



# Age and Gender Influence on Suicidal Ideation Among Undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria

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**Abstract**— This study investigated age and gender influence on suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis. Descriptive research design was used for this study. The participants of this study consisted of 250 randomly selected undergraduates from five faculties of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin Nigeria. Suicidal Ideation Scale used by Roberts and Chen (1995) was adopted to collect the data. Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 critical region. The finding indicated that there were significant gender and age difference in the suicidal ideation of undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis. The findings were discussed and necessary recommendations based on the findings of the study were highlighted. This includes the fact that intervention programme for managing self-destructive ideation among undergraduates should take into cognizance the influence of age and gender.

**Keywords**— educational management, gender influence, undergraduates, ideation.

## INTRODUCTION

Suicide is in the top twenty leading causes of demise internationally and the subsequent driving reason for death among youngsters matured 15 to 29 years. of age (World Health Organization, 2014). Globally, a large percentage of suicide is linked to low and middle-income countries where stigma around suicide is high and mental health promotion services, and treatment options are poorly organised and inadequate (Lancet, 2017). Within the last decade, cases of suicide attempts and suicide among young people including those in the university system have been reported in Nigeria (Aloba, Adefemi, & Aloba, 2018; Aloba, Ojeleye, & Aloba, 2017), elsewhere (January, Madhombiro, Chipamaunga, Ray, Chingono & Abas 2018; Patton, Sawyer, Santelli, Ross, Afifi, Allen, Bonell, 2016). More suicidal thoughts are ongoing, given the social pressures confronting emerging adults within and outside the university system. The menace of suicidal ideation is far from being over as report of this act has not seized from occurrence. In Nigeria recently, it has been observed that suicide is the leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24 (Berthane, Canavan, Darling, Sudfeld, Vual, Adanu, Barnighausen, Dessie, Bukenya, Guwatudde, Killewo, Sando, Sie, Oduola, & Fawzi, 2020). Based on the foregoing, this study intended to extend the frontier of knowledge on suicidal ideation by investigating the age and gender influence on suicidal ideation of undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis.

Olaseni (2017) investigated demographic factors related with self-destructive ideation among Nigerian teenagers with 600 members containing Nigerian male and female youths. Personal factors were estimated utilizing a self-created measure and Hopelessness Depression Symptom Questionnaire-Suicidality Subscale was utilized to quantify and evaluate self-destructive ideation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was utilized to decide the sort of connections that exist among the factors. The outcome of the study showed significant relationship between the ages of the respondents and their suicidal ideation. Also, gender was found to have significant negative relationship with the suicide ideation. In addition to this, no significant relationship was found between ethnicity and suicidal ideation of the participants.

Reed, Nugent and Cooper (2015) observed connections between age, sex, conventional tormenting and digital harassing exploitation, and vicious conduct, substance misuse, misery, self-destructive ideation and self-destruction endeavors in teenagers among 15,425 secondary school understudies from across the United States.

Results recommended that female youths who detailed digital tormenting exploitation additionally revealed higher paces of melancholy and self-destructive practices contrasted with their male partners, and that as young people got more established, despondency and substance misuse would in general increment, while rough conduct and self-destructive deduction would in general diminish. Ibrahim, Normah and Oug (2017) studied gender differences in suicidal ideation and determined the predictors of suicidal ideation among youth.

This study was conducted among 232 youths aged between 15 and 25 years from selected urban areas in Malaysia. The results indicated that suicidal ideation was higher among male participants compared with female participants. Age was the predictor of suicidal ideation for males, while depression and loss of motivation, as components of hopelessness, were the predictors of suicidal ideation among females

There seems not to be consensus among the previous studies about the age and gender influence on the suicide ideation of the respondents. The quest to establish the pattern of the above results among the undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis informed the conduct of this study. Besides, there is dearth of studies investigating age and gender influence on the suicidal ideation among undergraduate in Ilorin Metropolis. This is the gap intended to be filled by this research endeavour.

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

- There is no significant gender difference in the suicidal ideation of undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis.
- There is no significant age difference in the suicidal ideation of undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The study was not aimed at manipulating any variable and observing the effect of the manipulation on the other variable. Rather, it intended to collect data from the participants in their natural milieu without any manipulation.

The population of the study consisted of all students in the five faculties of Al-Hikmah University situated within the Ilorin metropolis. Put differently, the population included all Al-Hikmah University undergraduates in the Art and Social-sciences, Natural and Applied, Health Sciences, Education and Law faculties.

The sample of this study comprised 250 undergraduates randomly selected from the only university within the Ilorin Metropolis, Al-Hikmah University. The participants were made up of 118 males and 132 females with the ages of the participants ranging between 18 and 29 years; and mean and standard deviation of the ages respectively as 24.68 years and 11.53. The whole participants were selected from five faculties of the school which are situated within the confines of the study. Faculties of education (38); Arts and Social Sciences (75); Natural and Applied Sciences (81), Management Sciences (32) and Law (24). In addition to this, 184 students (73.6%) are younger students whose age are less than 24 years and 66 students (26.4%) are older students whose age are 24 years and above.

Suicidal Ideation Scale used by Roberts and Chen (1995) was adopted to measure suicide ideation of the participants. The scale comprises 21-items used to measure suicidal ideation among undergraduate student participants. The scale was constructed using a 3-point Likert scale between from 2 to 0. The minimum score is 0, while the maximum score is 42. The scale had internal consistency of .87 and .98. Since the scale was standardized using western sample to determine its Cronbach alpha), the need arose for the researcher to re-validate the instrument for the purpose of the present research. The internal consistency of the scale was determined by using split-half method of reliability. This returned the reliability coefficient of 0.85

On the procedure for data collection, the copies of the instrument of the study were administered to the randomly selected undergraduate students in the university that voluntarily participated in the study. Five research assistants (each for each faculty) who had been thoroughly instructed about the etiquettes of data collection administered the study's scale. The undergraduates completed the survey forms anonymously and the purpose of the study of the research was explained to the participants. The participants were assured that their responses were confidential and would be treated as such.

The statistical procedure employed to analyse the collected data was t. test statistical procedure. This procedure is adopted from it is the one that can enable the determination of significant difference among data that do not have more than two means.

## RESULTS

### 1. Hypothesis One

There is no significant gender difference in the suicidal ideation of university undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis.

**Table 1: t. Test Table Showing the Gender Difference in the Suicidal Ideation of Undergraduate Students in Ilorin Metropolis**

| Variable | No  | Mean  | S. D. | DF  | t. Observed | P    | Decision |
|----------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------------|------|----------|
| Male     | 118 | 23.45 | 11.53 |     |             |      |          |
| Female   | 132 | 28.48 | 12.35 | 248 | 3.18        | 0.02 | Rejected |

The table shows the result obtained from testing hypothesis one. From the table, it is shown that t. observed is 3.18, degree of freedom is 248 and Probability is 0.02. Since the probability (0.02) is less than 0.05 critical region of taking decision, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant gender difference in the suicidal ideation of undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis.

### 2. Hypothesis Two

There is no significant age difference in the suicidal ideation of university undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis.

**Table 2: t. Test Table Showing the Age Difference in the Suicidal Ideation of Undergraduate Students in Ilorin Metropolis**

| Variable                      | No  | Mean  | S. D. | DF  | t. Observed | P    | Decision |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------------|------|----------|
| Younger<br>(less than 24 yrs) | 184 | 26.34 | 12.13 |     |             |      |          |
| Older<br>(24 yrs. & above)    | 66  | 24.86 | 10.25 | 248 | 2.82        | 0.04 | Rejected |

The table shows the result obtained from testing hypothesis two. From the table, it is shown that t. observed is 2.82, degree of freedom is 248 and Probability is 0.04. Since the probability (0.04) is less than 0.05 critical region of taking decision, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant age difference in the suicidal ideation of undergraduates in Ilorin Metropolis.

## DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study show that there is significant gender difference in the suicidal ideation of undergraduate in Ilorin Metropolis. This means that suicidal ideation of the female undergraduate in Ilorin

metropolis is higher than their male's counterparts. This implies that the suicidal ideation among the undergraduate in Ilorin Metropolis is significantly different on the basis of their gender. The finding supports the previous findings of Ibrahim, et al (2017) and Reed, et al 2015. These studies observed that there was significant gender difference in the suicidal ideation of their respondents. The reason for this may not be far fetch. Naturally male are created to be stronger than female. They have better spiritual shock absorber than female folks. More often than none, female do not usually have strength to withstand an unfortunate and negative events of life and this make them more prone to suicidal ideation.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also indicated that there is significant age difference in the suicidal ideation of undergraduate in Ilorin Metropolis. Invariably, this discloses that the younger undergraduate's express higher suicidal ideation than the older participants. This implies that the age of the participants exerts significant influence on their suicidal ideation. This finding confirms the previous findings of Ibrahim, et al. (2017) and Reed, et al. (2015). These studies reported a significant age difference in the suicidal ideation of their participants. The reason for this finding may not be unconnected with the fact that wisdom comes with ages. Wisdom is the one of those things that can protect individual from suicidal intention. The younger undergraduate may not have enough wisdom to protect them from contemplating suicidality.

The implication of this study is that age and gender of the participants exert significant influence on their suicidal ideation. Based on this, it is recommended that the prevention programme of suicidal ideation should not relegate the importance of age and gender as influencing factors. The intervention programme should concentrate more on female and younger undergraduates as these are more vulnerable to suicidal ideation. This suggestion could also be useful to counselling centers, and psychological clinics on university campuses which may be interested in coming out with programmes that could be effective in addressing the menace of self-killing thought among undergraduates.

It is suggested that better results on this or similar topic can be obtained if the participant and context of the research is expanded. The present studies used 250 participants selected from the only university in Ilorin Metropolis. The number of the participants can be increased and context of the study can be widened to include more universities in Kwara State and beyond.

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