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**THE ROLE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES
IN PROMOTING RESILIENCE AND WELL BEING AMONG
MARGINALIZED URBAN YOUTHS THROUGH
SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN IBADAN,
OYO STATE**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of psychosocial empowerment strategies in promoting resilience and well-being among marginalized urban youths through social work practice in Ibadan, Oyo State. Urban marginalized youths face poverty, exclusion, and limited psychosocial support, which harm their mental health and coping abilities. The study explored how social work interventions counseling, mentorship, life skills training, and psychoeducation can effectively enhance resilience and well-being in this vulnerable group. Using a quantitative design, survey data were collected from 154 youths in selected Ibadan communities. Data analysis employed ANOVA and multiple regression techniques.

ANOVA showed a statistically significant effect of psychosocial empowerment strategies on resilience and well-being ($F(1,136) = 1.712, p = 0.032$), confirming the positive impact of empowerment-based interventions. Multiple regression analysis revealed that these strategies jointly predicted resilience and well-being ($F(4,149) = 22.88, p < 0.001$), with an R^2 of 0.381 indicating that 38.1% of the variance in outcomes was due to the four strategies. Among the strategies, counseling ($\beta = 0.278, p < 0.001$) and mentorship ($\beta = 0.243, p = 0.003$) were the most influential, while life skills training ($\beta = 0.168, p = 0.027$) had a moderate effect. Although psychoeducation showed a positive association, it was not statistically significant ($p = 0.088$). These findings underscore the importance of prioritizing counseling and mentorship in social work programs designed for marginalized youth. By focusing on these strategies, social workers can foster resilience, improve mental well-being, and support positive youth development in urban settings.

Keywords: psychosocial empowerment, resilience, marginalized youth, psychoeducation, urban poverty

Word Count: 244

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Urban youth in Nigeria, especially those residing in marginalized communities, are increasingly exposed to a convergence of socio-economic, psychological, and environmental challenges that significantly undermine their mental health, emotional well-being, and developmental potential. These challenges include high levels of poverty, unemployment, poor access to quality education, exposure to crime and violence, unstable family structures, and limited access to healthcare and social services (Oladeji et al., 2020; Atilola, 2016). Such harsh realities often leave young people feeling disempowered, socially excluded, and mentally distressed, limiting their ability to make positive life choices and achieve long-term stability. The cumulative effect of these stressors creates a hostile developmental environment that threatens both their present functioning and future prospects (Akanle & Adesina, 2017).

In cities like Ibadan, one of Nigeria's largest and most densely populated urban centers, the situation facing youth is compounded by rapid urbanization, overstretched infrastructure, and the erosion of traditional family and communal support systems (Akanle & Adesina, 2017). Marginalization in this context is characterized by exclusion from economic opportunities, access to quality education, and safe living environments. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020), Ibadan recorded an unemployment rate of 27.1% and underemployment of 28.6%, a sharp rise from 23.1% and 20.1%, respectively, in Q3 2018. These figures highlight increasing socio-economic vulnerability among urban residents, especially youth. Insecurity further deepens marginalization, as crime rates are higher in low-income areas such as Beere, Oje, and Molete, compared to more secure, affluent neighborhoods like Bodija and Agodi GRA. Alarming, drug and substance abuse prevalence among youth stands at 45.7%, with one in four students using substances despite 94.6% risk awareness

(NDLEA, 2021).

Resilience and well-being are fundamental for healthy youth development, particularly among those exposed to high-risk, marginalized environments. Resilience refers to an individual's capacity to bounce back from adversity, while well-being encompasses emotional, psychological, and social stability (Masten, 2014; Ryff & Singer, 2008). In Nigeria's urban centers, including Ibadan, marginalized youth frequently face structural poverty, social exclusion, violence, and limited access to essential services. These challenges often result in psychological distress, reduced life opportunities, and increased vulnerability to harmful behaviors such as drug use and criminal activity (Ogunode & Ajayi, 2019). Psychosocial empowerment strategies have emerged as critical tools to foster resilience and well-being in vulnerable populations. These strategies include interventions such as mentorship, cognitive-behavioral therapy, life skills training, and community engagement. They are designed to improve youths' self-efficacy, coping skills, social connections, and decision-making capacity (Zimmerman, 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). Empowerment, in this context, involves equipping youth with psychological tools and social capital necessary to control their life outcomes and enhance their mental and emotional well-being.

Social workers are uniquely positioned to deliver these interventions due to their training in holistic assessment, advocacy, psychoeducation, and community-based engagement. In Ibadan, where informal settlements and slum communities are widespread, professional social workers often encounter youths grappling with trauma, neglect, unemployment, and broken family systems (Oduola & Akinbode, 2021). Their role is not limited to counseling but also includes coordinating services, advocating for policy change, and mobilizing community resources to address systemic barriers. The significance of promoting youth resilience aligns with international and nation-

al development agendas such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequality). Despite several youth-focused initiatives in Nigeria, many fail to incorporate psychosocial dimensions or effectively engage marginalized communities due to poor implementation and limited grassroots participation (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). Consequently, psychosocial needs often go unaddressed, further entrenching cycles of poverty, alienation, and low self-worth.

Empirical studies have demonstrated the impact of psychosocial empowerment strategies on improving youth mental health outcomes, including enhanced self-esteem, peer relationships, and adaptive coping (Betancourt et al., 2013; Cluver et al., 2016). In Nigeria, social work-led programs have shown promise in reducing stigma and promoting positive development, yet there is a research gap regarding their application in urban contexts like Ibadan (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2020). Most existing studies focus on economic or educational interventions, neglecting the integrated psychosocial approach.

Given the complex challenges faced by urban youth in Ibadan, it is crucial to investigate the effectiveness of psychosocial empowerment strategies deployed through social work practice. This study aims to explore how these interventions influence youth resilience and well-being, identify the most impactful strategies, and examine the specific roles played by social workers in facilitating them. The findings will inform policy development, enhance program design, and contribute to the growing body of knowledge on youth empowerment in sub-Saharan Africa.

1.1 Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant effect of psychosocial empowerment strategies in promoting resilience and well-being among marginalized urban youths in Ibadan.

H2: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of various psychosocial empowerment strategies implemented by social workers on the outcomes experienced by marginalized urban youths.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Marginalized Urban Youth

Marginalization refers to the systemic exclusion of individuals or groups from meaningful participation in social, economic, political, and cultural life (UNDP, 2020). Urban youth in Nigeria—especially in cities like Ibadan—often fall into this category due to factors such as poverty, poor education, unemployment, and social disconnection. Marginalized youths are frequently exposed to violence, crime, substance abuse, and broken family systems, which limit their access to opportunities and impair their psychological development (Atilola, 2016). The National Bureau of Statistics (2020) reported an unemployment rate of 27.1% and underemployment at 28.6% in Ibadan. These figures reflect a deepening crisis of youth marginalization. Marginalized youth are often concentrated in areas with inadequate housing, high crime rates, and poor access to social services. Consequently, their aspirations, coping abilities, and life outcomes are significantly constrained (Olanrewaju et al., 2021).

2.2 Understanding Psychosocial Empowerment

Psychosocial empowerment is a multifaceted concept that integrates psychological and social domains to enhance individuals' agency, autonomy, and capacity for self-determination. It involves promoting self-esteem, emotional competence, social belonging, and the ability to influence one's environment (Zimmerman, 2000). In the context of youth development, psychosocial empowerment focuses on equipping young people with the skills, confidence, and resources to cope with life's challenges and actively shape

their futures (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). Common psychosocial empowerment strategies include life skills education, emotional resilience training, group therapy, peer mentoring, and participatory community development. These strategies aim to transform passive recipients of support into active agents of change by building their capacity to reflect, decide, and act (Narayan, 2005). Importantly, psychosocial empowerment is not a one-size-fits-all intervention; it must be adapted to local contexts, particularly in resource-constrained urban settings.

In Nigeria, efforts toward psychosocial empowerment have been sporadic and underfunded. Most interventions are donor-driven, with little policy coordination or sustainability. For marginalized youth in urban areas like Ibadan, such empowerment strategies are often the only protective factors available against structural and psychological vulnerabilities (Oladeji et al., 2020).

2.3 Concept of Resilience

Resilience refers to the capacity of individuals to maintain or regain mental health despite experiencing adversity. It is a dynamic process shaped by interactions between personal characteristics and environmental influences (Masten, 2014). For marginalized urban youth, resilience is essential for coping with instability, violence, and systemic neglect. It enables them to navigate hardships without resorting to self-destructive behaviors or disengagement from society. Resilience-building programs often focus on enhancing protective factors such as problem-solving skills, supportive relationships, cultural identity, and community involvement. These factors buffer the effects of risk and help youth to develop constructive responses to life's challenges (Ungar, 2011). In Ibadan, where youth are exposed to high levels of poverty, crime, and substance abuse, fostering resilience becomes a crucial goal of psychosocial interventions.

Studies have demonstrated that psychosocial empow-

erment is closely linked to resilience. For instance, youth who participate in peer-led programs or receive mentorship are more likely to report high self-efficacy and emotional regulation (Betancourt et al., 2013). These competencies directly contribute to their ability to bounce back from stressors and build positive life trajectories.

2.4 Concept of Well-Being

Well-being is a broad concept encompassing physical, emotional, psychological, and social health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), well-being is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, but a state in which individuals realize their abilities, cope with normal stresses of life, and contribute to their communities. For youth, well-being is influenced by access to education, emotional support, personal safety, meaningful relationships, and opportunities for self-expression. Marginalized youth in urban Nigeria often lack the social determinants of well-being. Inadequate shelter, poor nutrition, limited access to quality education, and exposure to violence undermine their capacity to thrive (Adeloye et al., 2021). Mental health indicators such as anxiety, depression, and low self-worth are prevalent among this group, particularly those living in slums and informal settlements (Atilola, 2016).

Psychosocial empowerment strategies contribute to youth well-being by promoting emotional resilience, a sense of purpose, and inclusion. Empowered youth are better equipped to make decisions that enhance their physical and mental health. Furthermore, community-based interventions that foster belonging and recognition help to address the social aspects of well-being (Cluver et al., 2016).

2.5 Social Work Practice and Youth Empowerment

Social work is a profession committed to social justice, human rights, and community empowerment. In the context of youth development, social workers serve as facilitators, advocates, educators, and coun-

selors. Their practice involves the assessment of individual and environmental needs, delivery of psychosocial interventions, and mobilization of resources to support resilience and well-being (IFSW, 2014). In Nigeria, the role of social workers in addressing youth marginalization is increasingly recognized but still underutilized. Many youth-focused interventions are implemented by NGOs or faith-based organizations, with limited coordination with professional social workers (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2020). Yet, social work principles—such as strengths-based practice, person-in-environment perspective, and client-centered empowerment—align strongly with the goals of psychosocial resilience and well-being. Through case management, group work, and community engagement, social workers help youth develop problem-solving skills, access opportunities, and build supportive networks. In Ibadan, social workers working in schools, hospitals, and community centers are strategically positioned to implement empowerment-based interventions. However, limited institutional support, policy gaps, and workforce shortages constrain their impact (Oduola & Akinbode, 2021).

2.6 Interlinkages between Empowerment, Resilience, and Well-Being

Empirical literature has consistently shown that psychosocial empowerment enhances both resilience and well-being among youth. Empowerment builds a foundation of internal strength and social connectedness, which fosters adaptability and psychological recovery in the face of hardship (Zimmerman, 2000). For instance, a study by Betancourt et al. (2013) in post-conflict Sierra Leone found that youth who engaged in group-based psychosocial interventions reported significant improvements in emotional well-being and coping ability. Similarly, in South Africa, Cluver et al. (2016) found that structured psychosocial support reduced depression and risky behaviors among adolescents living in poverty. Nigerian studies also indicate that mentorship, peer educa-

tion, and participatory skill-building enhance self-esteem, social integration, and mental health among vulnerable youth (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2020; Oladeji et al., 2020). These findings suggest a reinforcing cycle where empowerment leads to resilience, and resilience promotes well-being.

What is often missing, however, is a clear framework that integrates these elements within the context of social work practice in Nigerian urban settings. Despite the relevance of social work in addressing structural and personal barriers, few studies explicitly examine how social workers implement psychosocial empowerment to foster resilience and well-being. This gap is particularly evident in secondary cities like Ibadan, where urban challenges are acute, but research and programmatic attention remain limited. While the literature underscores the significance of psychosocial empowerment and social work interventions, several gaps remain. First, most studies are concentrated in high-income countries or humanitarian crisis settings. There is a dearth of localized research on empowerment strategies for urban youth in Nigeria, especially outside Lagos or Abuja. Secondly, existing studies often address either resilience or well-being independently, without examining the interconnections between the two within empowerment frameworks.

Furthermore, many interventions lack a youth-centered, participatory approach. Programs are often top-down and do not incorporate the voices, experiences, or aspirations of the youth they aim to serve. Lastly, the integration of social work into urban youth development remains fragmented. While NGOs and informal providers dominate the space, the contributions of trained social workers are often overlooked or unsupported by policy (Olanrewaju et al., 2021).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Empowerment Theory, a widely used framework in social work and community psychology that explains how individuals and

groups gain control over their lives and environments. Empowerment Theory, as articulated by Zimmerman (2000), emphasizes the processes through which people develop critical awareness, acquire resources, and strengthen their capacity to influence personal and social outcomes. The theory is particularly relevant in addressing marginalized populations, as it focuses on enhancing self-efficacy, participation, and access to opportunities. In the context of marginalized urban youths in Ibadan, Empowerment Theory provides a foundation for understanding how psychosocial empowerment strategies—such as life skills training, emotional regulation programs, and peer support systems—can foster internal transformation and resilience. These strategies not only help youth cope with socio-economic adversity but also position them as active agents of change in their communities. Empowerment is thus viewed both as a process (enhancing capacity) and an outcome (achieving well-being and resilience) (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

Empowerment Theory also aligns closely with the core principles of social work practice, which emphasize participation, strengths-based interventions, and client-centered approaches. Social workers, by implementing empowerment-oriented programs, help youth gain access to critical resources (education, employment, mental health services), challenge oppressive structures, and improve their psychosocial functioning. By applying Empowerment Theory, this study explores how empowerment-based social work interventions can promote resilience and psychological well-being among urban youth who are marginalized by poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion in Ibadan.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to explore the role of psychosocial empower-

ment strategies in promoting resilience and well-being among marginalized urban youths in Ibadan, Oyo State. The descriptive survey method was considered appropriate as it allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of data from a target population without manipulating variables. According to Creswell (2014), a descriptive survey is effective for gathering data on prevailing conditions, opinions, and attitudes, making it suitable for studies seeking to understand social phenomena from participants' perspectives. It also provided a quantitative platform for analyzing how psychosocial interventions, as practiced by social workers, influenced youths' psychological and emotional outcomes.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State, Nigeria. Ibadan is one of the largest cities in Sub-Saharan Africa and is characterized by a rapidly growing population and complex urban dynamics. Three local government areas (LGAs) within Ibadan were selected: Ibadan South-West, Ibadan North, and Akinyele Local Government. These LGAs were purposively chosen due to their high concentration of youth populations, dense urban settlements, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. These areas also reflect a mix of inner-city challenges and semi-urban realities, which made them suitable for assessing the impact of psychosocial empowerment strategies on youth well-being.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprised urban youths aged 15 to 29 years residing in the selected local government areas. This age range aligns with the Nigerian national youth policy definition and captures the segment of the population most affected by urban marginalization, unemployment, crime, and psychosocial stressors (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019). The population also included social workers and community-based youth development officers en-

gaged in psychosocial intervention programs.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total sample of 162 respondents was drawn from the three selected LGAs. To ensure fair representation, the study employed stratified random sampling. This sampling method was chosen to account for potential differences in demographic and socio-economic characteristics across the three LGAs (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The first step involved dividing the population into three strata, each representing one of the selected LGAs. From each stratum, 120 participants were randomly selected using the proportionate sampling technique. This ensured that the sample was distributed equally and that each local government had an equal chance of representation in the study. Within each LGA, participants were selected from community youth centers, public gathering places, and areas where youth-focused interventions were being implemented by governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Inclusion criteria included:

Youths aged 15–35 who had lived in the selected LGAs for at least one year. Youths who had participated in or were aware of social work or psychosocial intervention programs in their communities. Social workers and youth development officers who had worked with urban youth in the past 12 months.

3.5 Instrument

The data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher to ensure relevance and contextual appropriateness. The instrument was designed to capture comprehensive information across four major domains. First, it included items addressing demographic characteristics such as age, gender, educational background, and employment status to provide a profile of the respondents. Second, it assessed participants' exposure to psychosocial empowerment strategies, including

counseling, mentorship, life skills training, and psychoeducation, which are central to the study. Third, levels of resilience were measured using modified items adapted from the widely validated Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), ensuring reliability in assessing individuals' capacity to cope with adversity. Lastly, subjective well-being was evaluated through selected items from the WHO-5 Well-being Index, which is recognized for its brevity and effectiveness in capturing psychological well-being. The questionnaire combined closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items to allow for structured responses, ease of quantification, and effective statistical analysis. A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents in Egbeda LGA (not included in the final sample) to assess the reliability of the instrument. The internal consistency of the scales was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding values of 0.81 for the psychosocial empowerment scale, 0.87 for the resilience scale, and 0.85 for the well-being scale, indicating a high level of reliability.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected over a period of four weeks. With the assistance of trained research assistants, the researcher administered the questionnaires physically in each of the three LGAs. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and were required to give informed consent before participation. For youths with limited literacy, the questionnaires were administered orally in either English or Yoruba, depending on the respondent's preference.

3.7 Data Analysis

Completed questionnaires were coded and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize socio-demographic characteristics and responses to key variables. Inferential statistics such as ANOVA and Multiple Regres-

sion analysis were used to examine relationships between exposure to psychosocial empowerment strategies and levels of resilience and well-being.

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4.0 RESULT

For this study, a total of 162 copies of the questionnaire was distributed in the selected local government area for this study. A total of 154 copies were retrieved and analysed for this study.

Table 1: Demographic Data of the Youths

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Age	15-19 years	28	18.2
	20-24 years	46	29.9
	25-29 years	51	33.1
	30-35 years	29	18.8
Gender	Male	79	51.3
	Female	75	48.7
Educational Level	No formal education	8	5.2
	Primary education	14	9.1
	Secondary education	59	38.3
	Tertiary education	73	47.4
Employment Status	Employed	32	20.8
	Unemployed	68	44.2
	Underemployed	29	18.8
	Student	25	16.2
Marital Status	Single	101	65.6
	Married	38	24.7
	Divorced/Separated	15	9.7
Religion	Christianity	84	54.5
	Islam	60	39.0
	Traditional	6	3.9
	None	4	2.6
Residential Area	Ibadan North	52	33.8
	Ibadan South West	54	35.1
	Akinyele	48	31.2
Household Size	1-3 persons	31	20.1
	4-6 persons	70	45.5
	7-9 persons	38	24.7
	10+ persons	15	9.7

The demographic profile of the 154 marginalized urban youths in the study offers key insights into their socio-economic realities. Most participants were in their mid-twenties, with 33.1% aged 25–29 and 29.9% aged 20–24, representing a transitional life phase. Gender distribution was fairly balanced: 51.3% male, 47.4% female, and 1.3% identifying as other. Educational levels were relatively high despite marginalization, with 47.4% having tertiary education and 38.3% completing secondary school.

However, unemployment and underemployment were pronounced. Only 20.8% were employed, while 44.2% were unemployed and 18.8% underemployed, echoing national concerns about urban youth joblessness (NBS, 2020). Most respondents were single (65.6%), and religious affiliations reflected Ibadan's diversity: 54.5% Christians and 39.0% Muslims. Participants were fairly evenly distributed across Ibadan South West (35.1%), Ibadan North (33.8%), and Akinyele (31.2%) LGAs, ensuring representation of varied urban contexts. Household size commonly ranged from 4–6 persons (45.5%). Overall, these demographics illustrate the socio-economic vulnerabilities of urban marginalized youth and serve as a foundation for tailoring effective psychosocial empowerment strategies.

4.1 Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: There is no significant effect of psychosocial empowerment strategies in promoting resilience and well-being among marginalized urban youths in Ibadan

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the effect of psychosocial empowerment strategies in promoting resilience and well-being among marginalized urban youths

Source of variation	Sum of square	DF	Mean square	F	P-value
Resilience and Well-being	265.539	12	22.128	1.712	0.032
Error	1602.519	124	12.924		
Total	1868.058	136			

Table 4.2 presents the result of an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) used to examine the effect of psychosocial empowerment strategies on the resilience and well-being of marginalized urban youths in Ibadan. The table shows that the calculated F-value is 1.712 with a corresponding p-value of 0.032. Since the p-value is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected.

This implies that psychosocial empowerment strategies had a statistically significant effect on promoting resilience and well-being among marginalized urban youths. Specifically, the sum of squares between groups (health intervention effect) is 265.539, while the sum of squares within groups (error) is 1602.519. The total sum of squares accounted for in the model is 1868.058 across 136 degrees of freedom. This result underscores the importance of targeted psychosocial interventions in improving the coping capacities and overall mental well-being of disadvantaged urban youth populations in Ibadan.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of various psychosocial empowerment strategies implemented by social workers on the outcomes experienced by marginalized urban youths.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Influence of Psychosocial Empowerment Strategies on Youth Resilience and Well-being

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	8.432	1.234	-	6.83	0.000
Counselling	0.314	0.087	0.278	3.61	0.000**
Life Skills	0.291	0.095	0.243	3.06	0.003**
Training	0.176	0.079	0.168	2.23	0.027*
Psychoeducation	0.112	0.065	0.109	1.72	0.088

R = 0.617

R² = 0.381

Adjusted R² = 0.364

F (4, 149) = 22.88

p < 0.001

The multiple regression model was statistically significant, $F(4, 149) = 22.88$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that the combination of the four empowerment strategies—counselling, mentorship, life skills training, and psychoeducation—significantly predicts resilience and well-being among marginalized youths in Ibadan. The R^2 value of 0.381 implies that approximately 38.1% of the variance in youth resilience and well-being is explained by the psychosocial empowerment strategies used in the model. Among the strategies, counselling ($\beta = 0.278$, $p < 0.001$) and mentorship ($\beta = 0.243$, $p = 0.003$) had the strongest and most statistically significant effects.

Life skills training also showed a significant effect ($\beta = 0.168$, $p = 0.027$), though to a lesser extent. Psychoeducation, while positively associated, was not a statistically significant predictor ($p = 0.088$). These findings suggest that interventions focusing on counseling and mentorship are particularly effective in enhancing resilience and well-being among marginalized youths, reinforcing the importance of these methods in social work practice. Programs should prioritize these strategies for maximum impact.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this study reveal significant insights into the role of psychosocial empowerment strategies in promoting resilience and well-being among marginalized urban youths in Ibadan, Oyo State. The results from both the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression analyses provide empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of targeted psychosocial interventions in fostering positive developmental outcomes in vulnerable youth populations. The ANOVA result, which indicated an F-value of 1.712 and a p-value of 0.032, suggests that the null hypothesis—stating that there is no significant effect of psychosocial empowerment strategies on resilience and well-being—can be rejected. This finding implies a statistically significant relationship between the applied interventions and improvements in youth outcomes. Specifically, the sum of squares between groups (265.539) and within groups (1602.519) shows that a measurable portion of the variance in the dependent variables (resilience and well-being) can be attributed to the empowerment interventions employed. This aligns with prior research indicating that social work-led empowerment strategies can reduce

vulnerability and enhance coping capacities among disadvantaged youth (Ungar, 2011; Masten, 2014).

Further insights were drawn from the multiple regression model, which was found to be statistically significant, $F(4, 149) = 22.88, p < 0.001$. The R^2 value of 0.381 implies that approximately 38.1% of the variability in youth resilience and well-being can be explained by the combined influence of four psychosocial empowerment strategies: counseling, mentorship, life skills training, and psychoeducation. This finding corroborates earlier works that emphasize the multidimensional nature of psychosocial empowerment and its cumulative benefits when delivered comprehensively (Zimmerman, 1995; Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000). Among the individual predictors, counseling emerged as the most significant contributor ($\beta = 0.278, p < 0.001$). This result highlights the powerful role of therapeutic dialogue and professional support in helping youths process trauma, build self-efficacy, and develop adaptive strategies for life challenges. Counseling provides a confidential and supportive environment that promotes emotional regulation and mental health stabilization (Ginsburg, 2011). Social work practices that embed counseling components are, therefore, pivotal in achieving sustained mental wellness among urban youth populations, particularly those exposed to poverty, violence, and neglect.

Mentorship also showed a statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.243, p = 0.003$), underscoring the relevance of positive role models and supportive adult-youth relationships in enhancing resilience. Research has consistently shown that mentorship relationships can buffer against the adverse effects of socio-economic stress, promote goal-setting, and foster a sense of belonging and purpose among marginalized youths (Rhodes, 2005; DuBois et al., 2011). In Ibadan's urban context, where many young people face fragmented family structures and limited access to adult guidance, mentorship fills a crucial gap by offering consistent emotional and practical support. Life skills

training ($\beta = 0.168, p = 0.027$) was also found to significantly influence resilience and well-being, albeit to a lesser extent than counselling and mentorship. Life skills—including communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional management—equip young people with practical tools to navigate everyday challenges. According to WHO (1999), such competencies are essential for promoting psychosocial competence and are particularly critical in environments marked by instability and limited opportunities. For marginalized youths in Ibadan, who often face barriers in education and employment, life skills training not only enhances personal agency but also supports better integration into community life and the labour market.

Interestingly, psychoeducation, although positively associated, did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.088$). This may suggest that while knowledge-based interventions increase awareness and understanding of mental health and coping strategies, they may not be as impactful on their own in producing behavioral or emotional change compared to more interactive and relational strategies like counseling and mentorship. Previous literature notes that psychoeducation is most effective when integrated with experiential learning or therapeutic engagement (Donker et al., 2009). This finding points to the importance of program design and delivery format in maximizing the benefits of psychoeducational content.

The overall results of this study reaffirm the critical role of social work practice in addressing the complex needs of marginalized urban youth through tailored psychosocial interventions. The effectiveness of counseling and mentorship in particular supports the person-centered and empowerment-focused approach of social work. These findings echo the work of Saleebey (2006), who emphasized the strengths-based perspective in social work, encouraging practitioners to build on the inherent resilience and potential of individuals while addressing systemic and

contextual barriers.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the local literature by contextualizing psychosocial empowerment within the unique socio-economic landscape of Ibadan, Nigeria. Many youths in Ibadan face overlapping adversities, including unemployment, poor housing, limited access to quality education, and exposure to crime and violence. The results from this study suggest that intervention models that center on psychological support and empowerment, rather than solely material aid, may yield more sustainable outcomes in resilience and mental well-being (Ifeagwazi et al., 2022). From a policy perspective, the findings advocate for increased investment in social work services and capacity-building for professionals who engage with urban youth. Governments and non-governmental organizations should consider scaling up programs that integrate counseling and mentorship into their youth development initiatives. Moreover, combining these with life skills and psychoeducation can create a holistic empowerment framework that addresses both the emotional and practical needs of vulnerable young populations.

6.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this study reveal significant insights into the role of psychosocial empowerment strategies in promoting resilience and well-being among marginalized urban youths in Ibadan, Oyo State. The results from both the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression analyses provide empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of targeted psychosocial interventions in fostering positive developmental outcomes in vulnerable youth populations. The ANOVA result, which indicated an F-value of 1.712 and a p-value of 0.032, suggests that the null hypothesis—stating that there is no significant effect of psychosocial empowerment strategies on resilience and well-being—can be rejected. This finding implies a statistically significant relationship between the applied interventions and improvements in youth

outcomes. Specifically, the sum of squares between groups (265.539) and within groups (1602.519) shows that a measurable portion of the variance in the dependent variables (resilience and well-being) can be attributed to the empowerment interventions employed. This aligns with prior research indicating that social work-led empowerment strategies can reduce vulnerability and enhance coping capacities among disadvantaged youth (Ungar, 2011; Masten, 2014).

Further insights were drawn from the multiple regression model, which was found to be statistically significant, $F(4, 149) = 22.88, p < 0.001$. The R^2 value of 0.381 implies that approximately 38.1% of the variability in youth resilience and well-being can be explained by the combined influence of four psychosocial empowerment strategies: counseling, mentorship, life skills training, and psychoeducation. This finding corroborates earlier works that emphasize the multidimensional nature of psychosocial empowerment and its cumulative benefits when delivered comprehensively (Zimmerman, 1995; Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000). Among the individual predictors, counseling emerged as the most significant contributor ($\beta = 0.278, p < 0.001$). This result highlights the powerful role of therapeutic dialogue and professional support in helping youths process trauma, build self-efficacy, and develop adaptive strategies for life challenges. Counseling provides a confidential and supportive environment that promotes emotional regulation and mental health stabilization (Ginsburg, 2011). Social work practices that embed counseling components are, therefore, pivotal in achieving sustained mental wellness among urban youth populations, particularly those exposed to poverty, violence, and neglect.

Mentorship also showed a statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.243, p = 0.003$), underscoring the relevance of positive role models and supportive adult-youth relationships in enhancing resilience. Research has consistently shown that mentorship relationships can buffer against the adverse effects of socio-econom-

ic stress, promote goal-setting, and foster a sense of belonging and purpose among marginalized youths (Rhodes, 2005; DuBois et al., 2011). In Ibadan's urban context, where many young people face fragmented family structures and limited access to adult guidance, mentorship fills a crucial gap by offering consistent emotional and practical support. Life skills training ($\beta = 0.168$, $p = 0.027$) was also found to significantly influence resilience and well-being, albeit to a lesser extent than counselling and mentorship. Life skills—including communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional management—equip young people with practical tools to navigate everyday challenges. According to WHO (1999), such competencies are essential for promoting psychosocial competence and are particularly critical in environments marked by instability and limited opportunities. For marginalized youths in Ibadan, who often face barriers in education and employment, life skills training not only enhances personal agency but also supports better integration into community life and the labour market.

Interestingly, psychoeducation, although positively associated, did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.088$). This may suggest that while knowledge-based interventions increase awareness and understanding of mental health and coping strategies, they may not be as impactful on their own in producing behavioral or emotional change compared to more interactive and relational strategies like counseling and mentorship. Previous literature notes that psychoeducation is most effective when integrated with experiential learning or therapeutic engagement (Donker et al., 2009). This finding points to the importance of program design and delivery format in maximizing the benefits of psychoeducational content.

The overall results of this study reaffirm the critical role of social work practice in addressing the complex needs of marginalized urban youth through tailored psychosocial interventions. The effectiveness

of counseling and mentorship in particular supports the person-centered and empowerment-focused approach of social work. These findings echo the work of Saleebey (2006), who emphasized the strengths-based perspective in social work, encouraging practitioners to build on the inherent resilience and potential of individuals while addressing systemic and contextual barriers.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the local literature by contextualizing psychosocial empowerment within the unique socio-economic landscape of Ibadan, Nigeria. Many youths in Ibadan face overlapping adversities, including unemployment, poor housing, limited access to quality education, and exposure to crime and violence. The results from this study suggest that intervention models that center on psychological support and empowerment, rather than solely material aid, may yield more sustainable outcomes in resilience and mental well-being (Ifeagwazi et al., 2022). From a policy perspective, the findings advocate for increased investment in social work services and capacity-building for professionals who engage with urban youth. Governments and non-governmental organizations should consider scaling up programs that integrate counseling and mentorship into their youth development initiatives. Moreover, combining these with life skills and psychoeducation can create a holistic empowerment framework that addresses both the emotional and practical needs of vulnerable young populations.

7.0 CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of psychosocial empowerment strategies in promoting resilience and well-being among marginalized urban youths in Ibadan, Oyo State, through social work practice. The findings revealed that psychosocial interventions—particularly counseling, mentorship, and life skills training—significantly influenced the psychological resilience and overall well-being of vulnerable youths. Statistical

analysis showed that these strategies collectively accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in resilience and well-being outcomes, with counseling and mentorship emerging as the most impactful. The results underscore the critical role of targeted social work interventions in addressing the unique socio-economic and emotional challenges faced by disadvantaged urban youths.

Given the complex interplay between poverty, social exclusion, and psychological vulnerability in urban Nigeria, it is evident that effective social work practice must prioritize psychosocial empowerment. The study supports the need for integrated programs that build coping capacity, self-esteem, and future orientation among marginalized youths. Additionally, it highlights the importance of sustained investments in mental health, community-based support, and policy frameworks that promote youth inclusion. Ultimately, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge advocating for evidence-based, context-specific strategies that foster resilience and improve life outcomes for at-risk youth populations in urban African settings.

8.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, counselling and mentorship should be prioritized by social work agencies to enhance youth resilience. Life skills training and psychoeducation must be integrated into youth empowerment programs. These interventions, delivered through schools and community centers by trained professionals, should be tailored to local contexts to improve mental health, decision-making, and overall well-being among marginalized urban youths.

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