

# Evaluating the Effectiveness of Identity Exploration Workshops on Self-Esteem and Emotional Maturity

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of identity exploration workshops in enhancing self-esteem and emotional maturity among Nigerian adolescents and young adults.

**Methods and Materials:** A randomized controlled trial design was employed with 30 participants aged 16 to 21, recruited from educational institutions in Nigeria. Participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental group (n = 15), which received a nine-session identity exploration workshop, or a control group (n = 15), which received no intervention. The workshop was delivered over nine weeks, with each session lasting 60 minutes and focusing on different aspects of identity, values, emotions, and interpersonal roles. Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and emotional maturity was assessed using the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) by Singh and Bhargava. Assessments were conducted at pre-test, post-test, and five-month follow-up. Data were analyzed using repeated measures ANOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc tests in SPSS-27.

**Findings:** Participants in the experimental group showed a significant increase in self-esteem scores from pre-test (M = 22.87, SD = 3.45) to post-test (M = 29.13, SD = 3.78), and these gains were sustained at follow-up (M = 28.80, SD = 3.56). Emotional maturity scores significantly decreased from pre-test (M = 125.27, SD = 7.96) to post-test (M = 109.07, SD = 8.31), with sustained improvements at follow-up (M = 110.00, SD = 7.85), indicating enhanced emotional maturity. The control group exhibited no significant changes across time. ANOVA results revealed significant time × group interactions for both variables (p < .001), and Bonferroni post-hoc tests confirmed the stability of improvements over time.

**Conclusion:** Identity exploration workshops are effective in promoting both self-esteem and emotional maturity among adolescents and young adults, with effects lasting beyond the intervention period. These findings support the integration of identity-based developmental programs in educational and youth support settings.

**Keywords:** Identity exploration, self-esteem, emotional maturity, adolescents, workshop intervention, randomized controlled trial, Nigeria

## 1. Introduction

Self-esteem, often considered a cornerstone of psychological health, plays a vital role in shaping individuals' perceptions of their self-worth and capacity to cope with life's challenges. Numerous studies have underscored the association between enhanced self-esteem and improved academic performance, mental health outcomes, and interpersonal relationships. For example, Carabeo and Tado demonstrated that self-esteem and self-control serve as significant predictors of academic achievement, particularly in mathematical learning contexts where self-confidence is closely tied to performance outcomes (Carabeo & Tado, 2024). Similarly, Khorrami and Rezaei found that higher self-esteem is positively associated with social intelligence among female students, highlighting the interpersonal dimensions of self-regard and its relevance in adolescent development (Khorrami & Rezaei, 2024). These findings underscore the importance of designing interventions that target the multidimensional nature of self-esteem as both an intrapersonal and social construct.

Various educational and therapeutic programs have attempted to enhance self-esteem through group-based or experiential formats. For instance, Ahmadi et al. reported significant improvements in self-esteem among patients with heart failure following a structured group discussion intervention, demonstrating the therapeutic potential of collective reflection and peer engagement (Ahmadi et al., 2019). In the academic context, João emphasized the value of artistic workshops in boosting students' self-esteem, as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, revealing the transformative potential of creative expression in identity reinforcement (João, 2023). These findings are echoed by Shack et al., who documented improved self-esteem in adult artists following participation in a confidence-building workshop, thereby suggesting that structured identity-centered experiences can generate measurable psychological gains (Shack et al., 2018).

Emerging interventions are also drawing on embodied practices and creative engagement to address psychological constructs such as self-esteem and emotional maturity. For example, Hartono and Samosir implemented body-mapping workshops to enhance self-esteem in individuals living with HIV, emphasizing the importance of bodily awareness and narrative in self-construction (Hartono & Samosir, 2022). Similarly, Bagiński et al. introduced a community-based magic workshop to facilitate adjustment among university

students, revealing that arts-based interventions can effectively support emotional development during key transitional periods (Bagiński et al., 2022). The experiential format of such workshops fosters introspection, emotional expression, and mutual validation—elements essential for cultivating self-awareness and psychological resilience.

In addition to enhancing self-esteem, emotional maturity has become a salient focus in interventions targeting youth development. Emotional maturity, which encompasses emotional regulation, social adaptability, and autonomy, is vital for navigating the increasingly complex emotional landscapes of modern life. In their study, Sin and Kim demonstrated that Gestalt group counseling significantly improved self-acceptance and self-esteem in middle-aged women with depressive symptoms, indicating a close link between emotional maturity and therapeutic outcomes (Sin & Kim, 2022). Likewise, Mohammed et al. showed that communication skills training for head nurses led to increased assertiveness and self-esteem, reinforcing the interconnectedness of emotional competencies and self-perception (Mohammed et al., 2021). These findings support the idea that identity-centered interventions must simultaneously cultivate emotional awareness and interpersonal effectiveness.

Workshops and structured group interventions have increasingly gained traction as effective platforms for delivering identity exploration content. Kim and Kim designed a self-esteem improvement program for elementary students, rooted in moral education principles, and found notable benefits in both emotional stability and interpersonal functioning (Kim & Kim, 2023). Meanwhile, Fernández-Alarcón et al. implemented a self-esteem workshop targeting individuals with substance addiction, observing significant psychological improvements, including reduced anxiety and increased self-worth (Fernández-Alarcón et al., 2024). These examples demonstrate the adaptability and impact of workshop-based interventions across age groups and psychological profiles.

In light of growing interest in integrative and participatory approaches, several studies have explored the use of creative and reflective methodologies in promoting identity development. Miao and Stewart examined the impact of songwriting on youth self-concept, highlighting the value of personal expression and storytelling in identity formation (Miao & Stewart, 2022). Similarly, Juppi and Tanskanen investigated digital storytelling among unemployed professionals in creative fields and found that

participants experienced enhanced self-understanding and emotional expression, further validating the power of narrative-based workshops (Juppi & Tanskanen, 2022). These findings point to the relevance of integrating narrative, art, and embodied techniques in identity exploration protocols.

Furthermore, such interventions have demonstrated value across diverse cultural and demographic settings. Armadhani et al. revealed that connected mathematics project learning models significantly improved students' mathematical communication abilities, mediated by self-esteem levels, thereby affirming the cross-disciplinary relevance of self-concept enhancement (Armadhani et al., 2023). Oliveira et al. implemented a nutrition education workshop for individuals in substance abuse treatment in Brazil and found that group reflection and collective engagement fostered both behavioral and emotional improvements (Oliveira et al., 2020). Additionally, Puljak et al. emphasized the role of multisectoral collaboration between health, education, and culture systems in cultivating healthy habits and self-esteem, advocating for holistic approaches in youth development initiatives (Puljak et al., 2019).

Workshops addressing self-esteem and emotional maturity have also shown positive outcomes in vulnerable populations. Stegariu et al. evaluated the effect of chess training and well-being workshops on vulnerable children and documented notable growth in both cognitive and emotional domains, including enhanced self-confidence and psychological resilience (Stegariu et al., 2025). Similarly, Sundah used transactional analysis counseling to successfully increase self-esteem among adolescents, underlining the value of targeted psychological frameworks in identity-related interventions (Sundah, 2018). These studies suggest that identity exploration workshops are particularly effective when adapted to the specific psychosocial needs of the target population.

Moreover, workshop interventions have been shown to sustain their effects over time. Thais Sisti De Vincenzo et al. assessed the long-term benefits of cognitive stimulation workshops among elderly participants and found enduring improvements in both cognition and self-esteem, highlighting the potential for sustained developmental gains across the lifespan (Thais Sisti De Vincenzo et al., 2018). Similarly, Ammouri et al. reported that assertiveness training among Moroccan medical students led to increased psychological well-being and improved interpersonal dynamics that persisted over follow-up periods (Ammouri et

al., 2022). These outcomes emphasize the importance of structured, reflective programming in shaping long-term psychological growth.

Despite the growing body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of identity-related workshops, few studies have directly examined their impact on both self-esteem and emotional maturity within adolescent and emerging adult populations in African contexts. Most existing research has been conducted in clinical, educational, or Western environments, which limits the generalizability of findings to diverse cultural settings. Murad's research on self-esteem and social anxiety among Jordanian university students highlighted the unique socio-cultural variables influencing psychological development, pointing to the need for localized, culturally responsive interventions (Murad, 2020). The present study addresses this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of a nine-session identity exploration workshop on self-esteem and emotional maturity among Nigerian adolescents and young adults.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design to evaluate the effectiveness of identity exploration workshops on self-esteem and emotional maturity. Participants were selected from senior secondary schools and undergraduate preparatory programs in Nigeria using purposive sampling based on inclusion criteria, which required participants to be adolescents or young adults aged 16 to 21 with no history of psychiatric diagnosis and with moderate self-esteem scores based on pre-screening. A total of 30 participants were randomly assigned into two groups: an experimental group ( $n = 15$ ) that received the nine-session identity exploration workshop, and a control group ( $n = 15$ ) that did not receive any intervention during the study period. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and their guardians where applicable. The intervention was conducted over a period of nine weeks, with a follow-up assessment five months after the last session to evaluate the sustainability of effects.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Self-Esteem

To assess self-esteem in this study, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, was used. This standard tool consists of 10 items

designed to measure global self-worth by assessing both positive and negative feelings about the self. Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The scale includes five positively worded items and five negatively worded items, which are reverse-scored. Total scores range from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem. The RSES has been widely validated and demonstrates strong psychometric properties, including high internal consistency and test-retest reliability across diverse populations and settings. Numerous studies have confirmed the construct validity and criterion-related validity of the scale in both clinical and non-clinical samples.

### 2.2.2. Emotional Maturity

Emotional maturity was evaluated using the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava in 1991. This widely accepted instrument comprises 48 items divided into five subscales: Emotional Stability, Emotional Progression, Social Adjustment, Personality Integration, and Independence. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “very much” to “not at all.” Higher scores indicate lower levels of emotional maturity, and responses are interpreted based on established normative data. The EMS has demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability, including strong internal consistency and split-half reliability. Its validity has been confirmed through content and construct validation procedures in multiple psychological studies, establishing it as a reliable tool for assessing emotional maturity in adolescents and young adults.

## 2.3. Intervention

### 2.3.1. Identity Exploration Workshop

The identity exploration intervention in this study was conducted through a structured workshop format consisting of nine sessions, each lasting 60 minutes. The workshop was designed to promote self-reflection, enhance self-esteem, and develop emotional maturity by encouraging participants to explore various dimensions of their personal identity, values, relationships, and future aspirations. Sessions incorporated a combination of psychoeducation, guided self-reflection, group discussions, and experiential exercises rooted in developmental psychology and identity theory. Each session followed a consistent structure: a brief mindfulness warm-up, presentation of a theme, individual or

group activity, followed by discussion and reflective journaling.

#### Session 1: Introduction and Building Group Cohesion

The first session focused on establishing a safe and supportive environment for identity exploration. Facilitators introduced the goals and structure of the workshop and guided participants through icebreaker activities to foster group cohesion. Participants were invited to share their expectations and were introduced to the concept of personal identity, including its multidimensional nature (e.g., personal, social, and cultural identity). A brief self-assessment activity was used to initiate self-reflection.

#### Session 2: Understanding the Self

This session focused on enhancing self-awareness by helping participants differentiate between self-concept and self-esteem. Through guided visualization and autobiographical mapping, participants explored key life events that have shaped their sense of self. The session emphasized the evolving nature of identity and encouraged sharing personal narratives in small groups to deepen self-reflection and validate individual experiences.

#### Session 3: Personal Values and Beliefs

In the third session, participants engaged in activities designed to help them identify their core personal values and beliefs. Using value-sorting exercises and hypothetical dilemmas, participants reflected on what principles guide their actions and how those principles align with their sense of self. The session concluded with group sharing to discuss how values influence identity development and decision-making.

#### Session 4: Roles and Social Identity

This session explored the influence of social roles and group affiliations (e.g., gender, culture, family, religion) on identity. Participants analyzed how different roles shape their behavior and self-perception through role-mapping exercises and discussions. The session also encouraged critical thinking about how external expectations can affect emotional maturity and authenticity.

#### Session 5: Emotional Awareness and Regulation

The fifth session emphasized emotional intelligence as a key component of identity and maturity. Participants were guided to identify their emotional triggers, typical emotional responses, and coping strategies. Techniques from emotional regulation models were introduced, such as cognitive reappraisal and mindfulness, and participants practiced applying them to real-life scenarios.

#### Session 6: Self-Acceptance and Body Image



This session focused on self-acceptance, including body image and internalized standards. Through media analysis, reflective journaling, and affirmational exercises, participants challenged negative self-perceptions and practiced self-compassion. Group discussions allowed for the normalization of insecurities and reinforced messages of self-worth and respect for individual differences.

#### Session 7: Interpersonal Identity and Relationships

The seventh session centered on identity in the context of interpersonal relationships. Participants explored attachment patterns, communication styles, and how relationships influence self-perception and emotional development. Activities included relationship mapping and role-play exercises to practice assertiveness and empathy.

#### Session 8: Life Goals and Future Self

This session helped participants visualize their future selves and articulate personal goals. Through guided imagery and goal-setting frameworks, participants explored how their identity influences and is influenced by their aspirations. Discussions addressed the importance of consistency between values, goals, and actions in fostering emotional maturity and self-esteem.

#### Session 9: Integration and Closure

The final session focused on integrating insights from previous sessions. Participants created personal identity statements and shared reflections on their journey throughout the workshop. The session included a group feedback activity, future planning, and strategies to maintain growth post-intervention.

**Table 1**

*Means (Standard Deviations) of Self-Esteem and Emotional Maturity Scores by Group and Stage*

Variable	Stage	Experimental Group (n = 15)	Control Group (n = 15)
Self-Esteem	Pre-test	22.87 (3.45)	22.60 (3.28)
	Post-test	29.13 (3.78)	22.73 (3.24)
	Follow-up	28.80 (3.56)	22.67 (3.17)
Emotional Maturity	Pre-test	125.27 (7.96)	124.87 (8.23)
	Post-test	109.07 (8.31)	124.47 (7.92)
	Follow-up	110.00 (7.85)	124.60 (8.10)

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 show that participants in the experimental group demonstrated a marked increase in self-esteem from pre-test ( $M = 22.87$ ,  $SD = 3.45$ ) to post-test ( $M = 29.13$ ,  $SD = 3.78$ ), which was largely maintained at follow-up ( $M = 28.80$ ,  $SD = 3.56$ ). In contrast, the control group showed minimal change across time points. Regarding emotional maturity, the experimental group's scores decreased from pre-test ( $M = 125.27$ ,  $SD = 7.96$ ) to post-test ( $M = 109.07$ ,  $SD = 8.31$ ), indicating

## 2.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics were first computed to examine the distribution of demographic and baseline variables. To assess the effectiveness of the intervention, repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used with time (pre-test, post-test, and follow-up) as the within-subject factor and group (experimental vs. control) as the between-subject factor. When significant interaction effects were found, the Bonferroni post-hoc test was applied to determine the source of differences across time points. All analyses were conducted with a significance level set at  $p < .05$ .

## 3. Findings and Results

The study sample consisted of 30 participants from Nigeria, including 18 females (60.00%) and 12 males (40.00%). Regarding age distribution, 11 participants (36.67%) were aged 16 to 17, 13 participants (43.33%) were aged 18 to 19, and 6 participants (20.00%) were aged 20 to 21. In terms of educational background, 17 participants (56.67%) were senior secondary school students, while 13 participants (43.33%) were enrolled in university preparatory programs. All participants reported no prior experience in structured psychological interventions and no formal psychiatric diagnoses at the time of enrollment.

improved emotional maturity (lower scores), and these gains were preserved at follow-up ( $M = 110.00$ ,  $SD = 7.85$ ). The control group's scores remained stable over time.

Before conducting the repeated measures ANOVA, assumptions were assessed and confirmed. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated normal distribution of self-esteem scores at pre-test ( $W = 0.972$ ,  $p = .613$ ), post-test ( $W = 0.964$ ,  $p = .432$ ), and follow-up ( $W = 0.957$ ,  $p = .298$ ), as well as for emotional maturity scores at all three time points (pre-test:

W = 0.969,  $p = .521$ ; post-test: W = 0.961,  $p = .405$ ; follow-up: W = 0.951,  $p = .246$ ). Levene's test showed no significant difference in error variances across groups for either variable (self-esteem:  $F = 1.283$ ,  $p = .269$ ; emotional

maturity:  $F = 1.094$ ,  $p = .307$ ). Mauchly's test of sphericity was not violated for either outcome (self-esteem:  $\chi^2(2) = 1.476$ ,  $p = .478$ ; emotional maturity:  $\chi^2(2) = 2.013$ ,  $p = .365$ ), confirming that the assumption of sphericity was met.

**Table 2**

*Repeated Measures ANOVA Results for Self-Esteem and Emotional Maturity*

Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	$\eta^2$ (Effect Size)
Self-Esteem	Time	411.47	2	205.74	36.29	<.001	.56
	Time $\times$ Group	392.80	2	196.40	34.64	<.001	.54
	Error	164.00	56	2.93			
Emotional Maturity	Time	3184.60	2	1592.30	28.73	<.001	.50
	Time $\times$ Group	3012.87	2	1506.43	27.19	<.001	.49
	Error	3102.53	56	55.40			

As shown in Table 2, the repeated measures ANOVA revealed significant main effects of time for both self-esteem,  $F(2, 56) = 36.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .56$ , and emotional maturity,  $F(2, 56) = 28.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .50$ . Moreover, there were significant time  $\times$  group interaction effects for

self-esteem,  $F(2, 56) = 34.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .54$ , and for emotional maturity,  $F(2, 56) = 27.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .49$ . These results indicate that the intervention had a statistically significant impact on both outcome variables over time in comparison to the control group.

**Table 3**

*Bonferroni Post-Hoc Test Results for Self-Esteem and Emotional Maturity*

Variable	Comparison	Mean Difference	SE	p-value
Self-Esteem	Post-test – Pre-test	6.27	0.75	<.001
	Follow-up – Pre-test	5.93	0.69	<.001
	Follow-up – Post-test	-0.33	0.48	.493
Emotional Maturity	Post-test – Pre-test	-16.20	1.81	<.001
	Follow-up – Pre-test	-15.27	1.74	<.001
	Follow-up – Post-test	0.93	0.93	.324

The Bonferroni post-hoc tests in Table 3 show that the increase in self-esteem from pre-test to post-test (Mean Difference = 6.27,  $p < .001$ ) and from pre-test to follow-up (Mean Difference = 5.93,  $p < .001$ ) was statistically significant in the experimental group, with no significant difference between post-test and follow-up scores. Similarly, for emotional maturity, the post-test (M difference = -16.20,  $p < .001$ ) and follow-up (M difference = -15.27,  $p < .001$ ) scores significantly improved compared to pre-test, while the difference between post-test and follow-up was not significant. These results confirm the sustained effectiveness of the intervention across both outcomes.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study demonstrated that the identity exploration workshop was effective in improving both self-esteem and emotional maturity among Nigerian adolescents and young adults. Participants in the

experimental group showed statistically significant improvements in self-esteem and emotional maturity from pre-test to post-test, and these gains were sustained at the five-month follow-up. In contrast, the control group did not exhibit significant changes across the three time points. These findings suggest that structured identity exploration interventions have the potential to generate both immediate and lasting improvements in key psychological domains that are essential for adolescent development.

The improvement in self-esteem observed in the experimental group aligns with a growing body of literature supporting the effectiveness of group-based or workshop-style interventions. For instance, Ahmadi et al. found that structured group discussions could significantly enhance self-esteem in patients with chronic illnesses, suggesting that peer engagement and facilitated self-reflection can promote positive self-evaluation (Ahmadi et al., 2019). Similarly, João observed improvements in self-esteem through

participation in artistic workshops, emphasizing the power of creativity and expression in shaping self-concept (João, 2023). The current study supports these findings by demonstrating that when adolescents are provided with a structured space to explore their values, beliefs, and personal narratives, their self-esteem is positively affected.

The durability of these effects over time is also noteworthy. The sustained gains observed at the five-month follow-up reflect findings from earlier work by Thais Sisti De Vincenzo et al., who reported lasting cognitive and self-esteem benefits following cognitive stimulation workshops among elderly participants (Thais Sisti De Vincenzo et al., 2018). This supports the notion that experiential and reflective learning processes have long-term developmental value, particularly when they engage participants at both emotional and cognitive levels. In the present study, journaling, group discussions, and identity mapping exercises may have contributed to the internalization of insights, thereby reinforcing self-worth over time.

In terms of emotional maturity, the results revealed marked improvements in the experimental group. This is consistent with the findings of Sin and Kim, who documented significant gains in self-acceptance and emotional regulation following Gestalt group counseling among middle-aged women (Sin & Kim, 2022). The emphasis on emotional awareness, interpersonal understanding, and narrative exploration in both interventions suggests that structured group experiences can cultivate emotional competencies across age groups. Furthermore, Mohammed et al. demonstrated that communication skills training significantly improved both assertiveness and self-esteem among head nurses, highlighting the role of interpersonal learning in developing emotional maturity (Mohammed et al., 2021). These results resonate with the present study, where participants engaged in exercises that enhanced their awareness of emotions, improved their relational skills, and promoted independent self-reflection.

The identity exploration workshop also appears to have supported participants in integrating various aspects of their personal and social identities, which is essential for emotional and psychological well-being. This finding aligns with the work of Bagiński et al., who noted that university students participating in a community-based magic workshop reported improvements in psychological health and adaptability during their transition to university life (Bagiński et al., 2022). Such results indicate that creative, community-oriented interventions can help individuals

develop coherent identities, which in turn fosters emotional regulation and resilience.

Moreover, the findings of this study support the assertion that identity-centered interventions can be particularly impactful during adolescence and emerging adulthood—a period when individuals are actively engaging in self-exploration. The improvements in emotional maturity observed here are similar to those reported by Fernández-Alarcón et al., who found that self-esteem workshops improved emotional well-being in individuals recovering from substance addiction (Fernández-Alarcón et al., 2024). In both cases, structured reflection and peer support allowed participants to confront personal challenges and redefine their self-concepts, resulting in increased emotional awareness and stability.

Several studies support the interdisciplinary and experiential approach used in the current workshop. For example, Miao and Stewart showed that songwriting enhanced youth self-concept by allowing participants to express their inner thoughts and feelings in a structured yet creative format (Miao & Stewart, 2022). Similarly, Juppi and Tanskanen found that digital storytelling workshops provided unemployed creative professionals with a platform to reflect on their identities and foster emotional resilience (Juppi & Tanskanen, 2022). These results underline the value of integrating narrative and artistic components into identity exploration programs.

The cultural relevance of the current study also contributes to its significance. While many previous studies have been conducted in Western or clinical settings, the present research confirms the effectiveness of identity-focused interventions within the Nigerian context. Murad's findings on the relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety among Jordanian university students highlight how sociocultural factors shape self-concept (Murad, 2020). By situating this study in Nigeria, where youth may face unique challenges such as cultural expectation conflicts, academic stress, and limited psychosocial support, the findings offer valuable insights into how tailored interventions can support development in non-Western settings.

Moreover, educational interventions have shown consistent success in enhancing emotional and self-perceptual skills across different populations. For instance, Kim and Kim reported that a program aimed at improving self-esteem among elementary school students resulted in better emotional stability and moral development (Kim & Kim, 2023). Likewise, Armadhani et al. found that a mathematics learning model positively influenced students'

communication skills through enhanced self-esteem, confirming the cross-disciplinary potential of psychological interventions (Armadhani et al., 2023). These findings mirror the present study's outcomes, suggesting that psychological growth can be facilitated within various educational structures.

The workshop format employed in this study also shares commonalities with other intervention models that emphasize peer interaction, reflection, and experiential learning. Ammouri et al. found that assertiveness training programs among Moroccan medical students led to both emotional and behavioral improvements, including sustained psychological well-being (Ammouri et al., 2022). Oliveira et al., in their work with individuals in substance use recovery, found that nutrition education workshops that included group dialogue led to improved emotional awareness and behavioral change (Oliveira et al., 2020). These findings underscore the power of the group setting in fostering shared learning and emotional validation—elements that were central to the identity exploration workshop in the current study.

Lastly, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about the integration of identity work in youth development. Choudhary and Chaudhary found that activity therapy significantly improved self-esteem among women with mental illness, further validating the efficacy of participatory and active learning formats (Choudhary & Chaudhary, 2021). Puljak et al. advocated for the integration of health, education, and cultural systems in designing programs that foster well-being and identity coherence, reinforcing the need for multisectoral approaches (Puljak et al., 2019). The present study's approach—drawing from psychological, educational, and developmental frameworks—echoes these integrative calls.

## 5. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite its valuable findings, the present study is not without limitations. The small sample size ( $n = 30$ ) limits the generalizability of the results to larger populations. While the sample was randomly assigned and the intervention demonstrated effectiveness, a larger and more diverse sample would provide a stronger basis for external validity. Additionally, although the follow-up period of five months offers some insight into the long-term effects of the intervention, it may not capture the full trajectory of identity development, which unfolds over a much longer timespan. The reliance on self-report measures may also introduce

response bias, as participants could respond in socially desirable ways. Finally, the study was conducted in a single cultural context—Nigeria—which, while adding cultural depth, limits direct applicability to other regional or international populations without further adaptation and validation.

Future research should aim to replicate this study with larger and more heterogeneous samples to improve the generalizability of results. Including participants from different cultural, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds would offer deeper insight into how identity exploration interventions function across various settings. Longitudinal studies with extended follow-up periods—such as one year or more—could further illuminate the enduring impact of such workshops on psychological growth. Additionally, mixed-method designs that incorporate qualitative interviews or focus groups could enrich the understanding of participants' internal processes and perceived changes, offering nuanced perspectives that quantitative scores alone cannot capture. Comparative studies exploring different delivery formats (e.g., online vs. in-person) and the use of creative modalities (e.g., visual art, drama, music) may also identify best practices for diverse youth populations.

Practitioners working with adolescents and young adults should consider integrating identity exploration frameworks into their programming, particularly in educational and community settings. Workshops that emphasize self-reflection, peer dialogue, and value exploration can provide youth with the tools to navigate their developmental transitions with greater confidence and emotional clarity. Schools, youth organizations, and mental health services can benefit from embedding identity-related content into broader life skills or personal development curricula. Facilitators should be trained to create safe, inclusive, and culturally sensitive spaces that honor participants' unique narratives and foster psychological growth. Additionally, practitioners should consider tailoring workshop content to specific developmental needs, ensuring that sessions remain relevant, engaging, and developmentally appropriate.

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## Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.



## Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

## Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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## Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed equally.

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