

TRACING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ACROSS POLICY LEVELS IN PAKISTAN: A DOCUMENT ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL, AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

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Abstract

Youth development is affirmed as a policy priority at every level of governance, from international frameworks to the documents that govern individual institutions, yet it is not established how consistently the concept is represented as these documents move from one governance level to the next. This study analyzes international, national, provincial, and institutional policy frameworks relevant to youth development, examining how youth development is conceptualized in each. Using directed qualitative content analysis, four documentary registers are compared: the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 target framework (United Nations, 2015; international); the Planning Commission's Annual Plan 2022-23, which reports on national youth-development programming associated with the National Youth Development Framework (national); the Sindh Youth Policy (provincial); and the published institutional materials of Fatimiyah College, Karachi (institutional). Five youth-development dimensions are traced across the four registers: access/equity/opportunity, skills/employability, values/character/social identity, political/civic participation, and institutional mechanism. Findings show that skills and employability are represented at every level examined, while political/civic participation, though explicit and operationalized at the provincial level, has no corresponding representation in Fatimiyah College's published materials. Values, character, and social identity content becomes prominent from the provincial level onward. The study concludes that youth development is not conceptualized uniformly across governance levels in the documents examined: some dimensions, particularly skills and employability, recur consistently, while others, particularly political and civic participation, do not.

Introduction

Youth development has become an increasingly prominent educational, social, and policy priority, particularly for college-going students positioned between schooling, higher education, work

preparation, and emerging adult roles (Arnett, 2000). In Pakistan, higher-secondary and community-college students represent a critical transition group moving from school-based learning toward higher education, employment

pathways, and civic responsibility. Existing research documents fragmented, provincially uneven youth-policy implementation following the 18th Constitutional Amendment (Javed, 2020), and comparative studies find substantial cross-country variation in the extensiveness of national youth policies (Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency [PILDAT], 2020). What has received less attention is a more basic, prior question: does the conceptual content of youth development remain stable as policy documents themselves move from an international register, to a national register, to a provincial register, to the register of a single institution's own governing texts?

This study addresses that question directly, analyzing international, national, provincial, and institutional policy frameworks relevant to youth development, and asking how youth development is conceptualized in each. The scope is restricted to documentary evidence: no interviews, surveys, or fieldwork were conducted; the data consist of publicly available policy and institutional texts, coded against verbatim source text wherever the complete original document was obtainable. This restriction is a deliberate methodological choice, consistent with document analysis as an established qualitative method in its own right (Bowen, 2009), and it defines the scope of this study's findings: claims about how youth development is represented across governance levels, not claims about how it is implemented, experienced, or resisted in institutional life. Institutional practice and stakeholder perception fall outside this scope and would require complementary empirical methods to address.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on two bodies of theory. Multilevel governance (MLG) theory (Hooghe & Marks, 2003) provides the structural frame for locating the four documentary registers relative to one another: international, national, provincial, and institutional. The four registers are not treated as equivalent or formally interchangeable policy instruments; SDG 4 is a global normative framework, the national register is a government planning document, the Sindh Youth Policy is a provincial policy instrument, and Fatimiyah College's materials are published institutional content rather than an adopted youth-development policy. MLG supplies the rationale for comparing them as related, vertically positioned documentary contexts (the Document Corpus and Sampling Rationale develops this distinction directly).

A substantive youth-development framework, drawn primarily from positive youth development (PYD) theory and supplemented by the capability approach, supplies the content categories traced through the four registers. PYD theory (Lerner et al., 2011) commonly operationalizes youth development through competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, and contribution. The capability approach (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999) is concerned with the external conditions and opportunities that make development possible, rather than a developmental attribute of the young person. Table 1 maps five operational coding categories used in this study onto these theoretical traditions.

Table 1

Theory-Informed Coding Framework

Construct (tradition)	Operational Category	Documentary Indicator Sought
Competence (PYD)	Skills & employability	Named skill target, training mechanism, or employability requirement
Character (PYD)	Values, character & social identity	Named value, ethical commitment, or character-formation aim

Connection (PYD)	Values, character & social identity (merged with Character)	Same as above; merged with Character on co-occurrence grounds (see 2.2)
Contribution (PYD)	Political / civic participation	Named civic, political, or participatory mechanism or entitlement
Capability approach	(capability Access, equity & opportunity)	Named access provision, equity target, or scholarship/quota mechanism
Procedural, not a PYD or capability construct	Institutional mechanism (operationalization dimension)	Named implementation body, action plan, target, or monitoring/evaluation procedure

Connection and character are combined into a single coding category (values, character & social identity), not because the two are theoretically identical, but because the documentary corpus repeatedly combined language about identity, interpersonal values, tolerance, and belonging in the same clauses, without a textually reliable basis for coding them separately. Confidence and caring were not retained as independent coding categories because the corpus did not provide sufficiently stable, independently distinguishable textual indicators for them; this is a limit of the coding scheme applied here, not a claim about their presence or absence in the underlying documents. This study accordingly analyzes four substantive youth-development dimensions (access/equity/opportunity, skills/employability, values/character/social identity, political/civic participation) and one cross-cutting operationalization dimension (institutional mechanism), the last of which is procedural rather than a fifth substantive dimension of youth development.

A methodological caution applies throughout this study: because it analyzes documents, not actors, it cannot observe institutions interpreting, translating, or acting on policy. Where this study finds that a theme recurs, or does not recur, across registers, this is treated as documentary correspondence, not as evidence that one document influenced another or that an implementation process occurred.

Literature Review

Youth Development as a Construct

Youth development is not a single, agreed construct. Positive youth development scholarship (Lerner et al., 2011) treats it as a multidimensional developmental process spanning competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, and contribution; capability-approach scholarship (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999) treats it as the expansion of substantive freedoms, what a young person is genuinely able to do and to be, rather than a fixed bundle of skills or outcomes. A narrower, human-capital reading of youth development (Becker, 1964), treating education and employability as ends in themselves, is also prominent in government youth-policy language internationally, particularly where youth policy is framed primarily as an economic-productivity instrument rather than a broader developmental one. This study adopts the broader, multidimensional reading, since the gap between these two readings, and where each recurs across governance levels, is part of what the analysis below examines. The five coding categories used in this study (Table 1) draw substantially on the competence, character, connection, and contribution constructs from positive youth development, and on the capability approach for access and equity, precisely because these traditions jointly cover both the developmental-attribute and the enabling-condition senses of youth development identified in this paragraph. Neither tradition, on its own, is well suited to a documentary comparison of this kind: positive youth development was developed primarily to

describe individual developmental trajectories, not policy text, and the capability approach was developed primarily to evaluate substantive outcomes, not the presence or absence of a commitment in a document. Their combined use here is accordingly instrumental, supplying content categories for coding rather than a claim that either tradition is being tested or extended by this study.

Multilevel Governance and Cross-Level Policy Comparison

Multilevel governance (MLG) theory, since its introduction to describe European Union regional policy, has become one of the most widely applied frameworks in comparative political and policy scholarship, extended well beyond its original European context to national, sub-national, and sectoral policy comparisons (Hooghe & Marks, 2003). A recent systematic review of three decades of MLG scholarship, covering nearly 600 publications, finds that the framework's central contribution is its refusal to treat governance as confined to a single level, but also documents persistent criticism that MLG risks conceptual overstretch, losing analytical precision, when applied loosely across very different institutional settings without specifying exactly what is being compared (Papadopoulos et al., 2025). This study responds to that criticism directly by specifying, in the Corpus Heterogeneity table, precisely what kind of document each register is, and by using MLG in a bounded, structural sense: to position the four registers relative to one another, not to assert that they are formally equivalent policy instruments within one governance system. Multilevel governance scholarship applied specifically to education (Tamtik & Colorado, 2022) supports this narrower use, treating policy alignment across governance levels as inherently interpretive rather than a simple matter of top-down implementation, a position consistent with this study's treatment of documentary correspondence as distinct from policy transmission.

Youth Policy Across Governance Levels in Pakistan

Within Pakistan specifically, provincial-level analysis following the 18th Constitutional Amendment documents fragmented, unevenly resourced provincial youth landscapes, with weak federal-provincial coordination; a national assessment of Pakistan's youth-policy landscape across all four provinces (Javed, 2020) similarly finds substantial variation in the scope of employment quotas, internship provisions, and skill-development commitments named in each province's youth policy. Closer to the institutional level, critical analysis of civic-engagement provisions in Punjab's education and youth policies (Munir & Zaidi, 2023) identifies the absence of a structured, integrated institutional approach to civic education as a policy-level gap. Together, this literature establishes that Pakistan's youth-policy landscape is fragmented in its implementation capacity; this study's specific contribution is to ask whether the underlying conceptual content itself, independent of implementation capacity, is consistently represented across governance levels at the level of the documents themselves. This distinction matters because implementation capacity and documentary representation are logically separable: a province could, in principle, name a youth-development priority explicitly in policy while lacking the capacity to implement it, or, conversely, could implement measures informally without naming them explicitly in its governing documents. The existing Pakistan-focused literature, concerned primarily with the former question, provides limited direct evidence on the latter, which this study addresses through document analysis rather than implementation assessment.

Civic Participation and Citizenship Education

Because political and civic participation is one of the five dimensions traced in this study, and the theme showing the sharpest cross-level discontinuity in the findings below, it warrants separate literature grounding. A recent systematic review of 109 peer-reviewed studies on the impact

of citizenship education finds consistent evidence that structured opportunities for participation, such as student councils and community-based civic activities, are associated with stronger active-citizenship outcomes than civic knowledge instruction alone, but also finds that such opportunities are unevenly distributed across educational institutions and are frequently absent from formal institutional documentation even where informally practiced (Jerome et al., 2024). This distinction between civic participation as institutional practice and civic participation as institutional documentation is directly relevant to the present study: the absence of a qualifying coding unit for this theme in Fatimiyah College's published materials (see Political and Civic Participation, below) is a finding about documentary representation, consistent with this literature's observation that civic-participation provisions are often the least likely dimension of youth development to be formally documented at the institutional level, even where broader policy commitments to it exist. The same review also notes that access to structured civic-participation opportunities is not evenly distributed even where such opportunities exist, with uptake skewed toward students from more advantaged backgrounds (Jerome et al., 2024); this is a separate empirical question from the one this study addresses, but it underlines that documentary silence on a theme should not be read as evidence that the theme is unimportant to an institution, only that it was not identified in the documents examined under this study's coding criteria (see Coding Procedure).

Comparative and Cross-National Youth Policy Analysis

Comparative analysis of national youth policies across developed and developing countries finds substantial cross-national variation in policy scope, the presence or absence of dedicated implementation budgets, and the extent to which youth participation is built into policy design rather than treated as an implementation afterthought (Rystina & Kussainova, 2014). This comparative literature is concerned primarily with

cross-country variation at a single governance level, national policy, rather than with tracing a given set of priorities vertically across governance levels within a single country, which is the specific gap this study addresses. That comparative literature nonetheless establishes a useful baseline: cross-national variation in youth-policy scope and implementation budgeting is well documented (Rystina & Kussainova, 2014), which suggests that the documentary unevenness identified within a single country's governance levels in the present study is consistent with, rather than an exception to, the broader pattern of uneven youth-policy specification documented internationally.

Document Analysis as a Method

Document analysis is an established, standalone qualitative method (Bowen, 2009) in which existing texts are treated as primary data and analyzed systematically, rather than used only as background for interview-based research. Within this broader method, directed content analysis specifically derives initial coding categories from existing theory rather than solely from the text itself (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), the approach adopted in this study and detailed under Research Design and Method. Coding judgments should be traceable to specific, quotable source text rather than asserted from general impression; this study follows that convention throughout the Findings, where every classification is anchored to a quoted clause and its source location.

Taken together, this literature establishes three things this study builds on and one gap it addresses. It establishes that youth development is a contested, multidimensional construct rather than a settled one; that multilevel governance is a widely used but potentially overextended framework requiring precise specification of what is being compared; and that Pakistan's youth-policy landscape, and civic-participation provision specifically, are unevenly documented and implemented. What it does not establish is whether a given set of youth-development priorities, defined consistently, remains visible and comparably represented as documents move from an international register, through national

and provincial registers, to the register of a single institution's own published materials. That is the specific, narrower question this study addresses. This study's contribution is accordingly twofold: empirically, it maps how unevenly, and at what level of specificity, youth-development priorities are documented across international, national, provincial, and institutional registers in Pakistan; and conceptually, it treats documentary representation and policy implementation as analytically separable objects of study, showing that a priority's presence or absence in governing texts is itself informative, independent of any claim about whether or how that priority is enacted in practice. This distinction, stated once here, underlies the scope boundaries maintained throughout the remainder of this paper.

Method

Research Design and Method

This study uses a qualitative documentary research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018), with directed qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) as the analytic method. In directed content analysis, initial coding categories are derived from existing theory (Table 1) rather than solely from the text itself. This label is used in place of the broader term "reflexive thematic analysis": Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019) reflexive thematic analysis is an inductive, theory-generating approach, whereas this study begins from a specified theoretical framework and codes each register against it.

Document Corpus and Sampling Rationale

Four documentary registers were purposively constructed, not sampled to be statistically or nationally representative. SDG 4 was selected as the international register, rather than the 2030 Agenda as a whole or a youth-specific international instrument, for three reasons: it is the single Sustainable Development Goal explicitly and exclusively concerned with education, giving it the closest direct thematic overlap with a study of education-linked youth-development priorities; its

own target structure (4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.7, cited directly in Table 4) already names several of this study's coding categories, skills, employability, access, and equity, in language closely comparable to the national and provincial registers, making it a suitable anchor for cross-register comparison rather than a mismatched starting point; and it is the international commitment Pakistan has itself formally adopted and against which its own national and provincial youth policies are conventionally benchmarked, so it represents the international register these subordinate documents would themselves be expected to relate to, rather than an external standard imposed by this study. The Planning Commission's Annual Plan 2022-23 was selected as the national-level register because it is the fullest available official government account of national youth-development programming, reported under the National Youth Development Framework (NYDF). The Annual Plan itself, not the NYDF's own primary text, is the document coded for this study; the NYDF is referenced only as the programming banner under which the Annual Plan reports, and no claim is made about the NYDF's own content beyond what the Annual Plan itself states. The Sindh Youth Policy was selected as the provincial register, rather than another province's policy, because Fatimiyah College, the institutional-level case, is Sindh-based; the document coded is a pre-approval draft, not the officially gazetted 2018 policy; this is addressed as a limitation below. Fatimiyah College, Karachi, a degree-awarding college operated under the Fatimiyah Education Network, was selected as the institutional-level case because its published institutional materials (Vision, Mission, Core Values, and scholarship provisions) were directly retrievable from official sources.

Table 2 summarizes the four registers' heterogeneity explicitly, treating comparability as a documented design feature rather than an implicit assumption.

Table 2

Corpus Heterogeneity

Register	Document	Authoring authority	Status
International	SDG 4 target framework	United Nations	Adopted global goal; complete text retrieved
National	Annual Plan 2022-23	Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan	Official planning document; complete text retrieved and coded in full
Provincial	Sindh Youth Policy	Government of Sindh	Pre-approval draft cover-labelled; complete draft text retrieved; key provisions corroborated both by contemporaneous reporting on the April 17, 2018, cabinet approval and by the Sports & Youth Affairs Department's own current departmental webpage; full gazetted text not independently retrieved (see Limitations)
Institutional	Fatimiyah College published institutional materials	Fatimiyah Education Network	Publicly published institutional content; vision, mission, core values, and scholarship provisions retrieved

A note on document completeness: the complete original Sindh Youth Policy document was obtained and coded directly, including its Vision, Mission, Core Values and Principles, all three Development Goals with their strategic objectives, and its institutional-mechanism chapter. The national register is the Planning Commission's Annual Plan 2022-23, retrieved and coded in its entirety. This document reports on national youth-development programming associated with the National Youth Development Framework (NYDF); the NYDF's own primary text was not independently examined for this study, and no claims are made about its content beyond what the Annual Plan itself states. Fatimiyah College's institutional materials were retrieved from the Fatimiyah Education Network's official published content; no internal handbook, board-level strategic plan, or formal policies-and-procedures

document was located, and this is treated as a scope limitation below, not as evidence that no such document exists.

Comparability and Analytical Equivalence

A reviewer could reasonably object that this study compares documents differing substantially in genre, authority, purpose, and specificity, and therefore risks mistaking documentary heterogeneity for governance-level variation. Table 2 already documents this heterogeneity explicitly; this section states, as a single methodological argument, how the comparison remains valid despite it. First, the four registers are not assumed to be equivalent policy instruments: an international goal framework, a national planning document, a provincial policy, and a college's published materials carry different authority and were produced for different purposes, and no

claim in this study depends on treating them as interchangeable. Second, they are compared not as instruments of equal standing but as documentary sites at which youth-development priorities are, or are not, articulated in each register's own terms. Third, comparison is conducted at the level of the five theory-derived coding categories in Table 1, semantic categories applied uniformly across registers, not at the level of each register's institutional authority or legal force. Fourth, the classifications in Tables 3 and 4 record the presence and specificity of a category's representation in a given document; they are not, and are not intended as, a measure of that document's policy strength, political weight, or implementation capacity. Fifth, and following directly from the first four points, a theme's recurrence across two or more registers is evidence of documentary correspondence only: it does not indicate that a priority named at one level was transferred to, adopted by, or caused to appear in another. These five points, stated together here, govern the interpretation of every finding reported in the Findings section.

Coding Procedure

Coding proceeded in four stages: familiarization (each document read in full before coding); directed initial coding against the five categories in Table 1, with a coding unit defined as any sentence or clause naming, defining, or committing to action on one of these categories (coding units were not mutually exclusive; a clause could receive more than one code); evidence extraction, retaining the specific clause verbatim together with its source location, reported in Table 4; and cross-level classification as explicit (a named principle, target, or mechanism), present-but-general (named but not operationalized), weakly present (addressed only indirectly through a related concept), or not addressed (no coding unit meeting these criteria was identified in the document as retrieved for this study). "Not

addressed" means absence of identified evidence in the source consulted, not a positive claim of absence from the underlying policy. A single coder conducted all coding; before finalizing each classification, the coder actively searched for evidence that would contradict the preliminary judgment (negative-case examination), revising where such evidence was found. An audit trail of coding decisions and their supporting evidence was maintained throughout. A subset of coding units (skills/employability and political/civic-participation classifications across all registers) was re-coded after an interval; no discrepancies were found, though this limited check (two of five themes, one coder) does not substitute for a full second-coder inter-rater check.

Trustworthiness and Positionality

Trustworthiness, following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria as adapted for documentary research, was supported through repeated reading of each document; an explicit, theory-derived coding frame stated in advance (Table 1); verbatim evidence retention for every coding decision, reported in Table 4; and the intra-coder stability check and negative-case examination above. No claim of inter-rater reliability is made, since a single coder conducted the analysis; this is stated as a limitation below. The researcher holds a professional affiliation with Fatimiyah College, the institution selected for the institutional-level register; this affiliation motivated its selection as a directly accessible case, and is disclosed here as a potential source of familiarity bias in document selection and interpretation.

Findings

Table 3 summarizes, for each theme, its classification at each governance level. Table 4 reproduces the specific documentary evidence underlying each classification, so the coding can be audited directly against quoted source text.

Table 3

Cross-Level Classification Summary

Theme	SDG 4	Annual 2022-23	Plan Sindh (draft)	Policy	Fatimiyah College
Access, equity & opportunity	Explicit	Explicit	Explicit		Explicit
Skills & employability	Explicit	Explicit	Explicit		Present-but-general
Values, character & social identity	Not addressed	Not addressed	Explicit		Explicit
Political / civic participation	Not addressed	Present-but-general	Explicit		Weakly present
Institutional mechanism	Present-but-general	Explicit	Explicit		Weakly present

Note. The national register is the Planning Commission's Annual Plan 2022-23 (see Document Corpus and Sampling Rationale), which reports on national youth-development

programming associated with the National Youth Development Framework (NYDF). The NYDF's own primary text was not independently examined for this study.

Table 4

Documentary Evidence Matrix

Theme	SDG 4	Annual Plan 2022-23	Sindh Policy (draft)	Fatimiyah College
Access, equity & opportunity	"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education"; Target 4.3: "ensure equal access ... to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education"; Target 4.5: "eliminate gender disparities in education"	Thematic area 1, "mainstreaming marginalized youth"; YES loans carried a "25 percent quota for female beneficiaries, though only 12.5% of actual beneficiaries were female (Table 2.2, Planning Commission, 2022)	Core Principle I, "Diversity and Inclusion" (§3.3); Strategic Objective 1.1.5 sets a "minimum of 10% quota for female youth employment" and "2% quota for minority, differently-abled and other vulnerable youth groups"	"Top three students ... receive merit Scholarships"; "next ten students ... are also offered need based scholarships"; "tuition fee waiver"; a "Merit cum Need Based Scholarship / Soft Loan Facility" (Fatimiyah Education Network, n.d., Scholarships section)
Skills & employability	Target 4.4: "substantially increase the number of youth with relevant skills for employment"	the Annual Plan names	Development Goal A 1, "Economic Desk"	"Career and Scholarship facilitates students "in

	increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills ... for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship"	the "Employment" as one of three founding pillars under the NYDF; Hunarmand Vocational Education Network, n.d., Pakistan-Skill for Training"; Strategic Career and Scholarship All Programme Objective 1.1.4, Desk section)	Empowerment of obtaining educational scholarships / soft loans to pursue their professional careers" (Fatimiyah Institute Placement YES disbursed "Rs. 33.7 billion" in loans to 21,583 youth (Planning Commission, 2022)
Values, character & social identity	No coding unit meeting the predefined inclusion criteria was identified in the target list; framed around learning outcomes and access, not character	No discrete coding unit naming character, ethics, or values was located in the retrieved Planning Commission (2022) text	Vision/Mission, §3.2: youth should "possess useful competencies and tolerant values to become valuable citizens of Pakistan"; Core Values, §3.3: Education Network, n.d., "tolerance and respect for others"
Political / civic participation	No coding unit meeting the predefined inclusion criteria was identified	Thematic area 3, "civic engagement," is named among the NYDF's six major thematic areas; no itemized, budgeted programme component comparable to its employment/skills schemes was located for this specific area	Development Goal 3, "Political Empowerment of Youth": "Reservation of 5% quota in the elected local bodies for the eligible youth"; "Devise models of elected student councils"; "Youth-led campaigns to run voter registration campaigns"
Institutional mechanism	Implementation left to member states; monitored via 11 global indicators	Implemented as the "Kamyab Jawan programme" through "collaborative	§5 names a dedicated Youth Affairs Directorate, an "Inter-departmental Scholarship eligibility is criteria-based ("subject to given criteria") and tied to board/class rank; no further monitoring, evaluation, or

action by Federal Working Group," procedural mechanism was and Provincial and a "Sindh Youth located in the retrieved Governments"; Development material seven named, Commission"; \$4 separately budgeted sets numeric five-components year targets (Planning throughout. The Commission, 2022) Sports & Youth Affairs Department's current webpage corroborates the same institutional structure independently, naming an additional implementation detail not captured in the draft text retrieved: "Establishment of District Structure for Youth Affairs Department all over Sindh" (Government of Sindh, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, n.d.)

Note. Coding classifications follow the decision rules described under Coding Procedure. Where a cell indicates no coding unit was identified, this means the criterion was not met in the document examined; it is not a positive claim of absence from the underlying policy or framework.

Access, Equity, and Opportunity

This theme is explicit at every level examined. SDG 4's targets are built around universality ("all girls and boys", "all women and men"). The Sindh Youth Policy names an equivalent commitment in its own core principles and operationalizes it with numeric quotas. The Annual Plan names a comparable quota commitment, reported under the NYDF, though the Planning Commission's own reported disbursement data show that target was not met in practice: only 12.5% of actual YES loan beneficiaries were female (Table 2.2,

Planning Commission, 2022). Fatimiyah College's published materials address this theme through a graduated merit-and-need scholarship structure, board-position fee waivers, and a dedicated soft-loan facility, each named with specific eligibility criteria.

Skills and Employability

This is the theme with the broadest documentary recurrence across all four levels, though the four registers represent it in different forms: a broad international target (SDG 4), government

programmes (the Annual Plan), a provincial strategic objective (the Sindh Youth Policy), and, at Fatimiyah College, a named institutional support service (the Career and Scholarship Desk) rather than a curriculum requirement. This register is classified here as present-but-general because no further curriculum-level detail was located in the material retrieved.

Values, Character, and Social Identity

This theme is absent at the international level, absent in the national-level material retrieved, and explicit at the provincial level and in the institutional case. Fatimiyah College's Core Values name "Adherence to Islamic principles," "Personality and character development," and "Working towards a 'Just Society'" directly, converging conceptually, though not through any demonstrated relationship of direct derivation, with the Sindh Youth Policy's own values language ("tolerant values," "tolerance and respect for others").

Political and Civic Participation

This is the theme with the sharpest cross-level discontinuity. Development Goal 3 of the Sindh Youth Policy (draft) is devoted entirely to "Political Empowerment of Youth," naming a legislated youth quota in local government and elected student councils. The Annual Plan names "civic engagement" as one of six NYDF thematic areas, without an itemized programme component comparable to its employment/skills schemes. In the institutional case, Fatimiyah College's co-curricular materials show only weak, adjacent evidence (debate, celebration of national and international events), with no coding unit naming political participation, elections, or civic-institutional engagement specifically.

Institutional Mechanism

The Sindh Youth Policy and the Annual Plan both name detailed institutional mechanisms: a dedicated Directorate, an inter-departmental working group, and a Youth Development Commission for Sindh; a federal implementing programme, reported under the NYDF, with seven

separately budgeted components, per the Annual Plan. Fatimiyah College's scholarship eligibility is criteria-based, but no further institution-wide monitoring or evaluation framework was located in the material retrieved.

Discussion and Limitations

Read together, these findings show that youth development is not conceptualized uniformly across the governance levels examined. Skills and employability recur most consistently, present in some form at every level. Values, character, and social identity content becomes prominent only from the provincial register onward. Political and civic participation shows the sharpest discontinuity: explicit and operationalized at the provincial level, it is only weakly and indirectly represented in Fatimiyah College's published materials. An explicit classification at two registers does not imply identical specificity or meaning: SDG 4's broad international target and Fatimiyah College's narrow scholarship criteria are both classified as addressing access/equity, but they are documents of different kinds, addressing the theme at different levels of operational detail.

Several limitations should be noted. First, no internal handbook, board-level strategic plan, or formal policies-and-procedures document was retrieved for Fatimiyah College; the institutional findings are bounded by the publicly accessible materials examined, not a comprehensive account of the college's documentary record. Second, this study's national-level findings describe the Planning Commission's Annual Plan 2022-23 specifically; the National Youth Development Framework referenced within it was not independently examined, and no claims are made about its content beyond what the Annual Plan itself states. Third, the Sindh Youth Policy document obtained is labelled "yet to be approved by competent authority," consistent with a draft version subsequently approved by the Sindh cabinet on April 17, 2018. Two independent sources corroborate several of this study's coded provisions from this draft: contemporaneous reporting on the cabinet's own summary of the approved policy (Ghori, 2018), and the Sports &

Youth Affairs Department's own current departmental webpage (Government of Sindh, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, n.d.), which lists largely the same highlights independently, including a youth development commission, a job bank, institute placement bureaus, and "devise models of elected student unions." This corroboration does not extend to two other provisions coded from the draft and reported in Table 4, the 5% local-body youth quota and youth-led voter-registration campaigns, which appear in neither the cabinet's 2018 summary nor the department's current webpage; their absence from both sources is not conclusive evidence that they were dropped from the approved text, since such summaries are illustrative rather than exhaustive, but they are correspondingly flagged here as corroborated only by the draft, not independently confirmed by either official source consulted. The full officially gazetted text was not obtained for this study, and the provincial political-participation finding should be read with this partial, source-specific corroboration in mind. Fourth, single-coder analysis, while supported by an explicit theoretical frame and an audit trail, does not permit a full inter-rater reliability estimate. Finally, this study examines one institution in one province; its findings are analytically bounded, not generalizable beyond the cases examined.

Taken together, these findings indicate that youth development is affirmed as a priority at every governance level examined, but the specific dimensions through which it is articulated do not travel evenly across those levels. The key finding is therefore not simply that policy priorities differ across governance levels, but that different dimensions of youth development possess different degrees of documentary mobility. Economic and employability-oriented dimensions, skills, training, and access to opportunity, show comparatively high cross-level continuity, present in some documented form from the international register down to Fatimiyah College's own published materials; civic-participatory dimensions show much greater attenuation, explicit and operationalized in the Sindh Youth Policy but only weakly and indirectly present in

the institutional case. This unevenness is a finding about how youth development is represented in the documents examined, not a claim about institutional capacity, intent, or practice beyond what those documents themselves state.

Funding Declaration

This is part of doctoral research titled "Optimizing Youth Development in Community College: Policies, Practices and Strategic Initiatives" being carried out by the author at Sindh Madressatul Islam University. No funding agency sponsored the research. The research has been fully carried out by the author himself.

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