

**The Effectiveness of Positive Psychological Interventions in Enhancing Self-Esteem and
Psychological Well-Being among Adolescents in Kampala Slums**

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Abstract

Adolescents living in Kampala's slums experience chronic poverty, insecurity, and social marginalization, which heighten their risk of poor mental health; yet interventions in these settings remain largely deficit-focused, with limited attention to strengths-based approaches that foster psychological flourishing. This mixed-methods study examined the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions (PPIs)—resilience training, mindfulness practices, gratitude practices, and strength identification—in enhancing self-esteem and psychological well-being among adolescents in the Kampala slums. Adolescents were sampled from the following slums: Kagugube, Kisenyi, Nabutiti, Kanyogoga, Kikuba Mutwe, and Kamwokya. Guided by an explanatory sequential design, quantitative data were collected from 424 adolescents using structured questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression. This was followed by qualitative data from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with 40 purposively selected adolescents, which were then thematically analyzed. Regression analyses indicated that the combined PPIs significantly predicted higher self-esteem (adjusted $R^2 = .33$, $F = 123.46$, $p < .001$) and greater psychological well-being (adjusted $R^2 = .23$, $F = 14.20$, $p < .001$), while also reducing negative affect ($\beta = -0.49$, $p < .001$). Gratitude and strength-based practices emerged as the strongest independent predictors across models, whereas resilience training and mindfulness practices demonstrated more minor but statistically significant effects. Qualitative findings corroborated the quantitative results, identifying strengthened self-worth, enhanced social confidence, improved emotional regulation, and increased coping capacity as key mechanisms through which PPIs influenced outcomes. Integrating these findings, the study proposes the Pillars of Psychological Flourishing (PPF) Model as a culturally responsive framework for promoting adolescent well-being in resource-constrained urban settings. The findings underscore the feasibility and relevance of integrating PPIs into school- and community-based mental health programs in similar contexts.