

Psychological Factors As Correlates Of Suicide Ideation Among Undergraduates In Lagos State

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Abstract: *Suicide ideation among adolescent all over the world has assumed an alarming dimension. It has become so worrisome that it has gained prominence in social discourse. The prevalence rate of suicide among adolescents in different parts of the world gives room for concern. Despite these researches, factors that predict the occurrence adequately investigated in this part of the world. This study therefore investigated the psychological factors as correlates of suicide ideation among undergraduates in Lagos State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. Two hundred and fifty participants were selected through simple random sampling from five faculties within the University of Lagos State. Their ages ranged between 19 and 24 years with mean of 22.40 years (SD= 4.19). Three structured questionnaire; Hopelessness Scale ($\alpha=0.87$), Perceived Stress Scale ($\alpha=0.86$), and Self-Esteem ($\alpha=0.77$), were used to collect data. The findings revealed that there was significant positive relationships between perceived stress ($r = 0.338^{**}$, $p < 0.05$) hopelessness ($r = 0.385^{**}$, $p > 0.05$); self-esteem ($r = 0.359^{**}$, $p > 0.05$) and suicide ideation among the participants. The three variables jointly accounted for 10.1% variance in predicting suicide ideation among the participants. The independent variables made positive relative contribution to suicide ideation in the following order: Perceived stress contributed most to the prediction of suicide ideation among undergraduate students in University of Lagos ($\beta = 0.345$, $t = 50.077$, $p < 0.05$) followed by self-esteem ($\beta = -0.037$, $t = 1.224$, $p < 0.05$), hopelessness ($\beta = -0.020$, $t = -.308$; $p < 0.05$) had relative contribution to suicide ideation. Based on this finding, it is recommended that students should be exposed to stress management and self-esteem boosting training as a strategy for curbing suicide ideation. Parents should bridge up the communication gaps in their relationship with their young adults.*

Keywords: Hopelessness, Perceived Stress, Self-esteem, Suicide ideation.

Introduction

Every year, almost one million people die from suicide; a global mortality rate of 16 per 100,000, or one death every 40 seconds and as such it is a critically important public health problem (World Health Organization, 2011). Suicide has become an important public health problem and is rated the fourth leading cause of death globally among youth aged 15 to 19 years and the tenth leading cause for adolescents 10–14 years of age (Ovuga, 2005). However, these figures do not include suicide attempts, which are up to 20 times more frequent than completed suicide (WHO, 2011). Research on suicidal behaviour specifically in Africa has been scarce, in part because of other pressing health concerns, but also because of political and economic instability (Schlebusch, Burrow and Vawda, 2009).

Suicidal ideation among students is defined as the wish, thought or desires to take one's own life violently due to a variety of internal and external causes, such as personality, undesirable emotions and school life (Vawda, 2009). Information on suicidal ideation can be utilized to predict suicide and can act as a guide for suicide prevention (Rubenstein, 1999).. There are many difficulties associated with the identification of individuals at risk for committing suicide, because individuals resort to suicide for so many different reasons. No matter the reason, any individual thinking about suicide is considered to be in the at risk group. Adolescence can be a difficult time in a person's life. There can be a lot emotional upheaval and stress. Adolescents can experience stress from family discord at home as well as having difficulties with peer relationships at school. All of these may lead a person to suicide (Rubenstein, 1999).

According to Davis (2003), there are many very different motivations for individuals to commit suicide. He asserts that in order to help a suicidal person, one must first know the underlying motivation. One reason someone may commit suicide is to escape an unbearable situation. A second is to try to manipulate or change someone else's behavior. A third is to use suicide as a vehicle to communicate to significant others just how unhappy they are and they need help. According to Davis, these people often have no intention of dying.

Research reveals that a common variable associated with suicide ideation is self-esteem (Overholser, Adams, Lehnert, & Brinkman, 1995). Self-esteem can be defined in numerous ways, self-esteem refers to the appraisal a person makes of their value as a worthwhile individual (Brinkman, 1995). According to Overholser (2009) maintained that people who have high self-esteem tend to be positive in their attitudes about themselves and are thought to be satisfied with their lives. Individuals with low self-esteem, on the other hand, tend to have a negative view of themselves and feel they are incompetent and unworthy. When a person has a negative view of himself or herself, suicidal tendencies generally increase (Overholser et'al, 1995). Self-esteem can be defined in numerous ways. Most commonly, self-esteem is defined on the basis of two psychological processes: evaluation and affect (Mruk, 2006). Evaluation accentuates the role of cognition, while affect emphasizes the role of feelings as they pertain to self-esteem.

Mruk (2006) identified four basic ways of defining self-esteem: (1) as a certain attitude, (2) based on discrepancy, (3) as a psychological response a person holds toward himself or herself, and (4) as a function of personality. In the attitudinal definition, it involves positive or negative cognitive, behavioural, and emotional reactions. When people base their self-esteem on discrepancy, they are measuring the difference between what they see as their ideal self and their perceived self. The closer these two percepts are, the higher their self-esteem is thought to be. The psychological response a person holds towards himself or herself is described as feeling-based, rather than attitudinal alone. Self-esteem is viewed as part of a system that is concerned with motivation or self-regulation, or both. While there are numerous different definitions for self-esteem, even outside of this spectrum, the listed definitions cover the broadest range of definitions (Mruk, 2006).

Thus, self-esteem is analogous to a “reservoir of energy.” Like any other resource, self-esteem can be built up, but when used, it is lost. Here, the reservoir of self-esteem is filled up by successful self-verification and used up when the self-verification process is disrupted. Like other aspects of the self, self-esteem is highly stable but is responsive to changes in social situations. When these changes include persistent problems in self-verification, self-esteem is likely to decline even more as the energy reservoir is depleted (Adegbite, 2006).

Stress has been described in different ways over the years. According to Kazmi, Amjad and Khan (2008) opined stress as pressure from the environment, then later as a strain within the person. However today accepted definition one of the interactions between the situation and the individual (Kazmi, Amjad, Khan, 2008). It is the psychological and physical states that result when the resources of the individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the job situation. Thus, stress is more likely in some situations than others. The term “stress” has been defined differently by differently authors because of the complex nature of stress itself.

Stress may be referred to as an unpleasant state of emotional and physiological arousal that people experience in situations that they perceive as dangerous or threatening to their well-being (Hobfoll, 2009). Stress is the naturally occurring patterned experience in response to any demand placed on an organism. Stress is a psychological variable that has been attracting the attention of psychologists for a long time and has been vastly studied in relation to suicidal behavior and suicidal ideation (Akande, 2001).

According to Acholu (2005) although much is known about stress but there is no consensus or agreement as to the definition of the terms among scientist. According to Nweze (2004) stress is a process in which environmental events or forces threaten the well-being of an individual in the society. It is a disruption of the emotional stability of the individual that induces a state of disorganization in personality and behaviour. According to Wiley (2000) it is a biological phenomenon that is experienced by all persons regardless of their socio-economic status, occupation or age. Egor (2000) viewed stress as the way the individual responds to conditions that scare, threaten, anger, bewilder or excite them. McGrath (2006) defines stress generally as a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity constraints, or demand on being having it doing what he or she desires.

According to Mark (2006), it is widely accepted that with hope, human beings act, move, and achieve. Individuals who are hopeful are usually described as active, vigorous, and energetic. Conversely, individuals who are hopeless are described as inactive, apathetic, and dull. Hope and hopelessness are two experiences that represent opposite expectations. The concept of hope can be expressed as a way of feeling (affectively), as a way of thinking (cognitively), and a way of behaving or relating behaviourally (Ungoren & Ehtiyar, 2009). As a way of feeling, hope has been described as an energizing force. It propels persons forward when the odds seem to be against them. As a way of thinking, hope is associated with a sense of fortitude, as described as an assumed certainty that a dreaded possibility will not happen. As a way of behaving, hope expresses itself as an active process in which the individual seeks possible and appropriate alternatives (Ungoren & Ehtiyar, 2009).

Like hope, Hopelessness expresses a way of feeling (affectively), a way of thinking (cognitively), and a way of acting (behaviourally) (Gencay, 2009). As a feeling, hopelessness is expressed as discouragement, despair, or a de-energizing force. When people feel hopeless, their thinking is also impaired. They have difficulty making their plans concrete and realizing alternative methods of resolving issues. These feelings and ways of thinking also influence the way persons behave which is associated with feelings of alienation from society. Hopeless individuals believe their personal future is largely out of their control and others cannot be counted on. Outcomes associated with hopelessness have ranged from negative emotional responses to physical and mental illness and premature death. Feelings of hopelessness have consistently been shown to be one of the best predictors of depression and suicidal ideation (Ceyhan, 2004).

According to Williams (2007) stated that in the past within adult populations has focused on the importance of hopelessness as a factor in a variety of psychopathological conditions such as depression and suicide. He stated further that he had studied children to understand continuities and/or discontinuities in hopelessness or depressive tendencies across the developmental spectrum (Mac Leod, Rose & Ve Williams, 2007). In research pertaining to childhood psychopathology, risk factors have been identified as those factors, which, if present, increase the likelihood of an individual developing a behaviour disorder (Mac Leod, Rose & Ve Williams, 2007). Suicidal thoughts and depression may be a precursor or a consequence of this hopelessness. As stated earlier, this pathological type of hopelessness is associated with psychiatric disorders such as depression, suicidal ideation, or sociopathic disorders (Beck, 2008).

Statement of the problem

Suicidal behaviour is complex. It is an irrational desire to die. Suicide effects are tragic and felt long after the individual has taken his own life. A person who dies by suicide leaves behind a tangled confusion of family members and friend who try to make sense of a senseless and a purposeless act. Suicidal ideation among adolescents is associated with several psychosocial indicators for well-being including: depression, loneliness, anxiety, substance use, poverty, bullying, mood disturbance, feelings of sadness, despair and discouragement, resulting from personal loss and tragedy, poor relationship quality with parents and low social support and thus when perplexed adolescents may see suicide as last option. Adolescents can experience stress from family discord at home as well as having difficulties with peer relationships at school. All of these may lead suicide ideation. WHO (2010) reported that 4,924 adolescents committed suicide in the age ranges of 15-24. This accounts for 12.9 suicides for every 100,000 adolescents in this age bracket. This rate has tripled since 2011, increasing 522% in a 30-year period. The suicide rate of adolescents now equals that of the general population. Given this gap, this study intends to assess the psychological factors as correlates of suicide ideation among university students in Lagos state.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the psychological factors as correlates of suicide ideation among undergraduates in Lagos metropolis. Specifically the study seeks to:

- examine the relationship that exists between the independent variables (hopelessness, perceived stress and self-esteem) and the dependent variable (suicide ideation) among undergraduates in Lagos metropolis.
- investigate the joint contribution of the independent variables (hopelessness, perceived stress and self-esteem) and the dependent variable (suicide ideation) among undergraduates in Lagos metropolis.
- explore the relative contribution of each of the independent variables (hopelessness, perceived stress and self-esteem) and the dependent variable (suicide ideation) among undergraduates in Lagos metropolis.

Significance of the study

The findings of this study would be of immense significance to the adolescents, parents, teachers, school counsellors, school administrators, government and educational researchers. The findings will help adolescents to identify risk factors of suicide ideation inherent in them and thus be encouraged to seek out other way of provide solution to life challenges.

Counselling psychologists could use this information to adjust learning environment to meet adolescent individual differences and identify the extreme adolescent can go to when faced with challenges and thus develop proactive intervention that can assist the adolescents.

The outcome of this study will thus add to knowledge in the area of helping tertiary institution students psychologically and thereby building the body of knowledge in the area of educational psychology in Nigeria.

The outcome of this study will serve as resource materials for others who want to carry out research in related field while contributing to the existing literature on suicide ideation.

Literature Review

Self-Esteem and Suicidal Ideation

Dori and Overholser (1999) also found that low self-esteem is a good indicator of suicidal ideation. Dori and Overholser (1999) did a study to determine whether the levels of hopelessness, self-esteem, and depression were different among the inpatients who committed suicide prior to being admitted versus those inpatients who had not committed suicide. They recruited 90 adolescents diagnosed with depression. These adolescents ranged from 13 to 18 years old, and they were in the middle socioeconomic category. Those who attempted suicide had significantly lower self-esteem as well as higher levels of depression and hopelessness than their non-suicidal counterparts, as assessed by Dori and Overholser (1999). Self-esteem also was found to be a better indicator of suicide than a person's level of suicidal ideation in this study. Depressed and hopeless adolescents who were assessed as having adequate levels of self-esteem were less likely to demonstrate suicidal behaviors than those with low self-esteem (Dori & Overholser, 1999).

In a study conducted by Rasmussen, Negy, Carlson, and Burns (1997) involving 242 8th grade Mexican Americans adolescent regarding their suicidal ideation and the associated risk factors. The study was done to determine whether acculturation levels, specific risk factors, depression, and self-esteem could predict suicidal ideation. They found that Mexican Americans had many more suicidal risk factors than the White Americans of the same age. Some of these risk factors included acculturation, poverty, and substance abuse. Within this study, suicidal ideation was found to be significantly correlated with depression and self-esteem.

A study by Garnefski and Diekstra (1997) focused on the emotional effect of children raised in one-parent or stepparent homes. The participants in this study were 13,953 secondary students, ages 12 to 19 years old, from the Netherlands. The participants filled out self-report questionnaires under the guidance of a teacher. In general, children of one-parent or stepparent families reported more emotional problems, including low self-esteem. Children of these families also had a significantly higher rate of suicidal behavior over their lifetime. Once again, the low self-esteem of these adolescents was significantly correlated with suicide.

More studies show a correlation between self-esteem and suicidal ideation. Dukes and Lorch (1989) gave a Youth Lifestyles Survey to 9,752 students who were in the 12 grade. They found a disparity between the importance of academic achievement and the importance of personal satisfaction related to doing well academically. These factors were linked with suicidal ideation through the variables of self-esteem, purpose in life, alcohol use, and eating disorders. These authors found that doing well academically was not enough to maintain high self-esteem; personal satisfaction due to doing well must be a component. In their study, Dukes and Lorch also found that low self-esteem was found to be a good predictor of suicidal ideation among these high school students.

Vella, Persic, and Lester (1996) did a study that explored whether self-reported self-esteem was associated with suicidal ideation after controls for depression were introduced. The Beck Depression Inventory and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were given to 131 social science undergraduates. These researchers found that suicidal ideation was negatively correlated with self-esteem. As self-esteem declined, suicidal ideation increased among this college population.

Perceived Stress and Suicide Ideation

In addition, perceived stress is a risk factor for young adult suicide ideation, particularly for the college population, because college students are believed to have high levels of perceived life stress (Hirsch & Ellis, 1996). A relationship has been established between stress and suicide ideation. Joiner and Rudd (1995), Lipschitz (1995), and Chang (2002) present findings that suggest life stress is associated with suicide ideation.

Specifically, Hirsch and Ellis (1996) have found that college students who experience suicide ideation have greater levels of life stress. In addition, Weber (1997) and Singh and Joshi (2008) have shown significant associations between stress and suicide ideation among college students, indicating that people with a high level of life stress may have a greater tendency to experience suicide ideation. Moreover, Singh and Joshi (2008) have revealed that stress is a strong predictor of suicide ideation among college students, using multiple regression analyses. Thus, it is reasonable to maintain that stress, measured in terms of a person's perceived stress, would predict suicide ideation.

One study in particular conducted by Vilhjalmsson (1998) specifically examines the relationships between life stress and perceived stress and suicide ideation. These researchers have found that life stress and stress perceptions are significantly associated with thoughts of suicide; their research suggests that perceived stress is a risk factor for suicide ideation (Vilhjalmsson, 1998).

Overholser (1995) asserts that adolescence often is a time of self-criticism and turmoil. These stresses may put a strain on a young person's self-concept and self-esteem. According to Overholser (1995), adolescence also is a stage that is correlated with a great number of life changes. Frequent daily negative experiences and negative life events are common in an adolescent's life. Overholser et al. assert that adolescents begin dealing with lives that are unscheduled and non-normative, with new experiences of heterosexual events, peer events, school events, and extracurricular activities.

Adams and Lehnert (1997) reviewed studies to examine the relation between prolonged traumatic stress and suicidality as it relates to child abuse and trauma associated with combat. According to Adams and Lehnert, stressful events such as divorce, death, relocation, family arguments, and legal problems are important risk factors that can lead an individual to suicide. These acute and chronic stressors can have additive effects on adolescents, which may lead them to engage in suicidal behaviors. In their review, Adams and Lehnert also found that traumatic stresses such as child abuse and natural disasters may be linked to suicide. Their literature review also implies that there may be a relation between child abuse and suicidal behavior later in life. For example, among college students who were sexually abused, 16% admitted to making a suicide attempt compared to a 6% rate among of those not sexually abused (Adams and Lehnert).

Berman, and King (1992) found that suicidal children in comparison to depressed or psychiatric patients experienced significantly greater life stress involving chaotic and disruptive family events or losses or separations from significant others. With regard to stress, De Man (1998), De Man, Balkou, and Iglesias (1997), Paykel (1991), and Paykel, Myers, Lindenthal, and Tanner (1994) found that suicide attempters tend to have experienced a greater number of recent stressful life events. Jacobs (1991) noted that teenage attempters often have a long history of difficulties that culminates during adolescence. Negative and potentially traumatic life events are associated with poor mental health outcomes, including thoughts of suicide (Flannery, Singer, & Wester, 2001; Yang & Clum, 1996). Several studies conducted on adolescents have found that suicidal ideation among adolescents is associated with recent stressful life events (e.g., De Man, Leduc, & Labrèche-Gauthier, 1993; Dubow, Kausch, Blum, Reed, & Bush, 1992).

In a cross-legged panel study, using suicide attempters, Clum, Luscomb, and Patsiokas (1991) concluded that high life stress might put individuals at greater risk for future suicide attempts. Cole (1992) conducted a study on four hundred nine high school students. In their study, high-suicidal-risk subjects were found to have had experienced more life stress in the previous year, and significantly poorer quality friendships, and lower self-esteem. Sandin, Chorot, Santed, Valiente, and Joiner (1998) examined the relationship between negative life events and suicidal behaviour. Their study evidenced support for the hypothesis that life events might comprise a risk factor for adolescent suicidal behaviour but their contribution tended to be moderate or weak. King (1997) suggested that recent stressful events that are interpersonal in nature can increase the risk of suicidal behaviour among adolescents. In particular, Adams, Overholser, and Spirito (1994) found that stressors related to parents and close friends were predictive of suicidal behaviours in a sample of adolescent suicide attempters.

Huff (1999) in a study on 425 students aged 14 to 18 years, found that recency and degree of stress were significant in the prediction of degree and recency of suicide ideation. King (2001) in a study on 1,285 9 to 17 year old subjects found an association between suicide ideation or attempt and stressful life events, parental psychiatric history, low parental monitoring, low instrumental and social competence, sexual activity, marijuana use, recent drunkenness, current smoking, and physical fighting.

Beautrais (2000) summarized evidence about risk factors for suicidal behaviour in young people by reviewing of relevant English language articles and other papers published since the mid-1980s. The international literature yielded: social and educational disadvantage; childhood and family adversity; psychopathology; individual and personal vulnerabilities; exposure to stressful life events and circumstances; and social, cultural and contextual factors as risk factor domains. Suicidal behaviours in young people

appeared to be a consequence of adverse life sequences in which multiple risk factors from these domains combined to increase risk of suicidal behaviour.

Wong, Stewart, Ho, Rao, and Lam (2005) in a community sample of Hong Kong youth ages 12–17, formed two groups of interest—suicidal behavior groups and control groups based on adolescents responses to questions regarding self-injurious behaviors, and also presence of intention to hurt or kill themselves in the past 12 months. Their results indicated that depressive symptoms, stressful life events, suicidal ideation and exposure to suicide attempt (but not completed suicide) contributed unique variance to the presence of suicidal behaviors, after controlling for demographic variables. Stress was a risk factor which moderated the effect of exposure to others suicide on suicidal behavior.

Liu, Tein, Zhao, and Sandler (2005) conducted a study on a sample of 1,362 rural adolescents from 5 high schools in a prefecture of Shandong, China. Overall, they found, 19% of the sample reported having suicidal ideation, and 7% reported having made a suicide attempt during the past 6 months. Apart from other factors life stress was found to be significantly related to both suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. Mazza and Reynolds (1998) in a longitudinal investigation over a 1-year-period on a sample of 374 high school students, found that daily hassles and negative life events were significant factors related to suicidal ideation levels 1 year later only for males.

Investigators in three studies on American Indian youths reported significant positive relationship between negative life events and suicidal ideation (Howard-Pitney LaFromboise, Basil, September, & Johnson, 1992; Manson, Beals, Dick, & Duclos, 1989; Novins, Beals, Roberts, & Manson, 1999). Yoder, Whitbeck, Hoyt, and LaFromboise (2006) examined the correlates of suicidal ideation among 212 American Indian youth living in United States. They found that negative life events, perceived discrimination, self-esteem, gender, enculturation, and drug use were related to the likelihood of thinking about suicide.

In a recent study, Cerutti, Manca, Presaghi, and Gratz (2011) investigated the rates of deliberate self-harm (DSH) behaviour among an Italian 234 secondary schools adolescent sample and also explored its clinical correlates. They found that, 42% of the adolescents in this sample engaged in DSH. Results indicated an association between DSH and specific life-stressors—psychological and sexual abuse, natural disasters and serious accidents, the loss of someone important, and the witnessing of family violence or a serious accident. It is very much clear that life stress is an obvious and overarching proximal risk factor for suicide.

A study conducted by Heikkinen, Aro, and Lonnqvist (1994) found that the great majority (80%) of adolescents who attempted suicide had experienced a major life stress in the prior 3 month. These findings have been replicated by research showing increased rates of stressful life events among adolescents and young adults in the 3 month prior to death by suicide, and more specifically in a weak prior to death (Cooper, Appleby, & Amos, 2002). Major life events associated with increased risk for suicidal behaviours often include interpersonal difficulties, conflicts, or losses, and environmental consequences such as disciplinary action or legal problems (Adams, 1994; Beautrais, Joyce, & Mulder, 1997; Gould, Fisher, Parides, Flory, & Shaffer, 1996).

Töero, Nagy, Sawaguchi, and Sótonyi (2001) argued that there is a strong link between the pressure to excel in school and suicidal behaviors among children and adolescents. In their study, they showed that the number of suicide cases in a year usually peaked during examination periods where children and adolescents experienced a high level of stress in school. Some researchers have argued that in East Asian countries especially, this academic stress-suicidal ideation link among adolescents could possibly be even stronger given the familial and cultural demands for academic excellence. Specifically, in an Asian context, academic stress arising from adolescents' self-expectations and expectations of others (e.g., parents and teachers) are particularly salient.

Moreover, academic pressure has often to be a source of stress leading to suicidal behaviors among the adolescents in USA (Shagle & Barber, 1995), Japan (Iga, 1991), Korea (Juon, 1994), and Mainland China (Greenberger, Chen, Tally, & Dong, 2000). Likewise, in Singapore, academic difficulties were also found to be one of the predictors of suicidal behaviours among a population of young suicide attempters beside other factors (Ho, Hong, & Heok, 1999). School problems accounted for 11% of adolescents who attempted suicide in Singapore (Ung, 2003). Though extensive studies indicate high rate of stress associated with adolescent suicidality, other studies indicate the indirect effect of stress with other factors mediating the relationship between stress and suicidal ideation. With a sample of adolescents from Hong Kong, Stewart, Lam, Betson, and Chung (1999) found that relationships between stressors and suicidal ideation were mediated primarily by depression.

Relations among stress and suicidal ideation were examined by Ang and Huan (2006) in 1,108 Asian adolescents 12-18 years old from a secondary school in Singapore. The previously significant relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation was significantly reduced in magnitude when depression was included in the model providing evidence in this sample that adolescent stress was a partial mediator. Hintikka (2009) in a follow-up study on general population from Eastern Finland found that at baseline suicidal ideation is associated with a cluster of adverse life events and lifestyles, as well as stress. They also concluded that stress appears to be a necessary precondition for the occurrence of suicidal ideation even after adverse life events.

Hopelessness and Suicide Ideation

Konick and Gutierrez (2005) examined several risk factors believed to commonly precipitate suicide ideation in 345 undergraduate college students. Their study indicated hopelessness as predictors of suicide ideation in college students. However, negative life events (NLE) impacted suicidal thoughts through hopelessness. Some adolescent however do not report precipitants for their suicidal behaviour and the occurrence of life events may be related to young people's poor problem solving skills or psychiatric difficulties (Beautrais, 1997). Schotte and Clum (1992), while examining a model of suicide behaviour in a group of

college-aged suicide ideators, indicated that college student's suicide ideators experienced higher level of negative life stress, were more hopeless, and had higher level of hopelessness than their non-ideating peers.

Poor problem solvers under high hopeless were found to be significantly higher on suicide intent than any other group. Terzi-Unsal and Kapci (2005) tested three different suicide models for adolescents residing in a Turkish City, on a total of 605 adolescents from five different high schools. Their findings suggested that adolescent life events, hopelessness which, in turn predicted suicide ideation. Yang and Clum (2000) while examining the etiology of suicidal behaviour from cognitive and developmental perspective in a sample of 181 suicidal and non-suicidal college students, found that hopelessness have a mild impact on suicidal behavior, but a stronger impact on cognitive deficits, which in turn have a strong impact on suicidal behaviour.

Chang (2002) did not find any evidence for a diathesis stress model proposed by Schotte and Clum (1992). However, some support for the view that social problem solving mediate the influence of hopelessness on suicidal ideation was found. Ciarrochi, Deane, and Anderson (2002) conducted a cross sectional study on 302 university students that involved measuring of hopelessness and mental health. They found that hopelessness was associated with: (1) greater reported hopelessness, and suicidal ideation among people high in emotional perception and (2) greater suicidal ideation among those low in managing others' emotion. Berman and Jobes (1991) suggested that factors like hopelessness may mediate between hopelessness and suicidality.

Rubenstein (1989) found that high school-aged adolescents who reported an attempt to hurt themselves in the previous year had hopelessness score 33% higher than those of non-suicidal adolescents. Several other studies have also demonstrated that certain variables may moderate the association between hopelessness and suicidality. For example the relationship among hopelessness and suicidal ideation in late adolescents were examined by Wilburn and Smith (2005) in a group of college students. They found that hopelessness and stressful life events significantly predicted suicidal ideation and the hypothesis that self-esteem would moderate the effects of life stressors on suicidal ideation was supported at the .06 level.

Recently, Johnson, Gooding, Wood, and Tarrier (2010) conducted a study in which, 78 participants, who reported experiencing some degree of suicidality were recruited from a student population. They found that positive self-appraisals moderated the association between hopelessness and suicidality. For those reporting moderate or high levels of negative self-appraisals, raised incidence of hopelessness lead to increases in suicidality.

Izadinia, Amiri, Jahromi, and Hamidi (2010) in a study on 265 students of Tehran University concluded that, suicidal ideations had a significant and negative relationship with hopelessness. Hopelessness and daily stresses had a negative relationship with suicidal ideations.

Peltzer, Kleintjes, Wyk, Thompson, and Mashego (2008) assessed correlates of suicide risk in a South African school-based population from three secondary schools in Cape Town. Their results indicated hopelessness as predictors for suicide risk. Zayas, Gulbas, Fedoravicius, and Cabassa (2010) conducted thematic analyses of twenty-seven qualitative interviews (collected, between July 2005 and July 2009) with teenage Latinas (aged 11-19) living in New York City who had attempted suicide. Their results show that the pathways to the suicidal event consisted of a pattern of continuous, hopelessness (primarily at home) that created the emotionally combustible conditions for the attempt.

Research Questions

Is there a relationship between the independent variables (self-esteem, perceived stress and hopelessness) and suicide ideation among undergraduates in Lagos metropolis?

What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (self-esteem, perceived stress and hopelessness) and suicide ideation among undergraduates in Lagos metropolis?

What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (self-esteem, perceived stress and hopelessness) and suicide ideation among undergraduates in Lagos metropolis?

Methodology

Research Design

This study will adopt the descriptive survey research design of the ex-post facto type to achieve the purpose of the study. This is used because the researcher is not interested in manipulating the variables

Population

The target population for this study consists of undergraduates in Lagos state. The populations under this study are undergraduates in undergraduates in Lagos state, Nigeria. **Sample and sampling technique**

The participants for the study were drawn from five faculties randomly selected within the university. The five faculties are: Education, Agric, Tech, Science and Arts. One department was equally randomly selected through balloting from each of the faculties. Fifty participants were engaged in each department based on availability and willingness to respond to the questionnaire.

Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study comprised of five standardized instruments divided into six sections::

Section A contains the bio-data which sought demographic information such as age, gender, level, parent marital status, parent's educational qualification & occupation, person responsible for education etc. the other section contains the following:

Suicide Cognition Scale

This instrument developed by Rudd (2010) measured suicide ideation. The Suicide Cognitions Scale is an 18-item self-report measure that assesses suicide-cognition. The respondent indicates level of agreement with each statement using a 5 point Likert-type

scale, with responses ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The author reported an internal reliability co-efficient (alphas) ranging from .78 to .93.

Hopelessness Scale

The Beck Hopelessness Scale (Beck, 1993) assesses an individual's negative expectations about the future. The BHS contains 20 items that assesses hopelessness with a response format ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The author reported an internal reliability co-efficient (alphas) ranging from .87 to .91

Perceived Stress Scale

Perceived stress was developed by Cohen (1990). It consists of 10 items with a response format ranging from Strongly Disagree = SD to Strongly Agree = SA. The author reported a split-half reliability of .86 and .67 were observed for part 1 and 2 respectively, with a Cronbach alpha of .95

Self-Esteem Scale

This self-esteem was developed by Rosenberg (1995). It consists of 10-items which measures global self-worth by assessing both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. The author reported to range from .77 to .83.

Procedure of Data Collection

The researcher got the consent of each participant in the study. Explanations were made on the essence of the research and the procedure of administration. The researcher further assured participants of the confidentiality of the information provided. Questionnaires were distributed and collected immediately after participants responded.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the relationship among the independent variables and the dependent variable while Multiple Regression Analysis was used to analyse the joint contribution and the relative effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Results

Demographic Profile

This segment presents the descriptive statistics of gender and age.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	130	52.0
Female	110	44.0
No response	10	4.0
Total	250	100.0

Table 1 reveals that 52.0% of the respondents were female, 44% of the respondents were male. 4% of the respondents did not provide any response. This implies that male participated more in this study than their female counterpart.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of respondents by Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage %
Christian	120	48.0
Muslim	120	48.0
Traditional	5	2.0
No response	5	2.0
Total	250	100.0

Table 2 reveals that 48% of the respondents were Christians, 48% of the respondents were Muslims, 2% of them are traditionalist, while 2% of them gave no response. This implies that Muslim and Christians participated more in this study than their counterparts.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
19-21yrs	5	2.0
22-24yrs	130	52.0
25-27yrs	70	28.0
28-30yrs	30	12.0
No response	15	6.0
Total	250	100

Table 3 reveals that 52% of the respondents are within the ages of 22-24yrs, 28% of the respondents were within the ages of 25-27yrs, 12% of the respondents were within the ages of 28-30yrs, 2% of them are within the ages of 19-21yrs, 6% of them gave no response. This implies that majority of the respondents are within the ages of 22 – 24 yrs.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of respondents by Family Background

Family Background	Frequency	Percentage %
Monogamous	140	56.0

Polygamous	100	40.0
Single parenthood	10	4.0
Total	250	100.0

Table 4 reveals that 56% of the respondents were from monogamous home, 40% of the respondents were from polygamous homes, while 4% of them gave no response. This implies that majority of the respondents were from monogamous homes.

Research Question 1:

What is the relationship between the independent variables (self-esteem, perceived stress, hopelessness) and the dependent variable (suicide ideation)

Table 5: Correlation matrix showing the relationship between study variables

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev	1	2	3	4	5
Suicide ideation	22.4000	4.19887	1.000				
Self-esteem	35.8980	2.43981	.359**	1.000			
Perceived stress	34.7200	.53172	.338**	.448**	1.000		
Hopelessness	58.9600	3.34112	.385**	.318*	-.142*	1.000	

*Correlation is significant at 0.05(2-tailed)

Table 5 revealed the relationship of each independent variables (self-esteem, perceived stress and hopelessness) with the dependent variable (suicide ideation); Suicide ideation positively correlated with self-esteem ($r = .359, p < 0.01$), perceived stress ($r = .338, p < 0.01$), hopelessness ($r = .385, p < 0.01$). Self-esteem, perceived stress, and hopelessness are correlates of undergraduates' suicide ideation. This implies that the higher the stress perceived by undergraduates the higher their tendency of developing suicide ideas.

Research Question 2:

What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (self-esteem, perceived stress and hopelessness) on the dependent variables (Suicide ideation)

Table 6: Summary of regression for the joint contributions of independent variables to the prediction of suicide ideation.

R = .340 R Square = .115 Adjusted R square = .101 Std. Error = 3.99226						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	498.725	4	124.681	7.823	.000 ^b
	Residual	3825.152	240	15.938		
	Total	4323.878	244			

Table 6 reveals significant joint contribution of the independent variables (self-esteem, perceived stress and hopelessness) to the prediction of suicide ideation. The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions $R = 0.340$ and multiple R-square = 0.115. This suggests that the two factors combined accounted for 10.1% ($Adj.R^2 = .101$) variance in the prediction of suicide ideation. The other factors accounting for the remaining variance are beyond the scope of this study. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis shows that there was a significant effect of the independent variables on the suicide ideation, $F_{(2, 240)} = 7.823, P < 0.01$.

Research Question 3:

What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (self-esteem, perceived stress, hopelessness) on the dependent variables (Suicide ideation).

Table7: Relative effect of the independent variables to the prediction of suicide ideation.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-76.081	20.589		-3.695	.000
	Self-esteem	-.063	.124	-.037	-.512	.609

	Perceived-stress	2.714	.535	.345	5.077	.000
	Hopelessness	-.026	.083	-.020	-.308	.758

Table 7 shows that the two predictors (self-esteem, perceived stress, hopelessness) are potent predictors of suicide ideation. The only potent factor was perceived stress (Beta = .345, $t = 50.077$, $P < 0.01$), except self-esteem (Beta = -.037, $t = -.512$, $P > 0.05$), hopelessness (Beta = -.020, $t = -.308$, $P > 0.05$) and family environment (Beta = .055, $t = .879$, $P > 0.05$). This implies that, perceived stress increases suicide ideation tendency among undergraduates.

Discussion of findings

In response to research question one stated that what pattern of relationship exists between the independent variables (self-esteem, perceived stress and hopelessness) on suicide ideation among undergraduate students in Lagos. The result shows that there was significant relationship between self-esteem and suicide ideation. This finding is in line with the findings of Dori and Overholser (1999) who reported that low self-esteem is a good indicator of suicidal ideation. Duker and Lorch (2009) also found low self-esteem to be a predictor of suicidal ideation among these high school students. Lester (2006) did a study that explored whether self-reported self-esteem was associated with suicidal ideation after controls for depression were introduced. These researchers found that self-esteem was negatively correlated with suicide ideation. As self-esteem declined, suicidal ideation increased among this college population. Also, Calvete and Smith (2006) found that low self-esteem have been found to increase the impact of suicide ideation among students. Villanova & Bownas (1994) for example found that low self-esteem could not help the students to cope with everyday life stressor and lighten the suicide ideation. Without enough support from family and friends, they would be in trouble and are vulnerable to suicide ideation

The result from this study also shows that there was significant relationship between hopelessness and suicide ideation. This finding is in line with Konick and Gutierrez (2005) found that hopelessness is one of the risk factors believed to commonly precipitate suicide ideation. Banjoko (2009) found that some adolescent however do not report precipitants for their suicidal behaviour and the occurrence of life events may be related to young people's poor problem solving skills or psychiatric difficulties. McCarthy (2008), found that suicide behaviour in a group of college-aged suicide ideators, indicated that college student's suicide ideators experienced higher level of negative life stress, were more hopeless, and had higher level of hopelessness than their non-ideating peers. Poor problem solvers under high hopeless were found to be significantly higher on suicide intent than any other group. Also, Ciarrochi, Deane, and Anderson (2002) found that hopelessness was associated with: (1) greater reported hopelessness, and suicidal ideation among people high in emotional perception and (2) greater suicidal ideation among those low in managing others' emotion. Berman and Jobes (1991) suggested that factors like hopelessness may mediate between hopelessness and suicidality. Izadinia, Amiri, Jahromi, and Hamidi (2010) concluded that, suicidal ideations had a significant and negative relationship with hopelessness. Hopelessness and daily stresses had a negative relationship with suicidal ideations. Peltzer, Kleintjes, Wyk, Thompson, and Mashego (2008) assessed correlates of suicide risk in a South African school-based population from three secondary schools in Cape Town. Their results indicated hopelessness as predictors for suicide risk

The result shows that there was significant relationship between perceived stress and suicide ideation. This finding is in line with Hirsch and Ellis (1996) who found that college students who experience suicide ideation have greater levels of life stress. In addition, Weber (1997) and Singh and Joshi (2008) have found that there was significant associations between stress and suicide ideation among college students, indicating that people with a high level of life stress may have a greater tendency to experience suicide ideation. Moreover, Singh and Joshi (2008) found that stress is a strong predictor of suicide ideation among college students. Thus, it is reasonable to maintain that stress, measured in terms of a person's perceived stress, would predict suicide ideation. These stresses may put a strain on a young person's self-concept and self-esteem.

In response to the research question two which states whether there is any joint contribution of the independent variables on the suicide ideation among undergraduate students in University of Lagos. The result shows that there was joint effect of the factors (self-esteem, perceived stress, hopelessness) on suicide ideation. It was further revealed that 10.1% variance in the prediction of suicide ideation among undergraduate students in Lagos, this was due to the prediction of the independent variables. The ANOVA results from the regression analysis also attests to the causal effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables; hence, the rejection of the null hypothesis. In line with this finding, a combination of variables like self-esteem has been observed by Carroll (1997) on suicide ideation.

The result of the third research question on the relative effect of each of the variables was also not significant except perceived stress. In all, academic work as a whole, it is revealed that the degree of perceived stress and self-esteem is very relevant to suicide ideation among undergraduate students in Lagos. This finding corroborates the study of Ryan (2006); Simon (2007) who found that the self-esteem, perceived stress and hopelessness have independent effect on suicide ideation among students. It is also in contrary with the findings of Holley (2011) who found that self-esteem could act as a negative factor that could increase suicide ideation among college students. Adedipe (2005) in their finding reported that there was no significant relationship between hopelessness and suicide ideation.

Conclusion

This study was reinforced with the realization that the lingering suicide ideation had permeated in to the school system. This study has therefore, established linking pathways between some variables and suicide ideation. These include hopelessness, self-esteem and perceived stress among undergraduates' students. Changing the face of suicide ideation in Ibadan requires a lot of psychological re-orientation especially considering interventions that employ the independent variables in this study (hopelessness, self-esteem and perceived stress). This research work has established that, there is a positive joint contribution between hopelessness, self-esteem and perceived stress on suicide ideation. Positive joint contribution between hopelessness, self-esteem and perceived stress on suicide ideation. Nonetheless, there is need for replication and refinement of this work in the future. This study has provided more details to the existing information on the suicide ideation as a factor that required immediate solution. From this study, it becomes clear that various strategies should be design to access the issue of suicide ideation in different schools, attention should also be given to the identified means or factors through which the researcher has been able to identify that can affect the suicide ideation of undergraduate students through the type of stress they originated from, their level of self-esteem they associated with and their hopelessness.

Implication of the Study

The effect of suicide ideation on the social, economic political and educational life of Nigerian students cannot be over emphasized. With changing time and advancement in science and technology suicide ideation among undergraduate students, if not curbed will escalate into a societal problem and increase homicide. Therefore, this study makes an urgent demand for intensive orientation and re-orientation of the adolescents and young adults concerning the risk factors that may precipitate suicide ideation among our future leaders and what would befall this nation if it persists. Counselors and all other professionals must be alert and sensitive to these growing trends of suicide ideation. The implication of this is that all concerned caregivers in Nigeria should embark on intensive studies to identify the different causes of suicide ideation and different developmental trajectories associated with it.

Recommendations

In the light of these findings, the following recommendations are hereby proffered:

Proper monitoring and socialization of children should be given from the family. Parents must make sure some conflicting issues bothering the home should be solved earlier. Children's behaviour should be monitored right from home before they mingle with the larger society. Parents should also serve as good models, understand their child emotion and should attend promptly to the needs of their children at home and in school.

Health educators could try to make their target population self-esteem by teaching adolescents how to understand, cope and esteems, how to manage stress, and how to let other people understand their emotions.

Government should control the activities of suicide ideation among adolescents through the board of censors to see through all programmes that are put on air. All programmes that are suicide ideation based should be properly regulated and monitored by the board put in place by board. Government should provide social amenities, create employment and train young people about creativity and innovation and other programmes that can improve the economic capacities of people. Also public enlightenment programmes should be mounted by the government (Federal, State and Local) to broaden the knowledge of the populace especially parents to understand what lies behind young people's suicide ideation.

It is also very important to strengthen the human resources of the adolescents through constant workshops and seminars. There should be establishment of well managed youth-friendly centres to positively engage the adolescents both in-school and out-of-school youths.

There should be improvement in guidance and counselling services - Guidance services in schools should be functional enough to take care of all categories of behaviours exhibited by students. School administrators should understand and appreciate the importance of counselling services in the school and should render all the necessary support to the counsellor.

Personalized counselling services should also be easily accessed to help these youngsters out of their deep psychological, personal and social problems that blur their vision about self and future. The nature of the counselling services should be developmental, preventive, curative, remedial and therapeutic. It is worthy of note that specific counseling techniques could be used in modifying violent acts and developing or instilling disciplined behaviour in our youths.

Limitations of the Study

In an ideal situation the scope of any research must be open-ended. The scope of this study could not be enlarged more than the capacity of the researcher because of time constraint, on the part of the research, limited traveling opportunities and financial constraints. Therefore, undergraduate students were selected randomly in University of Lagos, Lagos State. To minimize expenses and complications that could result from population explosion, a total number of 250 students were randomly selected from undergraduate students in University of Lagos, Lagos State. Also, most of the undergraduate students did not fill the questionnaires with all seriousness, so this may reduce the robustness of the study.

Suggestion for further study

In the light of the findings, it is hereby suggested that researches should be carried out across other states in the country in other to expand the generalization of the finding of the study. More samples should be used so that the results will be a true representation of the populace. Other variables such as alcohol use should be look into by further researchers

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