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**Suicidal Ideation, Tendencies and the Use of Protective Factors
among Undergraduates of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria**

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Abstract

Suicidal attitudes and ideation are key antecedents in studying the pathways and mechanisms that can lead to suicide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in youth 12 to 18 years old. Suicide does not just occur over night it begins with a thought which may be as a result of failure in one aspect of life. The purpose of this study was to assess suicidal ideation, tendencies and the use of protective factors amongst undergraduates of the University of Ibadan. A descriptive cross-sectional

research design and a self-developed questionnaire was used to gather data from the respondent. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a total number of 265 student participated in the study. The findings revealed that 41% of the participant had suicidal ideation and 25% of students have the tendency to commit suicide as well as a high rate of using protective factors, 72% of undergraduate students in the university of Ibadan used protective factors. The study concluded that the use of protective factors had great effect on suicidal ideation and suicidal tendencies. It was therefore recommended that psychological care of students should be incorporated in the school clinic as this will aid in the identification of individuals with suicidal ideation and suicidal tendencies.

Keywords: Suicide, Suicidal ideation, Suicidal tendencies, Protective factors

Introduction

Suicidal attitudes and ideation are key antecedents in studying the pathways and mechanisms that can lead to suicide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), (2014) the worldwide rate of suicide death is 15.0 per 100,000 people per year in males and 8.0 per 100,000 per year in females. Absolute numbers, this translates to more than 800,000 deaths from suicide every year and this figure is likely an underestimate. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in youth 12 to 18 years old, and in 2017, it accounted for childhood maltreatment, mental health concerns (eg, depression), neurocognitive functioning deficits, and other risk factors have all been associated with suicide attempts, suicidal ideation, and suicide deaths (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019; Cha, Franz, Guzmán, et al., 2018). It is estimated that within the general populations, 2.1-18.5% of people had seriously thought of committing suicide in their lifespan (Kodaka, Postwan, Inagaki & Yamada, 2011).

Nigerians are ambitious a lot. They want to live to grand old ages in good health and work assiduously to reach the acme or summit of their careers and endeavours. In the recent past, the tales and news reports of people snuffing lives out of themselves were alien. The tales were taught to be apocryphal tales meant to entertainment. In fact, then suicide was

linked to other races other than the Negroid race. Suicide however existed in Africa for centuries. But it was a rare occurrence and was thought to be an abominable act. Individuals who committed suicide were not accorded funeral ceremonies befitting their status in the society (Chiedu & Uruowulu 2017). Today, Nigerians are jumping to their deaths from great heights or bridges. Some are ingesting poisonous substances in order to exit the world while others have embraced the rope. Suicidal ideation and suicidal attempts are more frequent in younger age groups than in later life (Kuo, et al., 2004). Therefore, there is a need to examine the suicidal ideation, tendencies and the use of protective factors among undergraduates of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Aim of the Study

The study aimed at assessing suicidal ideation, tendencies and the use of protective factors among undergraduates of the University of Ibadan.

Research Questions

1. What is the rate of undergraduates with suicidal thoughts in the University of Ibadan?
2. What is the rate of undergraduates with suicidal tendency in the University of Ibadan?
3. What is the rate of the use of protective factors amongst Undergraduates of the University of Ibadan?
4. What are the psychosocial factors that promote suicidal tendencies amongst Undergraduates of the University of Ibadan?

Hypotheses

1. There is no association between the use of protective factors and presence of suicidal ideation
2. There is no association between the use of protective factors and suicidal tendencies

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design to assess suicidal ideation, tendencies and the use of protective factors amongst undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan.

Population

The target population for this study were undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. The study population was both male and female undergraduate students from the University of Ibadan.

Sampling Method and Sample size

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 390 respondents from four faculties in the University of Ibadan to partake in the research process. The faculties includes Faculty of technology with about 1,300 students, Faculty of Art with about 1,900 students, Faculty of Science with about 2,200 students and Faculty of Social science with about 1,600 students to a total of 7000 students.

A standard sample size formula was used to calculate the required sample for study.

Sample (n) = N

$1 + N(e)^2$

Where n= sample size

N=total number of students

e= constant (0.05).

N = 7000

n = 7000

$1 + 7000(0.05)^2$

n= 378

Attrition rate =12

n= 378+12 = 390

Research Instrument

Patient health questionnaire-9 was used to assess suicidal tendency, while suicidal behavioural questionnaire was used to assess suicidal ideation, it involves four item but only item 1 and item 2 were applicable to this research study. Item one taps into life time suicidal ideation. Item

two assess the frequency of suicidal ideation over a period of twelve months. The revised suicide risk assessment tool served as a template for assessing the use of protective factors. The self-developed instrument was made up of section A which contains the socio-demographic information of the respondent and section B that measured psychosocial factors that leads to suicidal ideation.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the instrument was determined by presenting it to research experts and statistical analyst who scrutinized the content of the questionnaire and determined if the questions measures what it is supposed to measure in relation to the study questions and hypotheses.

Reliability of the testing instrument was ascertained by conducting a pilot study on some undergraduate students in the University of Ibadan before the real administration of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were checked for consistency, clarity, relatedness and simplicity.

Data Collection Procedure

A self-administered questionnaire was used for the collection of data for this study. Approval was secured from each student after a detail explanation of the study with the students.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethical Review Board of University of Ibadan and all ethical procedures were duly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Respondents were informed that they have liberty to participate and withdrawal from the study without any retribution. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their information that it just for research purpose and anonymity was maintained.

Data Analysis

The data collected were cleaned to identify missing data, the cleaned data were coded and analysed using Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS version 20). Descriptive statistical analysis was use to present socio demographic distribution and answered research questions

(frequency and percentages, mean and standard deviation). Chi-Square was used to analyse the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The mean age of the respondents was 21 with the majority of them falling above the mean age. Most of the respondents were male 143 (54%), 227 (86%) of the respondents were single which constituted the majority of the respondent as at the time of the research. Generally, most of the respondents being students of the Premier University of Ibadan, were from 300level 102 (38%) Meanwhile, majority of the respondents were Christians 221 (83%) while the majority of the respondents claim to come from Yoruba tribe (Table 1).

Table 1 Socio-Demographic data (Mean age = 21)

SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	F	%
Faculty		
Social Science	51	19
Faculty of Art	52	20
Faculty of technology	50	19
Science	57	22
Education	55	21
Age Group		
(17 - 20) years	99	37
(21 - 39) years	166	63
Sex		
Male	143	54
Female	122	46
Marital status		

Single	227	86
Married	28	11
Separated	5	1.9
Divorced	5	1.9
Current Level		
100 level	32	12
200 level	50	19
300 level	102	38
400 level	65	25
500 level	16	6
Religion		
Christianity	221	83
Islam	36	14
Others	8	3
Ethnicity		
Igbo	43	16
Hausa	12	4.5
Yoruba	181	68
Others	29	11

Research Question 1: What is the rate of undergraduates with suicidal thoughts in the University of Ibadan?

Among the respondents, 108 (41%) of the respondents had suicidal thought while the majority do not (Table 2)

Table 2 Undergraduates with suicidal thoughts in the University of Ibadan.

Undergraduates with suicidal thoughts	F	%
Had suicidal thought	108	41
Do not have suicidal thought	157	59
Total	265	100

Research Question 2: What is the rate of undergraduates with suicidal tendency in the University of Ibadan?

The result reveals that 65 (25%) of the respondents had suicidal tendencies (Table 3).

Table 3 Undergraduates with suicidal tendency in the University of Ibadan.

Undergraduates with suicidal tendency	f	%
Have the tendency of committing suicide	65	25
Do not have any tendency of committing suicide	200	75
Total	265	100

Research Question 3: What is the rate of the use of protective factors amongst Undergraduates of the University of Ibadan?

The finding reveals high rate of the use of protective factors 191 (72%) among the respondents (Table 4).

Table 4 Undergraduates with use of protective factors in the University of Ibadan.

Undergraduates with use of protective factors	f	%
Low rate of protective factors usage	74	28
High rate of protective factors usage	191	72
Total	265	100

Research Question 4: What are the psychosocial factors that promote suicidal tendencies amongst Undergraduates of the University of Ibadan?

The result reveals that majority of the student do not exhibit these psychosocial factors (Table 5)

Table 5 Psychosocial factors that promote suicidal ideation amongst undergraduates of the University of Ibadan

Psychosocial factors that promote suicidal ideation amongst Undergraduates of the University of Ibadan	Not at all F (%)	Several days F (%)	More than a day F (%)	Nearly half every day (%)	F
Little interest in or pleasure in doing things	108 (40.8)	75 (28.3)	43 (16.2)	39 (14.7)	
Feeling down depressed or hopeless	160 (60.4)	63 (23.8)	27 (10.2)	15 (5.7)	
Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much	122 (46)	94 (35.5)	27 (10.2)	22 (8.3)	
Feeling tired or having little energy	107 (40.4)	97 (36.6)	41 (15.5)	20 (7.5)	
Poor appetite or over eating	131 (49.4)	67 (25.3)	33 (12.5)	34 (12.8)	
Feeling bad about yourself or that you are a failure or have let yourself and family down	182 (68.7)	49 (18.5)	22 (8.3)	12 (4.5)	
Trouble concentrating on things such as reading, watching movies	141 (53.2)	73 (27.5)	38 (14.3)	13 (4.9)	
Moving or speaking so slowly that other people	195 (73.6)	39 (14.7)	23 (8.7)	8 (3)	
Thoughts that you would have been better off dead or thoughts of hurting yourself	220 (83)	24 (9.1)	16 (6)	5 (1.9)	

Hypotheses

H₀ 1 There is no significant association between the use of protective factors and presence of suicidal ideation

Table 6 Chi-Square of the association between the use of protective factors and presence of suicidal ideation

Rate of the use of protective factors	Presence of Suicidal Ideation		X ²	df	Pv	Remark	Decision
	Suicidal thought present	Suicidal thought absent					
Low rate of protective factors usage	40	34					
	37.0%	21.7%	7.52	1	0.008	S	Reject H ₀
High rate of protective factors usage	68	123					
	63.0%	78.3%					

Key: df – degree of freedom, pv- p-value, S – Significant, H₀ – Null hypothesis

The table above reveals that the students with high rate of protective factors usage had less suicidal thoughts and those that had low usage of protective factors have high suicidal thoughts ($X^2_{(1)} = 7.52$; $p_v = 0.008$).

H₀ 2 There is no significant association between the use of protective factors and suicidal tendencies

Table 7 Chi-Square of the association between the use of protective factors and suicidal tendencies

Rate of the use of protective factors	Presence of Suicidal Tendency		X^2	df	Pv	Remark	Decision
	Suicidal Tendency Present	Suicidal Tendency Absent					
Low rate of protective factors usage	26	39					
	35.1%	20.4%	6.24	1	0.017	S	Reject H ₀
High rate of protective factors usage	48	152					
	64.9%	79.6%					

Key: df – degree of freedom, pv- p-value, S – Significant, H₀ – Null hypothesis

The table above revealed that the students with high rate of protective factors usage had less suicidal tendencies and those that had low usage of protective factors have high suicidal tendency. Therefore the null hypothesis was not accepted ($X^2_{(1)} = 6.24$; $p_v = 0.017$).

Discussion

The findings of these study revealed that 59% of the participants do not have suicidal ideation however, 41% of the participant had suicidal ideation as they have had thoughts of committing suicide in the past one year or have told someone they were going to commit suicide. A greater

percentage of undergraduate students in the University of Ibadan do not have the tendency to commit suicide (75%) while 25% of students have the tendency to commit suicide which calls for serious concern. These findings are similar to previous studies Simon, (2006); Turecki and Brent, (2016).

Finding also reveals that 72% of undergraduate students in the University of Ibadan had a high rate using protective factors and the remaining 28% had a low rate of using protective factors which also call for concern. This finding is strengthened by hypotheses which shows the important role of protective factors in the prevention of suicidal ideation as individuals who grew up with their parents, and individuals who had strong support system did not exhibit suicidal ideation but those individuals who do not have strong support system, exhibited the it. Hence it can be deduced that the presence of protective factors is paramount to the prevention of suicidal ideation amongst the undergraduates of the University of Ibadan.

The findings of this study revealed that the use of protective factors play a major role in Suicidal ideation and Suicidal tendencies. The study showed that individuals who were sexually abused, or had no support system demonstrated suicidal ideations and suicidal tendencies. This corresponds to previous finding by Lee and Jung on suicide and its risk factors which revealed that lack of protective factors made individuals at risk for suicide as Individuals who have been physically or sexually abused or those who have experienced family violence had suicidal ideation and suicidal tendencies (Lee & Jung, 2006).

Implication for Nursing Practice

This study has proven that some undergraduates of the University Of Ibadan have suicidal tendencies and suicidal ideation'. This study will help to draw the attention of Nurses in the provision of psychological care, treatment and support to individuals, particularly young adults who have suicide ideation, tendencies in the society. Finally, the study will help nurses to identify preventive factors of suicidal ideations and suicidal tendencies in the society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study revealed that some students of University of Ibadan have suicidal ideation and tendencies and the implications of the use of protective factors in the control of suicidal ideation and tendencies. Based on the findings, we recommend that psychological care of students should be incorporated into various school clinics as this will aid in the identification of individuals at risk of committing suicide and the prevention of suicide and that counsellors should be incorporated at departmental levels to enable students discuss their psychological needs and also identify individuals at risk. Further study should take effort to examine the effect of psychological care/intervention on the students' suicidal ideation and tendencies.

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