

SUICIDAL IDEATIONS AMONG TEENAGERS IN THE UNIVERSITY: THE ROLE SELF-ESTEEM, PERSONALITY TRAITS AND PEER RELATION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of self-esteem, personality traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and peer relation in the manifestation of suicidal ideation among teenagers in the University. Three hundred and fifty (350) teenage undergraduate comprised of 206 males (58.9%) and 144 females (41.1%) with age ranges from 16 to 19 years ($M=17.62$, $SD=1.12$) selected through convenient sampling constitute the samples for this research. Index of Self-Esteem, Big Five Personality Inventory, Index of Peer Relation and Suicidal Ideation questionnaire were used to obtain information from the participants. Hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Regression. The results revealed a positive correlation between self-esteem and suicidal ideation ($r = -.174$, $p < .05$). Also, personality traits of Extroversion ($r = -.127$; $p < 0.01$), agreeableness ($r = -.130$; $p < 0.01$), conscientiousness ($r = -.129$; $p < 0.05$), openness to experience ($r = -.128$; $p < 0.01$) had significant negative relationships with suicidal ideation, while neuroticism ($r = .205$; $p < 0.05$) had significant positive relationships with suicidal ideation. Similarly, peer relation had a significant negative relationship with suicidal ideation ($r = -.0.119$; $p < .05$). Lastly, self-esteem, personality trait and peer relation jointly yielded significant coefficient of regression $R^2 = .090$ ($p < 0.05$) with $F_{ratio} = 5.660$ on suicidal ideation among teenagers in the university.

Keywords: Self-esteem, personality traits, peer relationship, suicidal ideation, teenagers

INTRODUCTION

Suicide is the act of killing oneself intentionally through any means so desire, suicidal behaviour is a disorder categorised as a diagnostic entity in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual -5th edition (DSM-5) by (APA 2013) which is characterised by suicide attempts, thoughts and planning within the past two years while suicidal ideation are thought, rumination or plan about suicide, and have been found to be a precursor of suicide. Suicide have always been experienced in the human society, it was usually viewed as a single -isolated incident until recently when it began to call for global attention with a steady rise in the number of reported cases. Suicide constituted 1.8% of the total disease burden in 1998, nevertheless it is estimated to rise to 2.4% by 2020 (Bertolote, 2009). Every year, close to 800 000 cases of suicide are reported globally across all ages, with the incidence of attempted or incomplete suicide been twenty-five times more than the number of reported cases of suicide (Alabi et al., 2014; WHO, 2018), this steady rise calumniated in the slogan "every 40 seconds someone commits suicide" which is based on

the global annual average estimate of reported case of suicide. In as much as the exact number of death recorded through suicide is not known, Suicide ranked fifteenth on the global cause of death and interestingly, approximately 75% of these suicide occurred in middle and low-income countries (WHO, 2014b) including Nigeria. It has also been found to be the second leading causes of death among adolescent age 15-19 (WHO, 2012).

The steady rise in the number of reported cases of suicide have made it a global public health concern (Bridge et al., 2006; Hinduja & Patchin., 2018) necessitating various countries of the world developing strategies to minimise it. Conversely, the steady rise in adolescents suicide have been linked with several factors (Turner et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2015), which have been studied by several researchers: for example, Relationship between suicidal ideation and pressure to excel in school (Toero et al, 2001), correlation between academic stress and suicidal ideation among teenagers (Ang & Huan, 2006), higher suicidal ideas in academically achieving students compared to students having academic difficulty, (Arun et al, 2017), suicide ideation and Parental conflict (Omigbodun et al., 2008). Additionally, Substance abuse vs. Suicide ideation (Uwakwe & Gureje, 2011; Brannan & McGalloway, 2012), mental illness vs. suicide (Lee et al., 2006; Gureje et al., 2007; Uwakwe & Gureje, 2011; Balazs et al., 2013), conduct disorder vs. suicide (Omigbodun et al., 2008; Linker et al., 2012), socioeconomic disadvantage vs. suicidal ideation (Yildiz et al., 2018) and Childhood adversity vs suicide ideation (Gureje et al., (2007).

Regrettably, Nigeria occupied the 15th position on the global suicide table in term of prevalence 17.3% per 100,000 in 2016 but in term of the actual number of recorded cases of death resulting from suicide in the same year, Nigeria occupied the 5th position on the world ranking with 17,710 recorded cases (WHO, 2018). In as much as the prevalence rate of suicide in Nigeria cannot be said to be known, Gureje et al., (2007), reported 3.2% prevalence rate of suicidal ideation, while Omigbodun et al., (2008) found 20% prevalence rate of suicidal ideation among young Nigerians.

The process of gaining university admission in Nigeria seems a bit tedious for the teenagers because of the competition and the volume of preparation involved, whilst coping in the university due to the limited facility raise another challenge. In the same vein, the recent economic recession in Nigeria and the inconsistency in governance by way of frequent changes in government policies with its attendant effect on unemployment and inflation brought about a significant reduction in the financial resources of many families making the family in turn to demand value for tuition in form of good grades from the teenager which may result in enormous pressure on the teenager; causing the teenagers to react poles apart to the pressure.

Additionally, gaining admission in to the university has different meaning for different teenagers, for some “my freedom as finally comes” while to other “I’m not ready for this” yet to some other “the time to begin the journey of my life to the top is now”. The university as an institution of learning is also filled with academic, social, psychological, and emotional challenges which may task the teenagers’ physical, psychological, social and cognitive resources with coping becoming a problem. This may invariably become overwhelming thereby making the teenagers thinking of the easiest way – suicidal ideation.

The discussion of suicidal ideation among adolescences should be vividly looked into and bring forth solution or prevention to it. But today, the story is different due to some factors

that usually accompany suicidal ideation such as self-esteem, personality traits, peer relationship, stress etc. It is not possible to conceive suicidal thought without any possible factor triggering the thought.

There are many factors, which may contribute to suicidal thoughts such as low self-esteem, family and social factors (peer relationship), personality traits, depression (Garber et al., 1997; Turner et al., 2002). Adolescence is a period characterised by numerous challenges and it is an eventful phase of life. There can be a lot of emotional upheaval and stress. Adolescents can experience stress from family discord at home as well as having difficulties with peer relationship at school.

Personality refers to individuals' characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behaviour, together with the psychological mechanisms -- hidden or not -- behind those patterns. (Funder, 2001). Based on decades of factor-analytic research on personality in the natural lexicon and questionnaires, there is considerable (Digman, 1990; John, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1997), but not complete (Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1993; Tellegen, 1985), agreement that personality attributes can be grouped along five major dimensions: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Because this model of personality provides a relatively comprehensive coverage of personality traits, it can be used to explore and generate hypotheses about phenomena that have been relatively under investigated or about which there is relatively little theorizing.

Self-esteem is individual's feelings of worth. According to Brockner and Hulton (1978), high self-esteem is described as people who feel good about themselves, have fewer sleepless nights, less likely to use drugs and are more persistent at difficult tasks and are very happy. Moreover, people with low self-esteem do not necessarily see themselves as worthless or wicked, but they do lack good things to say about themselves. Higgins (1987) those whose self-image falls short of what they think they ought to be are vulnerable to anxiety.

Peer relationship is the extent of interpersonal relationship of an individual in the course of interacting with peers, colleague, schoolmate etc. social acceptance is very important to adolescent's psychological adjustment and well-being. Few studies have showed that poor peer relationships are associated with suicidal behaviour. Wanger and Corle (1995), conducted a survey among junior and senior high school students. The result showed that the younger adolescents' suicidal attempters reported higher levels of peer stress than other adolescent suicide attempt.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical orientations designed to explain the relationships among these variables is Interpersonal theory of suicide (Joiner, 2005; Joiner, Van Orden, Witte, Selby, Ribeiro, Lewis & Rudd, 2009), which offered that people cannot kill themselves unless they have the desire to die by suicide, and also have the ability to carry on the act. According to this theory, suicidal desires are caused by the simultaneous presence of two interpersonal constructs which are: i) Thwarted belonging or social alienation which refers to a state of alienation from others; it could be from family, friends or other groups. ii) Perceived burdensomeness which is a belief held by individuals that their existence burdens the family, friends or the society. This quasi-delusional

mentality brings about ideas like “my death will bring forth happiness to my family than staying alive”. Hence, people die by suicide because “they can” and “because they want to”, this to them will eliminate the perceived burden caused by them to their family, friends and the society. This was further illustrated in (Ma, Batterham, Alison and Han, (2016). Another potentially useful framework for studying the variables ties to suicidal ideation concerns the cognitive theory (Ellis, 1962; Beck, 1967; Beck, Steer, Kovacs & Garrison, 1985), whereby mind cognition (thoughts, feeling, belief and perceptions) was conceptualised as playing a key role in determining behaviour. Also, dysfunctional thoughts were posited to lead to extreme emotions and extreme emotion in turn lead to maladaptive behaviours. Therefore, dysfunctional thoughts which may arise as a result of esteem issues, personality issues, issues with relationships (either with peers, family or marital or occupational) could precipitate suicidal ideation and eventually lead to suicide.

Willbrun and Smith (2005), studied the relationship between stress, self-esteem and suicidal ideation in late adolescents. Self-esteem was found to be significantly related to suicidal ideation, while low self-esteem and stressful life event jointly predicted suicidal ideation among the adolescents.

A study conducted by CJN, Cheng, XU, Chen, and Wang, (2010). The sample size was 1771 Chinese adolescents from a large survey. The results from multivariate logistic regressing suggested that specific problems in peer relationships such as lack of peer association and being victimized by bullying were significantly related to suicidal ideation and attempts. In addition, the moderating effects of feeling of loneliness in the association between peer relationships and suicidal ideation and attempt were found.

Although, previous studies have examined suicidal ideation among adolescents and young adults in the general population and despite the enormous attention being received by suicide recently, with numerous studies conducted in and around it among the adolescents in the general population, we have not come across any work that specifically examine suicide ideation and associated factors such self-esteem and personality among teenagers in Nigerian university. Moreover, none of the reviewed work examines relationship between suicide ideation and peer relation; hence we set out to fill that gap in research with our study.

The aim of this study is to examine whether personality traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness), self-esteem and peer relation will play any role in the manifestation of suicidal ideation among teenagers in the university. Based on the literature regarding adolescents with suicide and suicidal ideation, we hypothesized that: 1) there would be significant relationship between self-esteem on suicidal ideation among teenage undergraduates: 2) there would be significant relationship between personality trait (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and suicidal ideation among teenage undergraduates: 3) there would be significant relationship between peer relationship and suicidal ideation among teenage undergraduates: 4) there would be joint relationship between self-esteem, personality traits, peer relationship and suicidal ideation among teenage undergraduates.

METHOD

Research Design

This study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design in which quantitative means were used to gather data through questionnaires in order to describe suicidal ideation, personality traits, self-esteem, and peer relation among teenagers in university.

Sampling technique

The study employed non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique. This was because most of the students were met in places where they completed the questionnaires such as cafeteria, at common rooms, at classes when they were not having lectures and at faculty library across the selected faculties.

Participants /Research Setting

The participants for this research were Three hundred and fifty (350) teenage undergraduate of the University of Lagos, they comprised 206 males (58.9%) and 144 females (41.1%) with age ranges from 16 to 19 years ($M=17.62$, $SD=1.12$). The University of Lagos was established in 1962 by the Federal Government of Nigeria and situated in the most populous city in West Africa (World Population Review, 2020). It is a conventional university with three campuses for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. One major criterion for admission at the university is the attainment of age sixteen by October 1st of the admission year. Consequently, the least age of student in any undergraduate programmes in University is 16 years. The University currently has a student population of 55,000 (Unilag pocket statistic 2019) which cuts across 12 faculties and 150 departments out of which 350 teenage undergraduates, with years of study ranging from 100 to 300 level, from four faculties namely, Medical Sciences, Business Managements, Law and Social Sciences were conveniently sampled for the study.

Research Instrument

Four standardized instruments were used to collect data from participants for this research. These are:

Index of peer relation (IPR): This is a 25 item instrument developed by Walter W. Hudson et al (1986). It was designed to measure the extent of the problems of interpersonal relationship of an individual which they are experiencing in the course of interacting with peers, colleague, schoolmate etc. Statements about the respondent's relationship with his or her peer group are endorsed by using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "None of the time" to "All of the time". Select items are reverse-coded, such that higher scores indicate greater difficulty with the peer group. Reliability and validity of the scale have been established (Hudson, 1990). The internal consistency reliability of the IPR in the adolescent sample was $\alpha = .95$. The norms obtained by Anumba (1995) for Nigeria samples 29.31 for males and 26.83 for females. The norms obtained for America males and a female by Hudson (1986) was .35 for 107 students. Anumba also obtained a validity coefficient of .62 for Nigerian samples which correlated IPR with Hare self-esteem (SS) by Hare (1985).

Index of self-esteem (ISE): SE was developed by Walter W. Hudson (1982). It is a 25-item Likert scale format inventory designed to measure the self-perceived and self-evaluating components of self-concept which is the sum total of the self-perceived views of the self-held by a person. The questionnaire can be administered individually or in groups after a proper establishment of rapport, it has a combination of direct and indirect scoring pattern to arrive at the aggregate score. Hudson (1982) provided the original psychometric properties for American samples while Onighaiye (1996) provided the psychometric properties for Nigerian samples. The norms reported here are the mean score obtained by the general population. The American samples for male and female 30. While the Nigerian samples for male is 30.81 and female 32.04. Hudson (1982) obtained a coefficient alpha of .93 and a 2 hours' test-retest coefficient of .92. Onighaiye (1992) obtained the following validity by correlating ISE with stated test concurrent validity with SCL to 90 by Derogatis et al (1973) in scale C – inter personal sensitivity, 42 scale D – depression = 48. Onighaiye also obtained a discriminate validity using ego identify scale (ESI) by Tan et al (1977) = 48.

Big-Five Personality Inventory: The Nigerian Adapted version of the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI) by Omoluabi (2002) was used to measure personality variables. It is an adaptation of the original Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by Costa and McCrae (1992). The BFI is a 44-item inventory on a five-point Likert scale format ranging from 1- 'strongly disagree' to 5- 'strongly agree'. It was designed to assess personality from a five-dimensional perspective. The essence of the perspective is that personality characteristics can be resolved into five broad dimensions which are distinct from one another. They include (a) Extraversion (b) Agreeableness (c) Conscientiousness (d) Neuroticism (e) Openness to experience. John, Donahue, and Kentle (1991) provided the original psychometric properties for American samples while Umeh (2004) provided the psychometric properties for Nigerian samples. The coefficients of reliability provided by John et al. (1991) are: Cronbach Alpha .80 and 3-month test-retest .85, with mean convergent validity coefficient of .75 and .85 with the Big Five Instruments authored by Costa and McCrae (1992) and Golberg (1992) respectively. The divergent validity coefficients obtained by Umeh (2004) with University Maladjustment Scale (Kleinmuntz, 1961) are Extraversion .05, Agreeableness .13, Conscientiousness .11, Neuroticism .39 and Openness .24.

Suicide Ideation Questionnaire (SIQ): The suicidal ideation questionnaire is a 25-item self-administered questionnaire developed by (Reynolds, 1987). It was designed to assess an individual's preoccupation with thoughts of suicide on a 7-point Likert-type scale format ranging from 0 to 6. The questionnaire, requires individuals to indicate the frequency with which they have suicidal thoughts selecting from the following choices: (0) I never had this thought; (1) I had this thought before but not in the past month; (2) Almost once a month; (3) Couple of times a month; (4) About once a week; (5) Couple of times a week; (6) Almost every day. The responses aggregate is found by adding up all the response values to obtain a possible scores ranging from 0 to 150, with higher scores indicating a greater disposition for suicidal ideation and participants who obtains a cumulative score of 24 or greater on the SIQ is said to have a clinically significant score and should be considered a candidate for further psychological evaluation and

intervention, however, the mean score of participants' responses for this study is 30. SIQ has been found to have a high internal consistency reliability (coefficient alpha = .96) and a moderate to high level of test-retest reliability ($r = .86$). The instrument correlates highly with the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale ($r = .92$) (Reynolds, 1987).

Procedure

After obtaining ethical approval from the faculty ethical committee, the researchers met with the participants in groups in the lecture room while they were waiting for their scheduled classes, cafeteria, common room and faculty library. The researchers sought their permission to speak with everyone in the group followed by the researchers introducing themselves and the purpose of the research to the students: the students were given room to ask questions to clarify any grey areas. The inclusion criteria were read to them followed by the call for participation. All those who are willing, able to participate and volunteered to participate were given questionnaires to fill, thus forming the participants for the study. The inclusion criteria for this study: 1) must be between the age of 16 and 19 years; 2) must be an undergraduate; 3) must be between 100 to 300 levels of study; 4) must be in any of the four selected faculties.

Data analysis

The data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson moment correlation and regression statistics were used for this study. The regression was used to test joint relationships between and among the entire variable while Pearson Moment correlation was used to test for relationships between individual variables and suicidal ideation. All data were analysed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23 (SPSS 23).

RESULTS

Data collected in this study were subjected to statistical analysis obtaining the mean score and standard deviation of all the variables. The hypotheses were tested using descriptive statistics, Pearson moment correlation, regression analysis and independent t-test.

Table 1: Table of the descriptive statistics of suicidal ideation, self-esteem, peer relation and personality traits

| Variables | N | Mean | SD |
|------------------------|-----|-------|-------|
| Suicidal ideation | 350 | 48.22 | 20.17 |
| Self-esteem | 350 | 25.52 | 6.46 |
| Peer relation | 350 | 25.07 | 6.22 |
| Extraversion | 350 | 20.13 | 8.64 |
| Agreeableness | 350 | 20.16 | 8.67 |
| Conscientiousness | 350 | 20.18 | 8.67 |
| Openness to experience | 350 | 20.15 | 8.66 |
| Neuroticism | 350 | 31.49 | 6.59 |

Result in Table 1 showed the mean and standard deviation of suicidal ideation, self-esteem, extraversion, agreeableness conscientiousness, openness to experience and neuroticism. Suicidal ideation had a mean of (M=48.22; SD=20.17), self-esteem had a mean of (M=25.52; SD=6.46), peer relation had a mean of (M=25.07; SD=6.22), extraversion had a mean of (M=20.13; SD=8.64), agreeableness had a mean of (M=20.16; SD=8.67), conscientiousness had a mean of (M=20.18; SD=8.67), openness had a mean of (M=20.15; SD=8.66) while neuroticism had a mean of (M=31.49; SD=6.59).

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant negative relationship between Self-esteem and suicidal ideation among adolescents

Table 2: Correlation between Self-esteem and suicide ideation

| Variables | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | P |
|----------------------|-------|-------|---------|---|------|
| Suicide ideation (1) | 48.22 | 20.17 | 1 | | ≤.03 |
| Self-esteem (2) | 25.52 | 6.46 | -0.174* | 1 | |

* = P < 0.05

Results showed a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and suicidal ideation ($r = -0.174$, $p < .05$). The result shows a negative correlation between Self-esteem and suicidal ideation.

Hypothesis 2: Personality traits will significant relationship with suicidal ideation.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Personality Trait and suicidal ideation

| Variables | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| 1. Suicidal ideation | 48.22 | 20.17 | 1 | | | | | |
| 2. Extraversion | 20.13 | 8.64 | -.127** | 1 | | | | |
| 3. Agreeableness | 20.16 | 8.67 | -.130** | .999* | 1 | | | |
| 4. conscientiousness | 20.18 | 8.67 | -.129* | .999** | 1.000 | 1 | | |
| 5. Openness to exp. | 20.15 | 8.66 | -.128** | .999** | .1001* | .1000* | 1 | |
| 6. Neuroticism | 31.49 | 6.59 | .205* | -.112** | -.110* | -.108* | -.112* | 1 |

** = P < 0.01 level (1-tailed), * = P < 0.05 level (1-tailed)

Results revealed that personality traits of extraversion ($r = -.127$; $p < 0.01$); agreeableness ($r = -.130$; $p < 0.01$); conscientiousness ($r = -.129$; $p < 0.01$), openness to experience ($r = -.128$; $p < 0.01$), and neuroticism ($r = .205$; $p < 0.01$) had significant negative relationships with suicidal ideation.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant negative relationship between peer relation and suicidal ideation among adolescents.

Table 4: Correlation between peer relation and suicide ideation

| Variables | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | P |
|----------------------|-------|-------|---------|---|------|
| Suicide ideation (1) | 48.22 | 20.17 | 1 | | ≤.03 |
| peer relation (2) | 25.07 | 6.22 | -0.119* | 1 | |

* = P < 0.05

Results showed a significant negative relationship between peer relation and suicidal ideation ($r = -0.119, p < .05$). The result shows a negative correlation between peer relation and suicidal ideation.

Hypothesis 4: Self-esteem, peer relations and personality traits would jointly predict suicidal ideation among adolescent.

Table 5: Regression Analysis Showing the Relationship Contribution of Self-esteem, Peer relations and Personality Traits to the Prediction of suicidal ideation

| Variables | B | Beta | t | Sig. | R | R ² | F _{ratio} | Pv |
|------------------------|--------|-------|--------|------|------|----------------|--------------------|----------|
| Self-esteem | -1.180 | -.378 | -3.134 | .002 | | | | |
| Peer relations | -.918 | -.283 | -2.316 | .021 | | | | |
| Extraversion | 3.867 | 1.658 | 1.056 | .292 | | | | |
| Agreeableness | -5.967 | -2.56 | -1.463 | .144 | | | | |
| Conscientiousness | .251 | -.108 | -.108 | .041 | .300 | 0.090 | 5.660 | p < 0.05 |
| Openness to experience | 1.929 | .828 | .402 | .688 | | | | |
| Neuroticism | .632 | .207 | 3.929 | .000 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: *Suicidal ideation*

b. Predictors: *Personality traits* (openness, extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, agreeableness)

Regression analysis in Table 5 shows that the independent variables self-esteem, peer relations, personality traits-extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and agreeableness are negative predictor of suicidal ideation among adolescents (Self-esteem: Beta = $-.378$; $t = -3.134$; peer relations, Beta = $-.283$; $t = -2.316$; Extraversion: Beta = 1.658 ; $t = 1.056$; Agreeableness: Beta = -2.566 ; $t = -1.463$; Conscientiousness: Beta = $-.108$; $t = -.108$ and openness to experience: Beta = $.828$; $t = .402$; $p < 0.05$ respectively). Meanwhile, neuroticism at personality trait independently and positively contribute to the prediction of suicidal ideation (Beta = $.207$, $t = 3.929$ at $p < 0.05$). However, jointly the variables yielded significant coefficient of regression $R^2 = .090$ ($p < 0.05$) with $F_{ratio} = 5.660$. This shows that self-esteem, peer relation and the five dispositional characteristics of personality accounted for about 9.0% of the observed variance in suicidal ideation.

DISCUSSION

The current study sought to address a set of fundamental questions regarding the role of self-esteem, personality traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and peer relation in the manifestation of suicidal ideation among teenagers in the university. Four hypothesis were proposed to examined these

relationships 1) there would be significant relationship between self-esteem and suicidal ideation among teenage undergraduates: 2) there would be significant relationship between personality trait (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and suicidal ideation among teenage undergraduates: 3) there would be significant relationship between peer relations and suicidal ideation among teenage undergraduates: 4) there would be joint relationship between self-esteem, personality traits, peer relationship and suicidal ideation among teenage undergraduates. Although a growing body of research has supported the findings of this study.

The result revealed that self-esteem have significant negative relationship with suicidal ideation, this result is supported by a recent study by Nguyen, Wright, Deddings, Pham, and Bunders (2019) who found that self-esteem is associated with anxiety, depression, and academic stress, which significantly affect students' quality of life and link with suicide ideation among Vietnamese Secondary School Students. This finding is also in congruence with the study of Willbrun and Smith (2005) which found that low self-esteem and stressful life events significantly predict suicidal ideation among the adolescents.

Furthermore, the study found a significant relationship between personality trait (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness to experience, Conscientiousness and neuroticism) and suicidal ideation at positive and negative significant level. Brezo, Paris and Tureki (2006) corroborate this result in their study on personality traits as correlates of suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and suicide completions in which they found that some selected personality traits may be useful markers of suicide risk. Therefore, Extroversion/introversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness showed negative significant relationship with suicidal ideation, while neuroticism showed positive significant relationship which indicates that the higher the neuroticism, the higher chances of having suicidal ideation. This is in line with the cognitive theory by Beck (1967), according to this cognitive theory, our dysfunctional thoughts lead to extreme emotions. These extreme emotions in turn, lead to maladaptive behaviours. These results are in line with previous research in the clinical literature (Kotov, Gamez, Schmitz, & Watson, 2010; Mu, Luo, Nickel, & Roberts, 2016), which shows that neuroticism predicts most forms of psychopathology, such as depression, anxiety, psychological distress, and substance abuse. Extroversion as proposed by Eysenck (1963) has greater traits of sociability, impulsiveness, lack of inhibitions, vitality, optimism, and ingenuity. On the other hand, the more introverted people are generally more tranquil, passive, are less social, and more pessimistic. Extroversion is concerned with the balance between the excitation and inhibition processes in the central nervous system. Its main function is to maintain optimal level of arousal. However, individuals who are highly extroverted has a low chance of conceding suicidal thoughts as showed in the result that there is a negative relationship between extroversion and suicidal ideation. Agreeableness describes traits usually displayed in interpersonal relationships such as courtesy, altruism and compliance. They are individuals who have the tendency to agree and are good at getting along with others. Therefore, people with this personality trait have a very low chance of conceding suicidal ideation, hence negative relationship.

Conscientiousness, this concerns variables such as self-discipline, deliberation and dutifulness. They are people who are very careful, well organised, neat, keep to time, obey the

rules and hardworking. Thus, people with high of conscientiousness have low suicidal ideation as the result showed that there was a negative relationship with suicidal ideation. Openness to experience has often been associated with intellect and depicts a tendency towards a variety of experience, ranging from inner thoughts or fantasy to actions and ideas. This is the tendency to appreciate new things, ideas, values, feelings and behaviour, for this reason people who are willing to explore new ideas, go on an adventure, find life worth living and enjoyable have a very little or no room to harbour suicidal thoughts which is the reason for the negative relationship.

Additionally, the result found that there is a negative relationship between peer relations and suicidal ideation among teenagers in university. Although there are fewer studies that have examined the relationship between peer functioning and suicidal ideation among teenagers: however, it is important to explore the contribution of the role of adolescent peer relations for preventive study in public health action for the prevention of suicide. Some studies found that one third of adolescents who attempt suicide report interpersonal concerns (e.g., isolation from peers, lack of supportive friendships, a recent peer conflict, or boyfriend/girlfriend breakups) as precipitants to suicidal behaviour (e.g., Berman & Schwartz, 1990; Hawton, Fagg, & Simkin, 1996). This implies that poor interpersonal relationship between peers can predispose teenagers to suicidal ideation and suicide. This agrees with the study by C.J.N et al. (2010) in which they found that peer relations such as lack of peer association and victimization by bullying were significantly related to suicidal ideation and attempts. Moreover, the interpersonal theory of suicide by Joiner (2005) posits that the most dangerous form of suicidal according to this theory is caused by the simultaneous presence of two interpersonal constructs, which are thwarted belonging, or social alienation and perceived burdensomeness. This theory backed up the result, which showed that there was a negative relationship between peer relationship and suicidal ideation.

Furthermore, the study investigated the joint relationship between self-esteem, personality traits, peer relationship and suicidal ideation among teenage undergraduate, the result showed that the under listed variables accounted for about 9.0% of the observed variance in suicidal ideation. However, these studies focus primarily on large samples of teenagers in university instead of a specialized population presenting with a psychological complaint. What remains unclear is whether other factors linked to teenagers such as abusive parenting, dysfunctional family, traumatic childhood experience, bereavement, missing school, poorer health, self-reported loneliness, and poorer school achievement function as potential mediators for the relationship between self-esteem, personality traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and peer relation in the manifestation of suicidal ideation among teenagers in the university. There is a dearth of scientific study on the exploration of the joint relationships of the variables.

CONCLUSION

This study has added to the growing literature on suicide ideation among teenagers although it was carried out among teenagers that are undergraduate and not those that are in the diagnostic category or hospitalized but it is important to know that assessment of undergraduate students for suicide ideation is necessary for preventive care to the menace. Also

there is need to pay attention to personalities of adolescent since it has been established in this study that neuroticism is significantly associated with suicidal ideation and several studies has also confirmed the findings. Assessment is also necessary for teenager's self-esteem because evaluation of deficit in self-esteem will help to address the prevalence of suicide among teenagers. Our findings suggest the need for school-based therapy or counselling to help students develop their skills thereby proactively increasing their self-esteem and reducing academic stress. In the meantime, it will be important to clinically screen teenagers for suicidality ones' admission is given so that the academic stress does not trigger suicidal ideation.

Implications of the findings

The implication of this study gives insight on how personality attributes as a predictor to suicidal ideation and it was also proven that poor peer interpersonal relationship can also predispose one to having suicidal ideation. The action plan must be all-inclusive so that the family, schools, and peers can assist in preventing suicidal ideation among teenagers. The research has essential practical implications, proposing that depression can be stopped, or reduced, by interventions that develop self-esteem.

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