

## Article

# Demographics and Five Cs of PYD as Predictors of the Domains of Contribution among Youth in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** In recent times, research has focused on positive youth development (PYD) amidst the deficits of youth. However, little is known about PYD and its potential to predict social engagement. Thus, this study aimed to examine the presence of the 5Cs of PYD (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring) and its difference in gender and prediction to contribution, specifically social engagement among family, peers, schools, and community. The sample size consisted of Nigerian youth in University ( $N = 394$ ,  $M_{age} = 18.42$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ). The PYD framework served as the theoretical perspective underpinning the study. Questionnaires were administered using the 5Cs model of PYD and contribution items. Data were analysed for descriptive, correlations, and hierarchical regression to examine the predictors of contribution while controlling for demographics. The results showed greater scores in competence, connection, and character for women. Competence and connection ( $\beta = 0.56$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) specifically had significantly independent associations with community volunteerism. While the findings highlight the Cs experienced and predictive values among each variable in the Nigerian context, future research could consider how each domain of the 5Cs holistically promotes contribution equally in males and females among diverse Nigerian youth. The research has implications for research, policy, and practice.

**Keywords:** PYD model; 5Cs; contribution; caring; youth; community volunteerism; social engagement; family; school; Nigeria



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## 1. Introduction

Over the years, research has focused on the weaknesses and problems of youth rather than their strengths. However, positive youth development (PYD) has emerged as the current paradigm viewing youth as individuals who have the resources and strength to attain healthy development [1–4]. PYD emphasises principles, philosophy, practices, or approaches with active support from individuals, organisations, and institutions for the growing capacity of youth [5]. The historical tone underpinning PYD started in the early nineties [6,7] and focuses on how youth can develop in strength, and explore resources and opportunities, especially in developed countries. The most common PYD model is the 5Cs model are competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring. Competence emphasises the positive view in different developmental areas. Confidence is the internal sense of positive self-worth and efficacy. Connection embraces the attachment to people and institutions. Character will shape the youth who respect societal rules and demands. Caring means having sympathy and empathy for others. In the PYD field, the emergence of the sixth C is known as contribution [8]. The ideology behind contribution aligns with the commitment and the willingness to give back to others. Contribution is related to one of the scopes of civic engagement, social engagement. Through social participation, youth can make their contribution by rendering voluntary services to the family, peers, school, and community at large to their society. Further, research has shown that youth who have experienced the 5Cs are more likely to contribute to their lives, family, and

society [6,8–10]. The active engagement of youth in voluntary activities such as engagement in volunteer work, youth politics, school-self-government activities, non-political organisations, leadership, and the community has fostered self, family, and community development [10–13]. However, Lerner and colleagues' view on contribution centres on helping family mentoring, helping friends and neighbours, and participating in school committees, sports, and religious groups [13]. Thus, volunteerism is a means of social engagement and could be rendered with a keen interest in activities through various ways and capacities across communities and institutions [10,13,14].

To date, most studies on PYDs are based on studies from developed countries and a few African countries. Therefore, establishing the significance of PYD and its contribution in the Nigerian context may fill an important knowledge gap by shedding light on the experiences and roles of the 5Cs of PYD in social participation. Also, this study will bridge the gap identified in the scarcity of research related to PYD by providing and adding more insights to the discourse of PYD in developing contexts. Having a better understanding of how the 5Cs of PYD relate to the different types of contribution or social participation could help inform research, policy, and practice in Nigerian and African contexts.

Fostering the 5Cs among youth in Nigeria is crucial during the critical phase in the country where the quick rich syndrome is spreading among youth. Further, the importance of contribution among youth can advance research and guide practitioners in promoting 5Cs among youth as they approach the stage of unattached adulthood while it can influence policy formulation. The current study embraced the PYD framework to examine the experiences of 5C and the contribution among youth and the gender differences in the Nigerian context. It also explores the type(s) of contribution (community contribution, helping family, helping friends/neighbours, mentoring and advising peers, school participation in government or school) in the Nigerian context associated with the 5Cs.

### *1.1. Nigeria Context and Youth*

Nigeria, adjudged the giant of Africa located in the Western part, is very rich in resources with a population estimate of 217,079,601, of which 70% are youth [15,16]. Unfortunately, despite the richness of natural and human resources, poverty is on the high side as the majority of its citizens live below the poverty line [17]; with increasing brain drain, health and income per head remain devalued daily [18,19]. Further, in terms of inequality in West Africa, Nigeria is one of the highest compared to other countries like Ghana, Togo, and Mali [18,20]. Moreover, the Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Nigeria 163rd position out of 191 countries with an average HDI of 0.52 [21]. This is an indication that Nigeria is achieving less in longevity, education, and living standards [22,23]. Even though, Nigeria is one of the fastest in the establishment of tertiary institutions [24]. The value and standard of education are reducing with more attention paid to the building of universities than youth. The observed changes in education suggest the role and impact of the government; the ruling party, economy, and inflation have changed the tide strengthening the private sector in the education system, making it unbearable for an average Nigerian parent to afford the tuition in public universities, let alone private universities. For instance, in the space of 64 years, 270 universities have been established across the nation, with the breakdown of 149 private and 150 public institutions against the two public universities existing in the 1960s [25]. The current state of the country can be summarised with the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, which could be devastating and may result in the unwillingness of any youth to contribute to national development. The Nigerian leadership seems to have drawn many of the youth away from exploring their capacities towards the country's progress and the canvass for sustainable development [26].

Nigeria youth are defined as individuals between 18 and 35 years old [27], and represent 70% of the total populace. The tendency for risk behaviours is likely to abound among vulnerable youth living in public institutions like correctional and orphanage homes [26,28]. Also, the unemployed youth accounts for 53% [29]. In addition to the

unemployment rate among graduates, there has been an increase in organised crimes and ritual killings for the acquisition of properties and money among youth [30]. This new crop of youth has been identified as Yahoo boys and girls, who lure other youth into risk behaviours of kidnapping and ritualism (killing and sacrificing human beings for money rituals) to get rich. Exposure to corruption, insecurity, kidnapping, and religious and war insurgencies may make it difficult to make a personal and sustainable contribution due to environmental risk [30,31]. However, amid these atrocities and threats, youth strength can be tailored towards their positive development and contribution through social organisations and civic involvement in fostering positive development [13,32].

Exploring the ability of youth enables them to contribute to society amidst corruption and decadence. It is a known phenomenon that there are many social organisations in the Nigerian environment, especially in the university platforms. The University platform is a unique environment, especially with the backing of the University management and the available different social activities that support the building of the 5Cs and encourage contribution among youth. This implies that instead of only waiting for the service year under the umbrella of the National Youth Service Corps, which is a one-year mandatory voluntary service to the Nigerian community after obtaining a First degree, the youth can be engaged in civic activities before graduating [33].

### *1.2. Positive Youth Development, Civic Engagement, and Contribution*

The most popular model that, to an extent, describes the holistic construct of PYD is the 5Cs model. The use of this model is very germane with common usage in use in the US and European contexts among youth of different categories [34–37]. The model identifies five core domains that are essential for promoting positive outcomes in young individuals and has the potential to reduce engagement in risk behaviours including competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring [3,4,38,39]. Competence is the ability to develop skills and abilities in various domains, such as academic, social, and vocational competencies, empowering youth to navigate life's challenges effectively. Confidence is the building of self-belief and self-esteem in young people, helping them develop a sense of agency and efficacy. Connection regards the importance of positive relationships and a sense of belonging with family, peers, school, and community, which provide support and social integration. Character refers to the development of moral and ethical principles, fostering integrity, empathy, and responsibility. Caring is the cultivation of a sense of selflessness and concern for others, encouraging youth to be compassionate and engage in prosocial behaviours. Also, with the last C, identified as a contribution, youth possess the ability to make a moral and civic impact on themselves, families, communities, and society at large when the first of the 5Cs are evident and present [3,40,41]. It is possible to trace the likelihood of contribution when other 5Cs are present. The emergence of the sixth C is predicated on the circumstances around the youth fuelling the desire to contribute to their environment. However, emphasis on the sixth C—contribution, is based mainly on how youth have thrived and well developed the 5Cs.

It is assumed that youth who have the 5Cs tend to express their civic right, duties, and participation which could enhance community development [41,42]. Through contribution, youth can meaningfully influence themselves, family, and society at large [4,43,44]. The sense of contributing positively to society can be developed by stimulating the interests of youth towards community development within their environment [14]. Contribution affirms the importance of mutually influential relationships based on the individual and his multiple contexts for the interrelation of PYD as a developmental process, philosophy of youth programmes, and youth organisations tailored towards positive development [5,45,46].

Research has shown that the long-term active participation of youth in civil society and positive civic engagement related to the 5Cs promotes positive development [3]. Civic engagement is one of the ways to understand the concept of contribution with the 5Cs. Civic engagement cuts across the scopes of social engagement, social conscience, and

civic action through varying forms such as volunteer work, youth political organisations, school-self-government activities, and youth non-political organisations [14,47,48]. The ability of youth to engage in volunteer work is a means of contributing to society. It is action-oriented through participation in community development without the expectation of monetary or personal gains [42,49]. Youth who pursue their own personal and family and, in turn, render help through active participation in their communities are referred to as helpers [50]. Contribution can be both ideological and behavioural [40]. The ideology behind contribution aligns with the commitment and the willingness to give back to others while the behavioural contribution stems from the activities that youth engage in. Such activities can be leadership-oriented, mentoring, help-oriented towards friends and neighbours, sports, participation in school and religious groups, volunteering in the community, and tutoring others [10,51]. Thus, a youth can only successfully contribute to their society when they have developed personally. According to [52], volunteer work is carried out to achieve a milestone without returns. Volunteerism as a means of social engagement could be rendered with a keen interest in activities through various ways and capacities across communities, and institutions [13,53,54]. For instance, social engagement through volunteerism enables youth to render selfless service that can promote personal and skills development [54]. Further, sustained mentoring relationships can expose youth to new information for making better decisions along their career or development trajectory [55].

### *1.3. Theoretical Perspective of the Study*

The theoretical concepts underpinning PYD assert that youth have the capacity and potential for healthy and positive development in their environment [4]. Relational developmental systems expatiate on the importance of robust, influential, and mutual relationships between the youth and their context, resulting in the individual and context development [3,56]. A good example of such a system is the ecological systems theory. The ecological system theory portrays a bi-directional, person–context relationship whereby the best interest of the youth as well as the different systems connected provides a conducive atmosphere for positive development [40,57]. From a theoretical perspective, the contribution is explored from an individual–context relationship, where youth, through collaboration and networking, establish relationships with adults who mentor and grant opportunities for active and robust engagement in community-led initiatives and civic programmes towards positive development [39,42].

The five components (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem) of the ecological systems theory are interrelated and can positively support the development of youth. In this current study, the systems relevant and crucial that directly impact the individual youth, family, and environment are the individual, microsystems, and mesosystems. According to the microsystem, youth engage in activities and roles that directly interact with existing connections to family members such as parents, siblings, friends, peers, community, and schools [58]. Through contribution, youth within the microsystem can render helping hands to family, friends, and neighbours (10). In the mesosystem, youth become interconnected through gaining access to schools, religious groups, and other social institutions targeted to influence positive development [58,59].

In line with what researchers hypothesised, youth who have the 5Cs are trading on a developmental trajectory that would lead to the sixth C—contribution [9]. This means that for youth to contribute to their personal and family, the microsystem environment must be conducive, and this can then translate to contribution to the mesosystem (community). A means of providing support for youth to thrive is consequential upon their interconnectedness to resources, organisations, or institutions that can influence healthy positive development [3,57]. An interaction that can occur in the University context tends to expose the youth to academic and social activities. The implication of this is that youth are expected to receive a substantial level of support that promotes the 5Cs development and, at the same time, contribute back to the system for the healthy development of others through selfless service called civic engagement. Thus, the school environment can provide the

necessary social support whereby youth are engaged in civic activities that can build civic skills, family, and community when the atmosphere is supportive in growing or promoting their 5Cs. According to Masten and Coatsworth [60] and Catalano and colleagues [61], competence could ride on the interaction of an individual with his environment through volunteering and participation in PYD programmes. However, in the context of Africa, especially Nigeria, few youths have benefitted from PYD-oriented programmes, even though they may not necessarily have all the components of the 5Cs.

From the strength perspective approach, the strengths of youth can be tailored towards contributing to society rather than becoming a nuisance and liability. Youth are active contributors in their capacity to the development of any nation, especially when they are recognised and their voice counts. It is easy and encouraging for youth developing in an environment with welfare, social amenities, and access to basic needs to want to give back to society to improve sustainable individuals and communities. For example, from the present situation in Nigeria, the hike in fuel prices has worsened and led to hatred in the society where monthly income cannot be commensurate with the cost of living. In such a country, one would expect that the level of contribution may be high at the family level and low at the societal level. The dividend of engaging in civic activities has an impact on well-being [51,62] and could also benefit the family and community environment. However, the environment could determine to what extent their capacities are explored. Lack of good leadership characterised by corruption seems to keep youth away from contributing to their society [63,64].

#### *1.4. Empirical Evidence of PYD in African Contexts*

There is limited extensive international research on PYD, especially in Africa; only a few studies were found related to PYD in the African context. Tirrelle and colleagues [65] explored the PYD's three big features that make up a quality programme called Compassion International (CI) among 603 youth and 302 youth involved in Non-Compassion International in Rwanda. The findings revealed higher levels of the three big features of PYD including adult–youth relationships, life-skill-building activities, and opportunities for youth contribution and leadership. In Ghana, Wiium et al. [37] in a cross-sectional study on PYD and sustainable development goals among 858 Ghanaian youth found that males scored higher on competence compared to females. However, females scored higher in the caring component compared to their male counterparts. In Jordan, researchers examined how parents promote volunteering work and factors that could stamper this concept among 305 youth through snowballing [54]. The authors discovered that volunteering aids competencies through skills and acquisition and it is a means of inculcating a sense of responsibility. However, the lack of monetary gains in volunteerism reduces youth involvement. This implies that the promotion of the sixth C in the Jordanian context is based on supportive family and related to competence. This study established that through support, which is one of the developmental assets, friends, family, and society can encourage youth to positively contribute to their society [49].

Wagina [44] examined the role of 5Cs in reducing risk behaviours among 105 youth in Papua New Guinea. The findings revealed that the specific 3Cs—confidence, character, and competence when present in youth, can lead to avoidance of drug usage. By implication, engagement of youth in university in risky behaviour can be exacerbated when 5Cs are promoted and developed, which could lead to a contribution to society. In two schools in Lagos, Nigeria, Malik et al. [66] found that youth who were peer mentored improved their academic performance more than youth who were exposed to only conventional methods. The environment of Ethiopia is depicted as an asset-depleted society where youth reported less opportunity to engage in activities due to the poor developmental context [67].

It is interesting to note that different countries have explored this model to situate the status of youth in their context concerning their development. The empirical findings have established the significance of focusing on the positive outcomes of youth through their contributions in diverse settings. However, PYD models are new due to the paucity

of research in an understudied setting like Nigeria's context. Thus, research is needed to establish the 5Cs and contribution to promoting positive outcomes among youth.

### 1.5. Empirical Evidence of PYD, Demographics, and Contribution

Positive Youth Development (PYD) has been in use predominantly in the United States and spreading beyond the shores of Europe and gradually to Asia and Africa [3,49,68]. The research conducted in the United States and the PYD cross-cultural studies keeps providing the lead in validating the significance of positive development among youth [9,69]. According to Geldhof [70], Pittman [6], and their colleagues, contribution necessitates youth engagement in their community and society at large. Also, Maslow [71] identified PYD-related programmes including leadership, skills, and connectedness geared towards building the contribution of youth. Wiium and colleagues [51] explored whether civic engagement was related to optimal trajectories of mental health compared to other trajectories among 675 youth in Norwegian youth attending senior secondary schools. It was interesting to note youth's higher levels of engagement in civic activities were not tantamount to development and health. Rather, the socioeconomic status of youth influenced their trajectories. This could be a reflection on the significance of contexts.

Conway et al. [34], in a cross-sectional study in Ireland, investigated the PYD of 672 youth using the 5Cs model and contribution subscales. It was found that contribution highly correlated with character, connection, and competence while the confidence of youth was associated with lower contribution.

Regarding gender differences, [72], a study conducted in Spain and Peru highlighted the importance of the 5Cs where females had higher scores in caring and character while males reported competence, confidence, and connection. Similarly, Mesfin [73] investigated the presence of the 5Cs of PYD among 220 youth from 16 to 20 years old in the eastern and western parts of Norway. The descriptive results revealed that the respondents experienced more caring, character, competence, confidence, and connection in ascending order. Also, concerning demographics and PYD, a weak significant positive correlation was reported between age and connection ( $r = -0.15, p < 0.05$ ). That is the older the youth, the lower the connection and youth younger in age experienced high connection. Similarly, a weak significant negative correlation between gender and competence, gender and confidence, and a weak positive correlation between gender and caring. It was also evident that gender was negatively associated with competence and confidence, and positively associated with caring. In the study, it implied that males experienced more competence and confidence than females while females experienced more caring than males.

Further, research has highlighted the significance and deliberateness of using the 5Cs model through activities to encourage youth contribution. In such instances, sports have been explored to promote the strength and contribution of youth with evidence in increasing social competence, confidence, connection, self-efficacy, and character [74–76]. Also, Wong et al. [77], in a study among 180 youth using a randomized controlled trial design, found that youth can personally develop themselves through engagement and contribution to leadership programmes. Lerner et al. [10] in a longitudinal study comprehensively compared the relationship between the PYD and the contribution of youth engaged in a large 4-H study (4-H youth) and youth engaged in other school activities (non-4-H youth) in the United States. The findings revealed that the 4-H youth were more likely to contribute to community development due to their exposure to leadership, citizenship, and life skills from Grades 7 through 12. However, 4-H girls more than 4-H boys contributed to their communities. This implies that youth can be effectively engaged as early as possible, and society can benefit from their service which can become part of the societal niche and culture. Youth in developed contexts such as Europe and America have been engaged in different PYD programmes with evidence of community contribution that has helped reduce risk behaviours and problems [10,78,79].

Further, in Europe and the USA, volunteerism is part of youth's life. For instance, in Scandinavian countries, 50% of the youth know the need to contribute to their society,

even though the level of volunteerism could be low [13]. Also, in the United States, 74% of undergraduate students engaged in volunteerism, helping in the University and community work related to education, religion, professional groups youth development or mentoring programmes, and student government [80]. Crocetti et al. [47] surveyed the 5Cs and various involvement in civic activities such as volunteering, school-related, politics, and organisations to investigate the different identity styles among 1633 youths between 14 and 19 years. It was found that youth who scored higher in the 5Cs leading to personal and community dividends were more information-oriented and engaged in volunteering and non-political organisations. In contrast, youth who are normative in their identity style only developed themselves (the 5Cs) and not their community due to their low level of participation in civic engagement, whereas youth who are ready and avoidant in identity style scored low both in the 5Cs and civic engagement. In all, the presence of the 6Cs in youth can promote both personal and community development.

Similarly, Jelcic et al. [81] discovered that the presence of PYD in youth predicted higher engagement in Grade 5 youth contribution. Hansen [82] examined the types of developmental experiences associated with the 5Cs and youth activities. It was found that youth exposure to service activities outside school enables them to learn and develop leadership skills and community engagement. Truskauskaitė et al. [32] conducted a study in Lithuania on the 5Cs and volunteering among 615 participants between 13 and 16 years. The authors found that youth increased in competence, connection, and caring with steadiness in confidence and character while youth who were in the control group decreased in competence, confidence, and character with a steadiness in connection and character. O'Connor et al. [83] carried out a longitudinal study on predictors of positive development in emerging adulthood. It was found that community engagement during mid to late adolescence can lead to positive development in emerging adulthood. Research has documented the importance of the competencies of the three big of PYD. The three big ones of PYD are relationships with adults, opportunities for contribution and leadership, and life skill-building activities [71]. Although mentorship can be low-key or high-key, peer mentorship is common in schools, enhancing self-worth, positive social skills, relationship strategies, and skill-building activities [55,84,85].

### *1.6. Aim of the Present Study*

Research conducted at the international level on PYD gives both a theoretical and empirical background for investigating the role of the 5Cs in predicting contribution through the different engagements of youth at the family, school, and community levels. The present cross-sectional study is crucial and was conducted with a view of bridging the gap in the literature and furthering our understanding of PYD. This study aims to (1) examine the experiences of the 5Cs of the PYD model and the contribution of youth; (2) examine the association existing between the 5Cs and contribution, and the gender differences; and (3) based on earlier findings on the presence of the 5Cs would lead to contribution [6,10], it was hypothesised that in this study the 5Cs would predict the categories of contribution including community contribution, helping family, helping neighbours and friends, school or government leadership, and mentoring or advising peers after controlling for the demographic variables among Nigerian youth. The study was structured to provide information on Nigeria's context and youth. Then, the theoretical perspectives backing the study and the empirical evidence of PYD and demographics and PYD in African contexts were addressed. The study finally concluded with a discussion and implications for research, policy, and practice.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### *2.1. Participants and Procedure*

This current study used a cross-sectional research design. The participants included 394 undergraduates who were selected through convenience sampling from the College of Food Science and Human Ecology at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta

(FUNAAB). In total, 100 participants were selected across each of the four departments in the college including Home Science and Management, Food Science and Technology, Nutrition and Dietetics Hospitality and Tourism. The eligibility for participation required them being a first-year student. Data were collected over 4 weeks using hard copies of printed questionnaires on positive youth development and contribution. Access to the participants was through the Head of Classes (HOC). After permission was obtained from the Heads of Classes, informed consent was obtained from students before participation. Participants willing to participate in the study were given a paper-and-pencil self-administered questionnaire to be completed voluntarily on demographic variables, 5Cs, and contribution. The collection of data was, on average, 40 min. The questionnaire was in English format since students' medium of instruction in the university was English language.

The majority of the participants were between 18 and 24 years old ( $\text{Mean}_{\text{age}} = 18.42$ ,  $\text{SD} = 1.02$ ), and 80.7% of the participants were female. The sample was not quite heterogeneous, and this could be because more females do offer the courses in the College. The ethnicity of youth included Hausa (7.11%), Igbo (24.26%), and Yoruba (64.97%). In total, 70.30% of the participants were Christian.

## 2.2. Measures

The questionnaire tool included the demographic variables, a short measure of the 5Cs, and the contribution of participants to self, family, and community. The demographic variables assessed the gender (male or female), age, department, ethnicity (Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo), and religion (Islam and Christianity) of the participants. To measure the components of PYD, the short measure of the 5Cs was employed. The short measure consists of 34 items with 6 items on competence, 6 items on confidence, 6 items on character, 8 items on connection, and 6 items on caring [70,86]. Response options were coded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Competence was related to classwork in school. Items of competence included I do very well in my class work at school/university, I am better than others of my age at sports. The reliability measure was 0.78. Confidence refers to individual happiness and self-worth, which was measured using a confidence sub-scale (e.g., I really like the way I look). The reliability measure was 0.81. Character refers to the various management skills (e.g., I like helping to make the world a better place to live in). The reliability measure was 0.86. Connection items focused on the link youth has with family, school, community, and peers (e.g., I receive a lot of encouragement at my school/university). The reliability measure was 0.85 with the 8 items. Caring was the fifth sub-scale and consisted of 6 items (e.g., When I see someone being taken advantage of, I want to help them). In all, contribution was measured with 5 items to represent five domains in understanding the frequency of time youth spend with their family, friends, and services rendered to the schools and the community [70]. One sample item was used to assess each domain in which youth can contribute. Community volunteerism was assessed by one item—how many hours do you spend in a typical week to volunteer or do something without pay to make your community a better place? Helping friends or neighbours was assessed with one item—how many hours do you spend in a typical week helping friends or neighbours? Helping family every week was evaluated with an item—how many hours do you spend in a typical week to help your family? Another means of youth contributing to society is through mentoring or advising peers which was assessed with an item—how many hours do you spend in a typical week in mentoring others or advising peers? Lastly, youth are expected to be involved in school leadership through participation in school committees or government. This was evaluated with an item—how many hours do you spend in a typical week participating in school committees or government? The responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale in 0-h, 1 h, 2 h, 3–5 h, and 6 or more hours. The reliability coefficient was 0.83. The reliability coefficients for the 5Cs were consistent with previous studies [70,87].



### 2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. The number of questionnaires retrieved was 394 out of the 400 questionnaires. Before the analysis, the internal consistencies of the scales used were checked with reliability tests. Preliminary analyses were conducted using descriptive statistics to assess the frequency, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis to ensure the linearity and normal distribution of data collected on demographics, 5Cs, and contribution variables among participants. In the bivariate analysis specifically, the correlation was run for the relationship among study variables and strength of association between the five categories of PYD and the five categories of contribution. To test the hypothesis, hierarchical regression was performed to examine the predictors for each category of contribution after controlling for the demographic variables in Step 1 while in Step 2, the 5Cs were entered as independent variables. The list pairwise was used to exclude missing cases without losing the relevance of the data collected in cases where some items were not filled or omitted in the questionnaire by the participants.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Descriptive and Correlation Analyses of 5Cs of Positive Youth Development and Domains of Contribution

Table 1 shows the descriptive and correlation analyses among the study variables including the demographics, 5Cs, and the five domains of contribution. The results of the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), skewness, and kurtosis of each variable are described as well as the correlation (*r*). The mean for each of the 5Cs ranged from 2.48 to 3.04. The highest mean scores were observed in confidence (M = 3.04, SD = 0.83) and connection (M = 3.02, SD = 0.86). For contribution, participants reported helping the family for 6 or more hours as the highest means scores of 3.71 (SD = 1.45), followed by helping friends and families. Further, participants spend 3–5 h weekly helping friends or neighbours with a mean score of 3.65 (SD = 1.42), then weekly mentoring others or advising peers with a mean score of 3.47 (SD = 1.34). However, community volunteerism had the lowest mean score of 1.90 (SD = 1.29). This could indicate that participants more or less do not make any contribution to their communities. The skewness and kurtosis range from −0.14 to 7.24 and −1.43 to 2.67, respectively. In addition, correlation was performed to ensure the variables were not highly correlated. Positive significant correlations were observed between the 5Cs ranging from  $r = 0.41, p < 0.01$  to  $r = 0.83, p < 0.01$ , while the correlations between the four domains of contribution ranged from 0.25 to 0.80. A moderate significant positive correlation was observed between caring and the composite of contribution. Positive significant relationships were observed with all the 5Cs and the five domains of contribution ranging from 0.18 to 0.53. The strongest correlation was between caring and community volunteerism, whereas the weakest correlation was between competence and helping friends or neighbours as well as competence and helping family. Based on the demographic variable, age did not correlate with any of the study variables. Although a weak correlation was observed, gender significantly positively correlated with competence, confidence, connection, and character. Religion positively correlated with caring and community volunteerism.

**Table 1.** Descriptives and correlation among study variables.

Study Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Age	1	0.017	0.054	0.061	−0.023	−0.026	−0.003	0.013	0.028	−0.006	−0.034	0.007	0.016	0.024	−0.039
2. Gender		1	−0.062	0.132 **	0.185 **	0.109 *	0.154 **	0.132 **	0.011	0.028	−0.082	0.049	0.031	0.054	0.046
3. Religion			1	0.047	0.098	0.092	0.072	0.106 *	0.016	0.016	0.131 **	−0.019	−0.066	−0.036	0.063
4. Department				1	0.053	0.132 **	0.141 **	0.216 **	0.111 *	−0.089	0.006	−0.137 **	−0.115 *	−0.088	−0.014
5. Competence					1	0.477 **	0.475 **	0.414 **	0.279 **	0.281 **	0.176 **	0.180 **	0.212 **	0.255 **	0.255 **
6. Confidence						1	0.768 **	0.728 **	0.682 **	0.412 **	0.289 **	0.325 **	0.323 **	0.339 **	0.346 **
7. Connection							1	0.831 **	0.721 **	0.416 **	0.299 **	0.354 **	0.282 **	0.331 **	0.372 **
8. Character								1	0.750 **	0.437 **	0.316 **	0.372 **	0.323 **	0.331 **	0.377 **
9. Caring									1	0.571 **	0.534 **	0.442 **	0.387 **	0.423 **	0.476 **
10. Contribution										1	0.572 **	0.851 **	0.868 **	0.842 **	0.791 **
11. Community volunteerism											1	0.256 **	0.298 **	0.309 **	0.450 **
12. Helping friends/ neighbours												1	0.800 **	0.717 **	0.552 **

Table 1. Cont.

Study Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
13. Helping family													1	0.736 **	0.555 **
14. Mentoring/Advising peers														1	0.529 **
15. School/Government															1
Mean	18.42	1.01	2.24	2.40	2.86	3.04	3.02	2.98	2.48	3.18	1.90	3.65	3.71	3.47	3.15
Standard Deviation	1.02	0.40	0.49	1.14	0.88	0.83	0.86	0.89	0.84	1.12	1.29	1.42	1.45	1.45	1.51
Skweness	7.24	-1.56	0.47	0.01	-0.68	-1.07	-1.30	-1.22	-0.77	-1.04	-0.14	-1.05	-1.16	-1.00	-0.68
Kurtosis	0.69	0.44	-0.22	-1.43	0.19	1.77	2.67	2.28	1.02	0.55	-0.95	0.46	0.44	0.16	-0.45

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

### 3.2. Gender Difference in 5Cs and Contribution

An independent sample *t*-test was run to determine the gender difference in the 5Cs and contribution. Females reported higher levels of experiences of competence, connection, and character as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Gender difference in the experience of 6Cs of positive youth development.

Variables	Male $n = 76$		Female $n = 318$		Mean Difference	95% CI	df	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
Competence	2.54	1.03	2.94	0.83	-0.41	-0.63, -0.20	392	-3.74	0.00
Confidence	2.85	0.77	3.09	0.84	-0.23	-0.43, -0.02	392	-2.16	0.31
Connection	2.75	0.83	3.09	0.86	-0.34	-0.55, -0.12	392	-3.08	0.00
Character	2.73	0.80	3.03	0.90	-0.30	-0.52, -0.75	392	-2.63	0.01
Caring	2.46	0.84	2.49	0.85	-0.02	-0.23, 0.19	392	-0.21	0.84
Contribution	3.11	1.21	3.19	1.10	-0.79	-0.36, 0.20	392	-0.55	0.59

### 3.3. Hierarchical Regression of 5Cs Predicting Contribution

Table 3 revealed a significant association between the 5Cs as predictors of the dependent variables. For each domain of contribution in step 1, demographic variables were entered while in step 2, the 5Cs were included. In the first domain, step 1 explained 2.4% of the variance in community volunteerism,  $F(4, 380) = 2.37, p < 0.05$ . The addition of competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring in Step 2 accounted for 30.8% of the explained variance in community contribution,  $R$  square change = 0.308,  $F$  change (5, 375) = 20.8,  $p < 0.00$ . Religion ( $\beta = 0.13, p < 0.00$ ), competence ( $\beta = 0.15, p < 0.05$ ), connection ( $\beta = 0.15, p < 0.00$ ), and caring ( $\beta = 0.65, p < 0.00$ ) made unique contributions to community contribution. Further, Table 3 shows that when the 5Cs were entered in step 2, it explained 21% of the variance in helping neighbours and family friends; 18% of the variance in helping family,  $R$  square change = 0.18,  $F$  change (5375) = 0.00, with confidence ( $\beta = 0.17, p < 0.05$ ), and caring ( $\beta = 0.36, p < 0.00$ ), making unique contributions. In all, caring made a significant contribution to each of the domains of contribution as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Hierarchical regression analyses of community contribution, mentoring, school/government engagement, helping friends and family, and the 5Cs among youth.

	Community Contribution				Helping Friends/Neighbours				Helping Family				Mentoring Advising				School/Government Committee				
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	
Step 1																					
Age	-0.39	0.49	0.04	0.43	0.16	0.54	0.02	0.76	0.28	0.55	0.03	0.61	0.33	0.55	0.03	0.55	-0.47	0.58	-0.04	0.41	
Gender	-0.25	0.17	-0.08	0.14	0.24	0.18	0.07	0.19	0.16	0.19	0.04	0.41	0.23	0.19	0.06	0.21	0.21	0.20	0.05	0.30	
Religion	0.34	0.13	0.13	<b>0.01</b>	-0.03	0.15	-0.01	0.86	-0.18	0.15	-0.06	0.25	-0.09	0.15	-0.03	0.57	0.21	0.16	0.07	0.18	
Department	0.01	0.06	0.01	0.80	-0.18	0.06	-0.15	0.00	-0.15	0.07	-0.12	0.02	-0.12	0.07	-0.10	0.06	-0.03	0.07	-0.02	0.68	
Step 2																					
Age	-0.50	0.41	-0.05	0.22	0.11	0.48	0.01	0.81	0.28	0.51	0.03	0.58	0.32	0.50	0.03	0.52	-0.52	0.51	-0.05	0.31	
Gender	-0.24	0.14	-0.07	0.10	0.21	0.17	0.06	0.21	0.13	0.18	0.04	0.46	0.18	0.18	0.05	0.30	0.14	0.18	0.04	0.44	
Religion	0.17	0.11	0.06	0.14	-0.17	0.13	-0.06	0.20	-0.32	0.14	-0.11	<b>0.02</b>	-0.23	0.14	-0.08	0.09	0.04	0.14	0.01	0.76	
Department	-0.03	0.05	-0.03	0.48	-0.25	0.06	-0.20	<b>0.00</b>	-0.21	0.06	-0.17	<b>0.00</b>	-0.19	0.06	-0.15	<b>0.00</b>	-0.10	0.06	-0.07	0.11	
Competence	0.20	0.07	0.14	<b>0.01</b>	-0.07	0.09	-0.04	0.45	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.96	0.03	0.09	0.02	0.74	0.09	0.09	0.05	0.34	
Confidence	-0.17	0.11	-0.11	0.12	0.05	0.13	0.03	0.69	0.29	0.13	0.17	<b>0.03</b>	0.18	0.13	0.10	0.17	-0.01	0.14	-0.00	0.95	
Connection	-0.22	0.11	-0.15	<b>0.05</b>	0.12	0.13	0.07	0.35	-0.14	0.14	-0.08	0.32	-0.02	0.14	-0.01	0.91	0.06	0.14	0.04	0.65	
Character	0.01	0.01	0.06	0.17	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.31	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.79	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.79	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.31	
Caring	0.99	0.10	0.65	<b>0.00</b>	0.68	0.12	0.41	<b>0.00</b>	0.61	0.12	0.36	<b>0.00</b>	0.64	0.12	0.37	<b>0.00</b>	0.77	0.12	0.43	<b>0.00</b>	

#### 4. Discussion

The current study explored the 5Cs and contribution as a composite and the categories of contribution. It further examined the association between each of the 5Cs and how each could predict contribution in a sample of Nigerian youth in University. The findings established the importance of promoting the 5Cs and contribution among youth in a Nigerian context. Firstly, the study investigated the experiences of 5Cs and the contribution, of the sixth C. Secondly, the association between the 5Cs and 6th C was determined. Finally, the 5Cs predictive role in the domains of contribution such as community volunteerism, helping family, helping neighbours and friends, mentoring and advising peers, and building leadership capacity through participation in school committees and government after controlling for demographic variables was examined.

Based on the first aim of the study on the experiences of the 5Cs, the findings revealed the Cs with the highest mean value in order of ranking included confidence, connection, character, competence, and caring. This present study aligns with the study of Conway et al. [34] where confidence, connection, character, and caring had a substantial and advantageous link with thriving. The mean scores of each of the Cs seem to be low when compared to that found among youth in Peru and Spain where the highest to lowest mean range from 4.21 to 3.06 [72] while in Norway, Mesfin [73] found that the youth sampled experienced more caring, character, competence, confidence, and connection. This could imply that these Cs are present but not to their fullest in the youth sampled in this current study. Although the 5Cs are the basis for positive youth development [45], the lack could affect their contribution to society. As pointed out by Geldhof et al. [70,86], the 5Cs are part of a bigger and more complicated framework for growth that must be assessed and evaluated regardless of the situation confronting youth. Caring seems to be the least experienced among the participants. This could reflect the hardship and complexity in society characterised by the demand for survival, leading to an individualistic nature and gradual eroding of the collectivistic nature of Nigerian society. Further, from contribution cut across family, friends, neighbours, peers, leadership at school or government levels, and volunteerism in the community, it was obvious in the current study that youths spend hours weekly contributing more to the family domain than any other domains of contribution. This finding signifies the importance of the family in nurturing the 5Cs as the first arena to foster 5Cs. An earlier study in Jordan [54] found that children with supportive parents promote volunteerism. The next domain of contribution identified to be more experienced among youth was helping friends and neighbours, mentoring others, and advising peers by spending 3 to 5 h every week rather than participating in school or volunteering in the community. A possible reason for contributing mainly to the family, friends, and neighbours could be due to the collectivistic society which pays due attention to the importance of support among close relatives, friends, and neighbours than the community or schools at large.

From the theoretical perspective, the importance of the microsystem is indispensable to foster 5Cs and contribution. Youth living with their families of orientation engage in activities and roles that directly interact with existing connections to such family members inclusive of parents, siblings, friends, and peers [10,58]. In the mesosystem, youth become interconnected through gaining access to schools, religious groups, and other social institutions targeted to influence positive development [57,59]. Time allocated to contribute to one's microsystem and mesosystem reflects the importance youth place on interconnected systems. Although only a few youths render help to their community or participate in school committees or government, this suggests that few of the youth in this current study are helpers. Pancer et al. [50] argued that helpers are youth who can both pursue their own personal, family and in turn, render help through active participation in their communities. This could indicate the possible reasons for some youth not being able to contribute to the wider society could be due to educational pursuits [54], where they are fully engaged with attaining their personal goals and neglecting other areas of development that could benefit them and society. Another possible reason why youth

could overlook contribution could be due to a lack of exposure to activities outside their context. This negates the finding of Hansen [82], who found that youth access to contribution outside the school enables them to contribute. Furthermore, while many youth may want to render community volunteerism, the insecurity in Nigeria can be threatening and scary for any youth, and parents may want to discourage such civic action [30,63,64]. Also, there is the likelihood that organisations such as schools, industries, and NGOs among others tend to be fearful of accepting youth to render helping hands which could result in more rejection than acceptance for youth desiring to render a contribution. This finding is in line with the study of Al-Bakar et al. [54] that found that fear of responsibility and commitment, low income, a lack of training for volunteering activities, and rejection from institutions running volunteer work are major obstacles to rendering community services. Even though Nigerian society partially embraces contribution, although not yet to the fullest in comparison to developed nations where normalcy exists to a point, an enabling environment has spurred many youth to contribute to their society [33].

The second aim of the study considered the relationship of gender differences among the study variables. The findings revealed that the 5Cs correlated with all the domains of contribution from small to medium correlation [88]. Conway et al. [34] found that contribution was highly correlated with character, connection, and competence while confidence of youth was associated with lower contribution. This previous study partially supports the current study as the correlations observed were moderate and not highly significant correlations. Further, gender was related to all the 5Cs except caring and not at all with a composite of contribution and its domains.

The correlation between gender and all the 5Cs except caring indicates that females tend to experience differently from Cs than males. The gender difference using the *t*-test result also confirmed the differences. The differences were observed in competence, connection, and character. Thus, females reported higher levels of these 4Cs than males. In contrast, in a study conducted in Ghana, Wium et al. [37] found that males scored higher on competence, confidence, and connection compared to girls, while girls scored higher in the caring component compared to their male counterparts. However, there is a need for caution since the majority of the participants in this current study were females. Although, it is common in previous studies that males scored higher in the 5Cs than females [10], in some studies females reported more caring and character than their male counterparts who reported more competence, confidence, and connection [37,72,73].

Lastly, in line with the hypothesis for the study, the variance for each of the 5Cs in contribution was below average. This could imply that the possibility of contribution being present in youth in Nigeria context is low. Although Jelacic et al. [81] discovered that the presence of PYD in youth predicted higher engagement in Grade 5, the findings worthy of note in the hierarchical regression revealed that caring was the most important predictor as it cut across each domain of contribution. This implies that caring predicts youth contribution whether in helping the family, helping friends and neighbours, mentoring or advising, participating in school or government committees, or contributing to the community at large. According to Lerner et al. [10] and Roth and Brooks-Gunn [39], caring is a selfless concern for others through sympathy and empathy, encouraging youth to be compassionate and engage in prosocial behaviours. Thus, it is crucial to develop the ability of Nigerian youth to selflessly contribute to their family, neighbourhood, and society and not for monetary gains. Specifically, aside from caring in this current study, other Cs made unique contributions to helping family and community volunteerism. Helping the family was further predicted by confidence, thus, 2Cs (confidence and caring) predicted this domain of contribution. The family is an arena of socialisation where values and norms are inculcated in youth. Thus, in this study, the family arena has built the confidence of self-belief and self-esteem in youth so that youth would be helped to develop a sense of agency and efficacy. This is in line with the findings of Lerner et al. [10]. Although the demographics of religion and the departments of youth also predicted contribution

at the family level, the concern is that youth need to translate their contribution beyond the family.

Furthermore, the predictors of community volunteerism include competence and connection. This could imply that youth experience and possess the skills and abilities to be socially and vocationally competent [4], which is liable to influence them in contributing to the community. Thus, if competence is not present in youth, they may not have the skills needed to make any contribution that can advance their community. In addition, while clamouring for competence, connection is a significant predictor of community contribution. Also, with connection being identified as a predictor of community contribution, it could imply that the robustness of community volunteerism is hinged on human interactions and relationships. It could imply that connectedness will assist youth to desire youth to improve themselves, their environment, and social contexts. As such connection could promote contribution, especially through volunteerism. Earlier studies have shown that youth can be more involved in civic activities towards national development in varying forms including volunteer work, youth political organisations, school-self-government activities, and youth non-political organisations [14,47,48]. Focusing youth on contribution is a key to expatiating on the strength of youth as against the challenges and problems of youth. Contribution is an indication that youth can actively be engaged to attain dual achievement of personal, family, and community development [71].

#### *4.1. Limitations and Recommendations*

This study has several limitations which may affect its generalizability and broader applicability of the results to the larger youth in Nigeria and the African context. First, being a cross-sectional design, the causal relationships among demographic factors, 5Cs, and contribution could not be examined. Also, the convenience selection of the sample studied from a single university narrows the scope and may not be a true representation of the overall state of youth in Nigeria. Addressing the identified limitations would strengthen the validity and generalizability of its findings. Therefore, longitudinal studies using a larger sample size could provide more robust evidence of the predictive role of the 5Cs in shaping youth behaviour over time. Also, the measures used could be adapted or developed to suit the Nigerian context, especially considering that Nigerian youth live in a collectivistic society, although such adaptations will need validation. Universities need to engage youth in selflessly contributing to their society with no returns by engaging youth in active leadership roles, life skills and accountability. This could help curb the quick-and-get-rich syndrome that has resulted in ritual killings of many Nigerian female students. This could go a long way to reduce the social problems, cravings, and desire for money among youth in Nigerian society. This can be achieved by focusing on the preventive approach of PYD using different activities to stimulate the interest of youth to contribute to their environment beyond self and family settings. The free University break can be tailored towards heterogeneous extracurricular activities. Although some students engage in social and religious activities, it would be interesting for universities to strategise on ways of introducing first-year students to the importance of contributing selflessly to their society. Finally, it would be interesting to examine the support youth receive in promoting the 5Cs. This could help in providing insights into how the family can be more committed to promoting youth contribution in their communities.

#### *4.2. Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice*

Regardless of the limitations of this study, the findings have implications for research, policy, and practice. Along with previous and ongoing research on PYD, the current study has contributed to this paradigm field that views youth as having strength rather than problems [2,4]. Being a new area unexplored, this study has given the importance of investigating the 5Cs and contribution in the African context, especially among Nigerian youth in university. Further, the findings have emphasised the need for future research to probe into how diverse youth experience the 5Cs in the Nigerian context and if it would

lead to the sixth C because the experiences of this model were poorly experienced in this current study. Since the youthful phase is an explorative stage, it would have been expected that youth would engage willingly in civic activities; however, this is not the real picture in the current study, so probably youth engage in risky behaviours. Thus, future studies can also examine how the 5Cs could mitigate against risk behaviours. In addition, the study was limited to a single university.

Regarding policy, Nigerian government policies must respond to the social problems and menace by promoting positive outcomes, especially contribution, with the PYD framework in mind among diverse youth in Nigeria. This can be achieved by focusing on programmes that centre on the three big features of PYD such as adult–youth relationships, life-skill-building activities, and opportunities for youth contribution and leadership [75]. About practice, it is evident from the findings that there is a need to promote the 5Cs among youth and in turn contribute. Thus, youth can be engaged in core community-building initiatives and projects within and outside of the university environment to promote volunteerism as a means of fostering a supportive environment for the development of the 6Cs of PYD. The establishment of a PYD unit within the University system can provide appropriate educational and practical programmes during students' free period to render free services to their society. In addition, the creation of youth clubs can offer intervention programmes where youth develop self-interest and a desire for positive thriving outcomes. Seminars on the importance of contribution could be organised for newly admitted students in the Universities focusing on the significance of volunteerism to build their positive development and reduce the challenges of risky behaviours among youth.

## 5. Conclusions

The current study has provided insight from the global south to the international perspective on the 5Cs. First, beyond the shores of developed nations, the study is the first to assess the experiences of youth attending university in Nigeria and has extended the generalisation of the PYD framework to the African context. Thus, this current study has shown the limitations and the need for advancing PYD research generally in Africa among diverse youth. Extensive research can provide more insight on how the 5Cs can be promoted among youth which can then influence policy formulation. Further, this present study has elaborated on the need to promote contribution within and outside of the family setting as a likely antidote to social problems and menace such as cravings for money among youth.

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**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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