more pronounced sense of empathy and sympathy have a higher clarity regarding their future objectives. As previously claimed, studies focusing on the general Albanian youth population are missing, thus further comparisons at this stage are not possible. However, it is important to emphasize that, given the distinct specifics of the target group, comparing would be challenging even in the presence of future contributions. It was further found that age is important for the link between connection and life purpose. Specifically, it was shown that as young people get older, they experience a stronger sense of connection and feel clearer about their purpose in life, directly influencing a clearer vision of their future. These findings suggest that connection not only helps young people to have a clear

objective for life but also to experience fewer worries and uncertainty about the future. In addition, Caring appears as the component that is a good predictor of a person's life purpose. With the increase in age, young people tend to become more accepting and helpful towards others and engage in an optimistic vision for their lives if the conditions of the surrounding environment are supportive and accepting. Finally, a number of limitations should be taken into account considering the conditions in which the study was carried out. First, this study was conducted soon after the initial strict anti-covid-19 measures were slightly eased. Secondly, recruiting young people from these two minorities is generally not easy, and in this case, even when they would appear registered in school registers, they had not attended school for the past months. Thirdly, the small number of the sample and the scope of the study in only three Albanian cities (Berat, Elbasan, and Shkodra), may not be representative of the Roma and Egyptian minority youth. Fourthly, the cross-sectional study which was used after the first wave of the pandemic does not present the continuity of the situation and whether the relationships between the study variables were continuous or related to other factors that were not foreseen by the researchers. To conclude, this study carried out in a sample of young people from the Roma and Egyptian communities showed that the components of the 2 Cs, connection and character, and age predict life purpose. It is worth emphasizing the role of external factors such as family, peers, and the surrounding community in terms of creating a supportive environment

that allows youth to identify their strengths and develop those strengths optimally. The sense of belonging to their minority group and the role and responsibility that young people impose on themselves, help them ease challenges into becoming adults. This study, regardless of the limitations in some directions, has an extraordinary contribution in terms of exploring the dynamics faced by the young people of the Roma and Egyptian minority in Albania. Also, the findings of this study can help the various institutions, organizations, and professionals in these two communities to clearly address some problems and to take concrete actions in the direction of the intervention plan aimed at increasing young people's capacities to make choices that facilitate decision-making for their future.

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