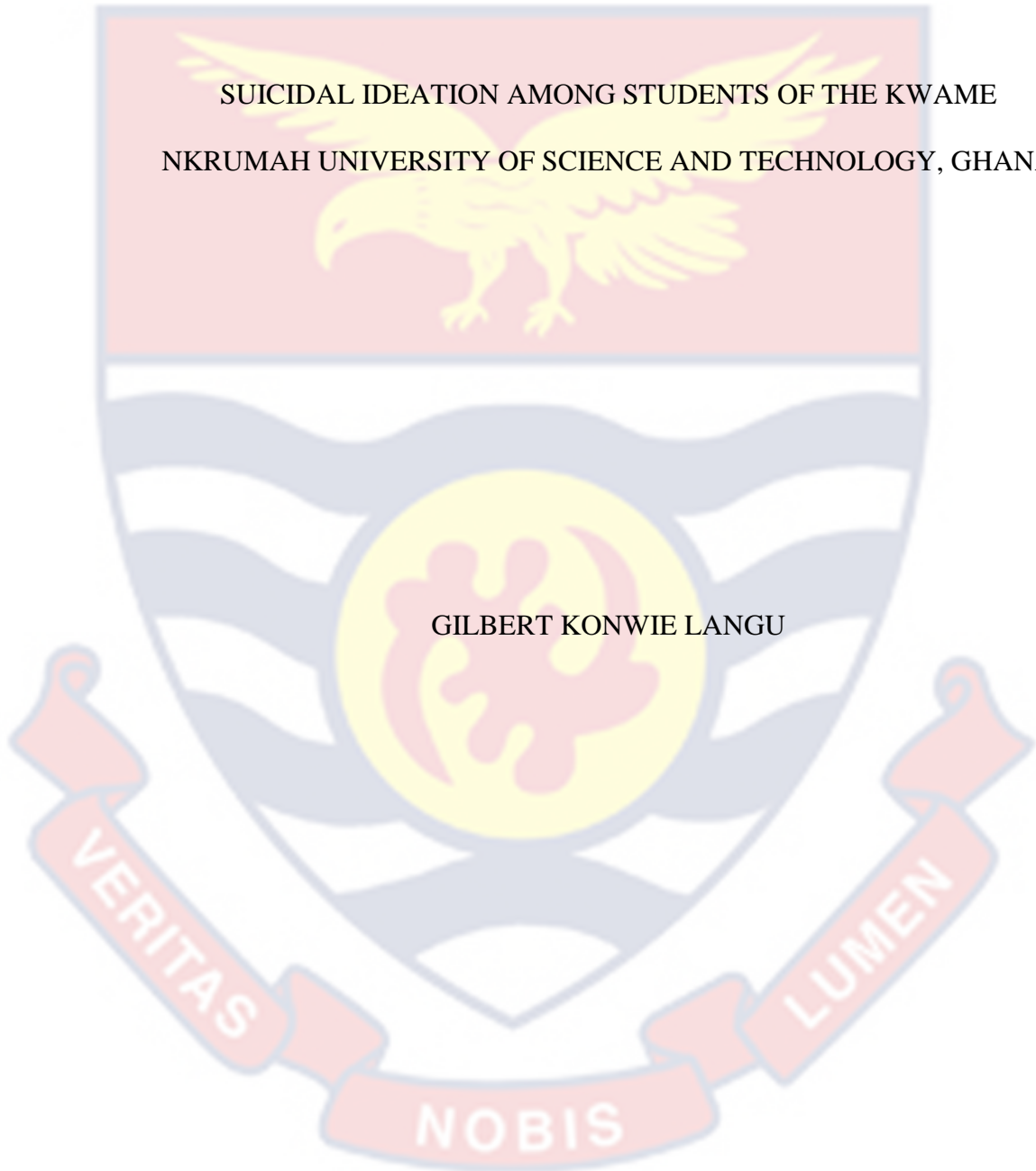UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

SUICIDAL IDEATION AMONG STUDENTS OF THE KWAME

NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, GHANA

GILBERT KONWIE LANGU

2024

© 2024

Gilbert Konwie Langu

University of Cape Coast

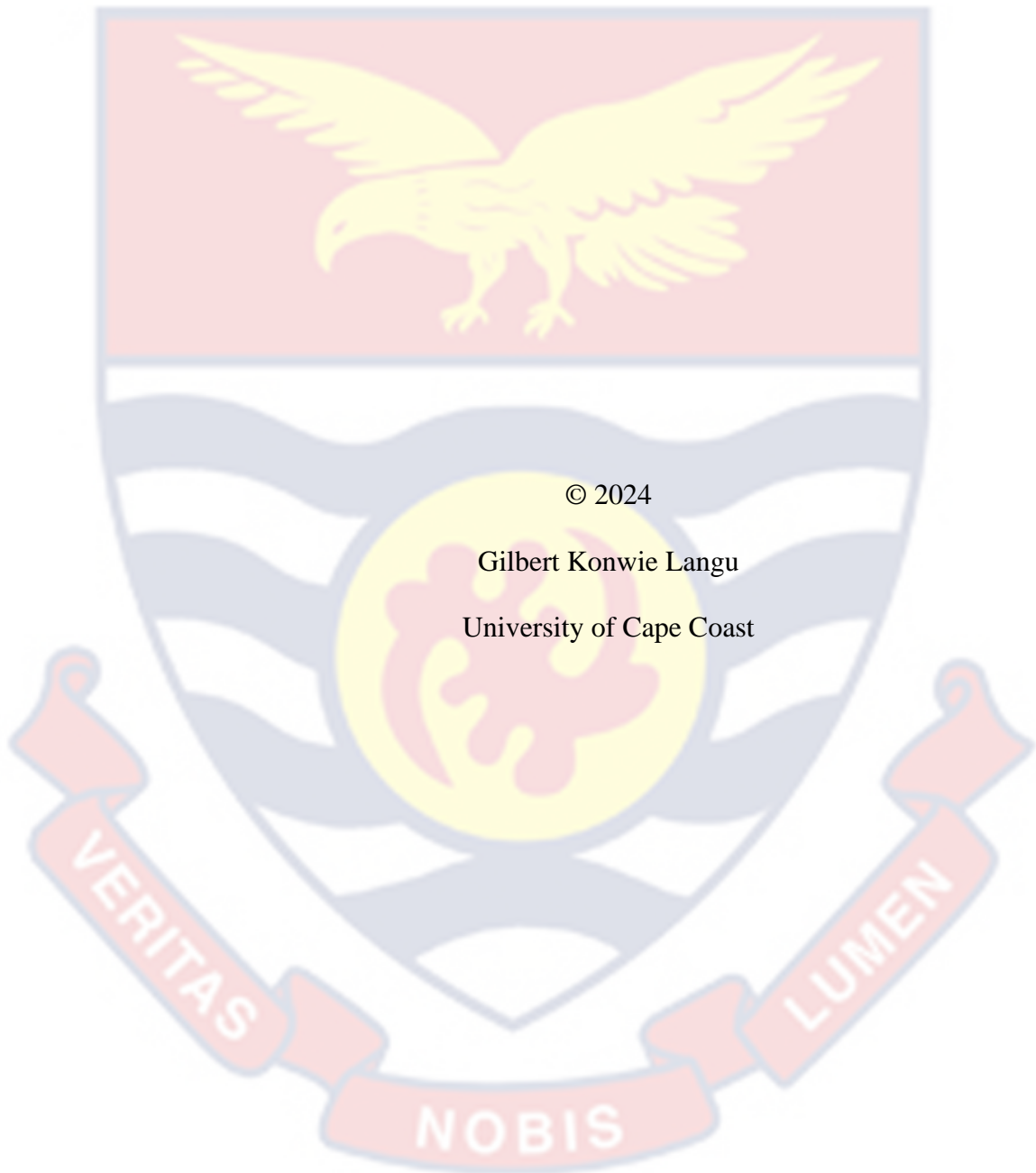UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

SUICIDAL IDEATION AMONG STUDENTS OF THE KWAME

NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, GHANA

BY

GILBERT KONWIE LANGU

Thesis submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the

Faculty of Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, University

of Cape Coast in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of

Master of Philosophy degree in Guidance and Counselling

JUNE 2024

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and

that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or
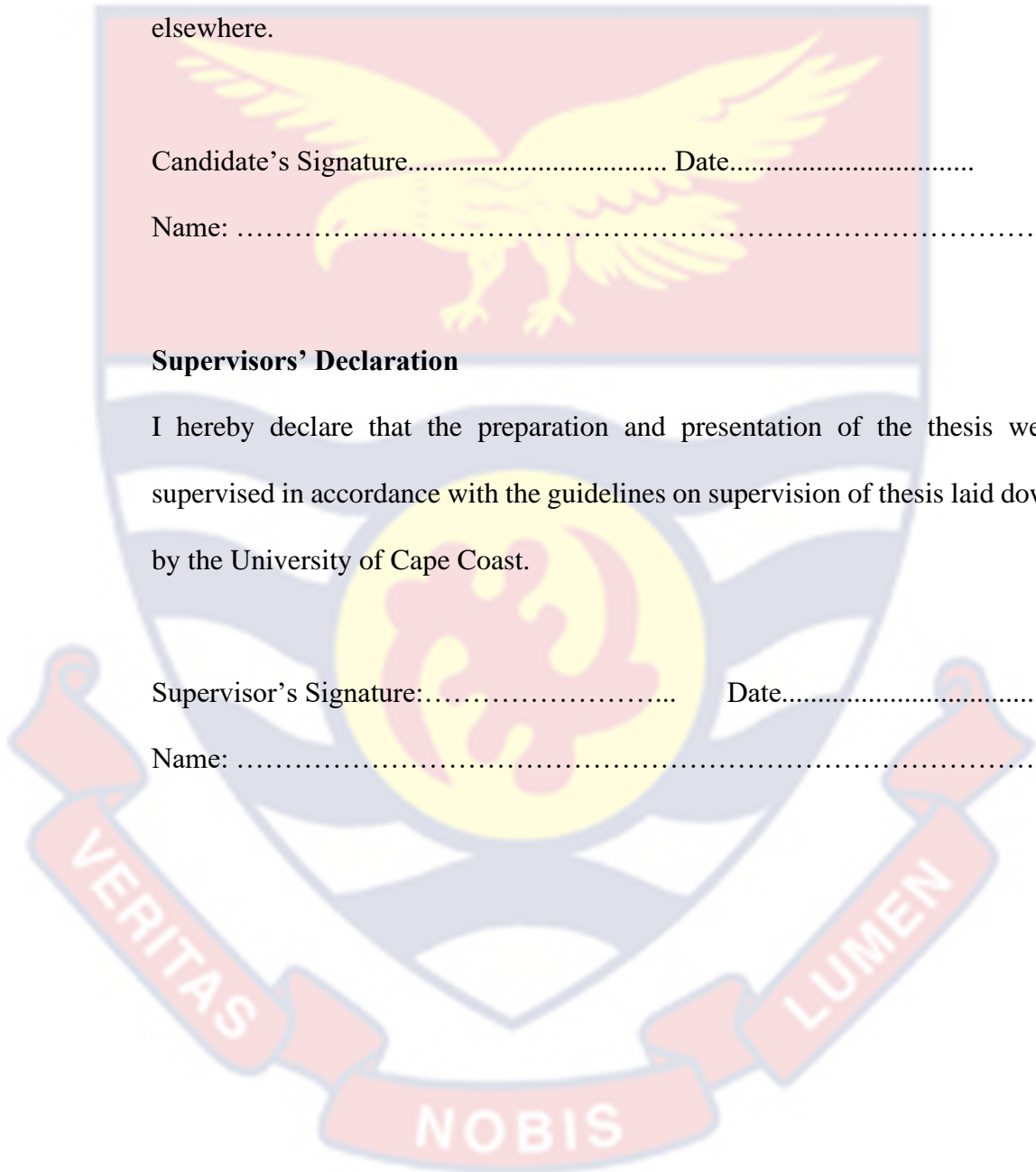
elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature.................................. Date.................................

Name: ……………………………………………………………………….

Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were

supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down

by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature:…………………….. Date......................................

Name: …………………………………………………………………………

ii

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore suicidal ideation among university students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. The study adopted a qualitative case study approach. The study, through purposive and snowball sampling techniques sampled 20 students from three colleges of the university out of 71,844 students that reflected data saturation. The data was gathered using a semi-structured interview guide. The data obtained was analyzed qualitatively using thematic approach. The study discovered that suicidal ideation was triggered by depression, stress, financial challenges, academic performance, poor relationship issues, loneliness and sickness/illness. Suicidal ideation resulted in poor academic performance, substance abuse, psychological, isolation/loneliness, low self-esteem and anxiety. Additionally, the study discovered that building self-resilience, counselling/psychotherapy, academic advisor's help, social support and motivational speech/messages were management strategies that students used to overcome their suicidal ideation. It was concluded that, the causes of suicidal ideation were influenced by a multitude of factors comprising a range of mental health challenges. Also, students adopted a combination of self-resilience techniques, counselling support and social networks to overcome their suicidal ideation. As a result, the study recommended to the university authorities and the Counselling Centre to develop mental health and suicide prevention programmes targeting the issues of depression stress, academic and relationship issues. Budgetary support for needy students should also be increased. Also, programmes should be organize for students on how to reduce suicide ideation or cope up with the situation.

KEYWORDS

Causes

Impact

Strategies

Suicidal ideation

University students

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Stephen Doh Fia of the Department of Guidance for his professional guidance and unwavering support throughout this project. His expertise has been invaluable in reaching this successful outcome.

Additionally, I am deeply thankful to Mr. Joseph Asamoah-Gyawu for his steadfast support and encouragement, serving as a pillar of strength throughout this journey.

My gratitude also extends to my wife, Natalia Bayour, and our children Gershon Kanyiri Langu, Geaten Dorsah Langu, Gertrude Puoyelle Langu, Germa Mwinkaara Langu, and Godwin Konbangye Langu for their prayers, encouragement, and unwavering support. Their sacrifices and love have been instrumental in my success. Furthermore, I am thankful to my brothers, Andrews T. K. Langu and Amatus Langu, for their constant encouragement and support.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge Mr. Gregory Ali Sanyella, a fellow M.Phil student, for his unwavering presence and support throughout this project. His companionship has been greatly appreciated.

DEDICATION
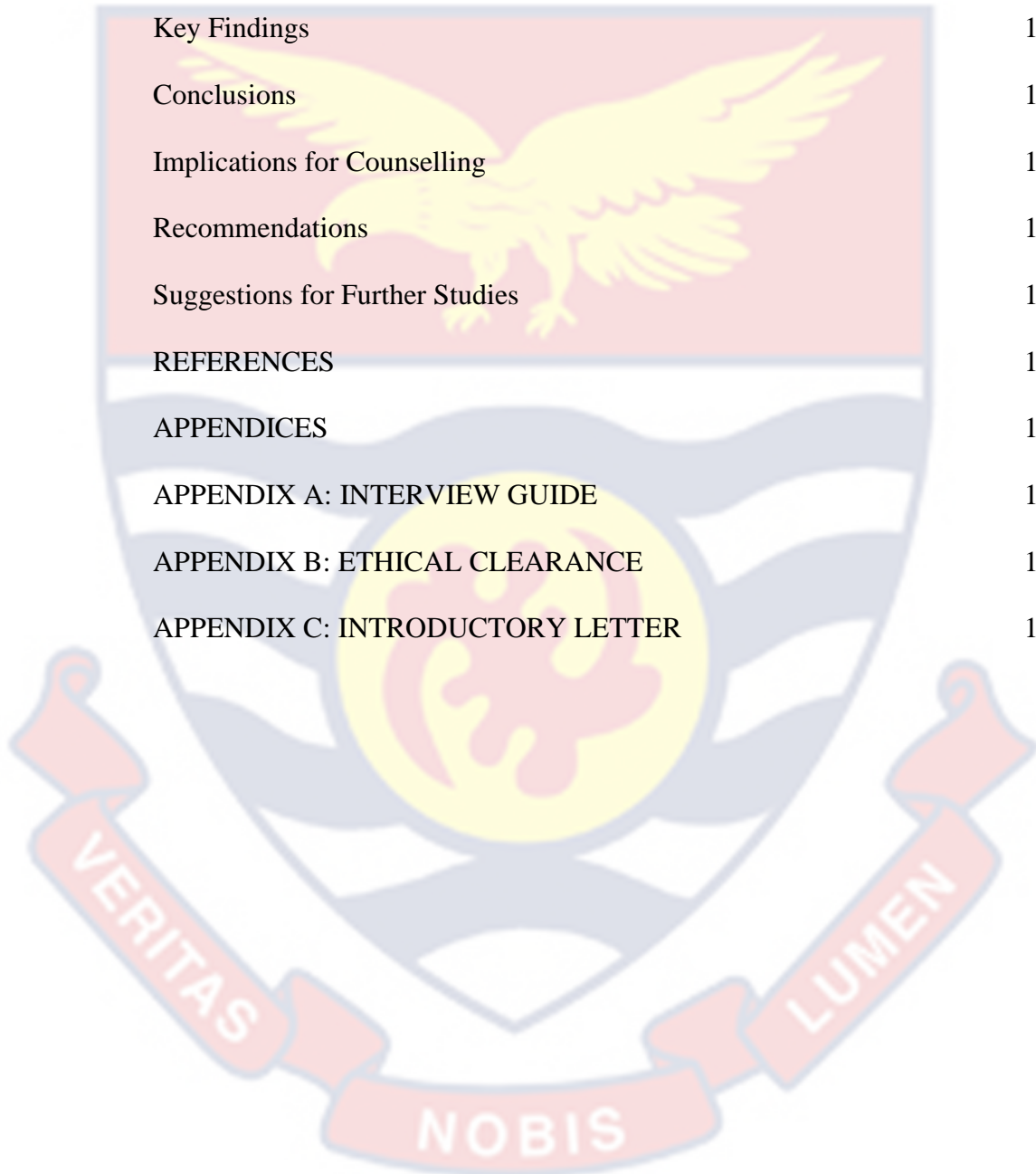
To my beloved late father and sister

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Suicidal ideation leads to the triggering of suicide among people. According to a report by the World Health Organization in 2014, there has been an increase in suicidal ideation among young individuals in countries such as China, the United States, and Canada.

Suicide has been recognized as the second most prevalent cause of death among university students globally (Taliaferro & Muehlen-Kamp, 2015)**.** Among undergraduate university students alone, suicide emerges as major cause of mortality within the United States of America (Schwart, 2006). The percentage of students suicidal ideation is quiet high as, 12% of students showed suicide ideation during their time in the university (Wilcox, Arria, Caldeira, Vincent, Pinchevsky, & O'Grady, 2010). Close to 10.7% of students confirmed that they have ever conceived the idea of suicide in 2014 (Pereira & Cardoso, 2015). Therefore, this group of people should be of interest to people in authority and in the society.

Background to the Study

Globally, suicide death rate is about 1 million individuals, indicating a significant fatality rate of 16 per 100,000 persons. This translates into a frequency of occurrences of deaths to 40 seconds per death from suicide globally (Feroz, Islam, Roza, Rahman, Sen, Moula, & Rahman, 2012; Khan, Arends & Ratele, 2021; World Health Organization (WHO) (2019). Consequently, it has been reported that suicide is among the three major causes of mortality worldwide for persons aged 15 to 44 (Arafat, 2016; Shah, Ahmed, & Arafat, 2017). In a similar vein, in 2019, 77% of global suicides occurred in

1

low and middle-income countries (LMCs), including Ghana. The estimated suicide rates by age groups stand as 15-29 years and 30-49 years, World Health Organization (WHO, 2019).

As a growing concern in Africa, factors of suicidal ideation continue to attract the attention of researchers. In Kenya, a study conducted by Wanyoike (2015) on suicide among university students revealed that various factors contribute to suicidal issues among students. The main causes and their respective percentages include: loneliness 10%, depression 39%, hopelessness 30%, anger 15%, conflict 6%, social pressure 10%, illness 19%, drug abuse 19% and conflict 5% were the leading causes of suicidal issues among students.

Research indicates that, majority of Sub-Saharan African low and middle-income countries, including Uganda, Botswana, Kenya, Zambia, and Nigeria, reported high suicide rates among adolescents and young adults in schools (Swahn, Bossarte, Eliman, Gaylor, & Jayaraman, 2010). This finding aligns with Palmier (2011) who investigated the prevalence of suicidal ideation and correlates among students. The study showed that Zambia had the highest prevalence of students suicidal ideation at 31.9%, followed by Kenya (27.9%), Botswana (23.1%), Uganda (19.6%), and Tanzania (11.2%).

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2020), the global lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation was found to be 9%, while the prevalence within a 12-month period stood at 2%. In the United States, suicide ranks as the tenth most prevalent cause of mortality, and specifically, it stands as the second most common cause of death among individuals aged 10 to 34 years.

2

Research has shown that suicidal ideation among students in institutions of higher learning exists in two categories, external and internal. The aforementioned causes encompass several factors such as peer and societal pressures, the impact of social media, family challenges, financial constraints, as well as intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges, including the presence of poor self-esteem (Embing, Yusoff & Othman, 2020). Surprisingly, their study found that students did not value psychologists as professionals whom they can confide their problems, which eventually led them to their suicidal ideations in the university. They accordingly prefer non-professionals such as family members, close friends and ironically strangers rather than professionals.

Suicide behaviours are the direct outcome of both societal and psychological challenges (Grossman, 2017). The National Centre for Health Statistics in its report indicated that suicide has become an important public health challenge. It is stated that, societal, biological and psychological issues are major source of concern in relation to suicide issues (Curtin, Warner & Hedegaard, 2016).

Students family environment including authoritarian parenthood involvement, drug abuse, psychotic condition, behaviour problems, social relationship condition, peers and academic challenges greatly influence students desire for thinking about suicide (Hawton, Saunders & O'Conner, 2012). Hawton, et al. opined that, students who have mental health challenges present significant suicidal ideations and self-harm.

Suicide ideation to self-harm plot and the action itself requires serious mental thinking, consideration and action. Existing research indicates that individuals who have survived suicide attempts often have physical

3

disfigurement or endure psychological distress resulting in long-term disability (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002). The psychosocial effects cannot be underestimated. Studies of Hjelmeland, Akotia, Owens, Knizek, Nordvik, Schroeder and Kinyanda, (2008) discovered that nearly 47% of university students can point to someone they know who has had suicide ideation. The study further added that one out of every five students knows somebody who died by suicide.

The preoccupation of suicide involves series of mental interaction and reasoning, individuals do extensive thinking, detail planning, demonstration of how to do the act and subsequently deliberately committing to the act leading to death or may survive (Ahmad et al., 2014). Thinking about death through suicide is a psychological issue that disconnects one's ability to view things in a normal way, self-defeating thoughts such as worthiness and helplessness will set in which eventually dominate the mind where the individual becomes obsessed with self-destructive feelings (Abasse, Oliveire, Silva & Souza, 2009).

Suicide ideation is an important factor in suicidal behaviour especially suicidal thoughts when conceived, and the action of the intent is put in place by planning. The ideation could be expressively shown in the individual verbally or could be converted into behaviour for instance, looking for an avenue or way to take one's own life (Buch, Fawcett, & Jacobs, 2003).

There is a scarcity of literature pertaining to suicide-related matters in the African universities (Adinkra, 2011; Osafo, Akotia & Boakye, 2016). Despite efforts made by some researchers to shed more light on the phenomenon (Adinkra, 2011; Osafo, Hjel-meland, Akotia & Knizek, 2011), existing literature remains limited. However, there exists evidence to point out that

4

suicide ideation among university students in Africa is relatively high. The rates of suicide-related issues according to available literature have shown the following prevalence among African countries. Kenya, are 16.4%. 47.5% among Botswana students (Korb & Platter, 2014) and South Africa, 32.5% (Cash & Bridge, 2009).

Statistics from literature has indicated that studies have been done on suicide ideation in Ghana, a study conducted by Asante, Kugbey, Osarfo, Quashie and Sarfo (2017) found that the prevalence rates of suicidal thoughts, planning, and attempts were 15.2%, 22.5% and 22.5% respectively. These rates were primarily linked to psychological challenges, including anxiety, depression, isolation and student bullying (Asante, et al., 2017). Suicide according to Owusu-Ansah, Addae, Peasah, Oppong and Osafo, (2020) is becoming one of the leading cause of deaths among students in universities.

Empirical research has shown that adolescents who perceive a lack of social support are more likely to exhibit higher levels of suicidal ideation and symptoms of depression (Wilcox, Arria, Caldeira, Vincent, Pinchersky & Ogrady, 2010). The importance of giving psychosocial support to students should be a concern to families because, family factors play major role in students psychosocial balance (Wang, Kou, Bui, Song, Lui, Yu Yuanyuan, Hua & Wanjun, 2019).

Other existing studies gave various reasons why students would want to conceive suicidal ideation and suicide. Environment, self-management and addictions form part of the many factors that push students to suicidal thoughts (Mootin, 2017). Mootin's study concluded that suicidal thoughts have relationship with interpersonal factors. Other studies also found that peers,

5

depression, abuse, gender differences, sickness and cyber addiction contributes to suicidal thoughts (Malkan & Amat, 2018). Additionally, daily tension, feeling of hopelessness both general and social bring about suicide ideation (Heisel, Flett & Hewith, 2003).

Taliaferro and Muehlenkamp (2015) also postulate that students who have mental health challenges present significant suicidal ideation and self-harm. Also, different factors account for suicidal ideation among students. These factors that are often associated with the daily functioning of students in the university environment encompassing various aspects such as family issues, sleep disorders, mental health challenges, students' daily habits, and their socio-demographic characteristics (Rodríguez-Cintas et al., 2017; Menezes, Subba, Sathian, Kharoshah, Senthilkumaran, Pant, Arun, Kundapur, Jain, Lobo, & Shankar, 2012).

In a quest to find solutions to students suicidal ideations in institutions of higher learning, Adom-Mensah, Omotosho, Bediako and Kwarteng-Nantwi (2023) conducted a quantitative study to examine the efficiency of Individual Psychology (IP) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) in reducing suicidal ideation among 30 undergraduate students of UCC showed that, both Individual Psychology (IP) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) were effective therapies in the reduction of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students. Their study recommended that the counselling centre should be engaged to screen students regularly to reduce suicidal ideation among students. The study in its attempt to find solutions to undergraduate students suicide ideation did not take into consideration the main causes of suicide ideation among students in UCC, also the study was limited to quantitative approach.

6

A cross-sectional study design and quantitative approach done by Koduah, Apedani, Azie, Ankamah, Odotei, Brempong and Okyere (2023) to find out the knowledge level of students on the availability of suicide prevention services among undergraduate students at a public university established a higher number of them rely on family (79.5%) and friends (95.61%) for support when they were suicidal. The study recommended that, university management focus on mental health education programmes to create awareness among the student body on the availability of counsellors and hotlines/helplines services. The authors relied on only quantitative methods, the causes of suicide ideation and the coping strategies of students in overcoming their suicidal ideation were not considered.

A study conducted by Azasu, Quarshie, Messiah, Lamyoh, Ali and Joe (2024) to explore early characteristics and patterns of suicide behaviours within 12 months in Greater Accra among students with a sample size of 800 revealed that 1 out of 5 students have had suicide ideation. The study found that dating, stress, substance abuse and hunger were correlations of suicide ideation among students. Their study ignored the impact of suicide has on students and how they overcome their suicide.

Adom-Mensah (2022) using a mix method with a sample size of 30 on individual characteristics predisposing students suicidal ideation at the University of Cape Coast established that financial, academic and relationship influenced suicidal ideation among students.

Ironically, suicide attempt still remains illegal in many parts of Africa including Ghana, Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria, and due to that people would always want to complete their suicidal attempts because they dare not attempt

due to the repercussion when caught (Kaggwa, Nuwamanya, Ashaba, Rukundo & Hanns, 2021d). Consequently, those who have made suicide attempts and have been apprehended in the past have faced legal prosecution. According to the World Health Organization's (2019) report on suicide rates by country, reported that, around 1500 individuals in Ghana engage in suicidal behaviours on a yearly basis. This presents a worrying situation because Ghana has a youthful population including university students. Criminalizing suicide-related issues poses a major challenge to the fight against suicide. People would normally finish the act due to fear of prosecution.

In light of this, the researcher opted to diverge from previous research and explore suicidal ideation among students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. This study was therefore necessary to delve into the cause of suicidal ideation, the impact of suicidal ideation on students life, and the strategies that students use to overcome their suicidal ideation in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Statement of the Problem

Suicidal ideation has been identified as a public health challenge among young people including some adults (WHO, 2014; Zur, 2016). The analysis of suicide patterns in many regions throughout the globe revealed that people between age 15-29 were the largest demographic group affected by suicidal tendencies (WHO, 2023). Over the years, suicidal ideation remains an interesting subject for many researchers because of its health implication (Lamis, 2006).

Eshun (2003), conducted a study to compare college students in Ghana and the United States. The study examined sociocultural factors influencing

suicide ideation, with a particular focus on the impact of family issues, gender, religion, and unfavourable attitudes towards suicide as potential contributors to variations in suicide ideation among students. The study found that gender was a major determinant of suicidal ideation among Ghanaian students, whereas this association was not found among students in the United States of America. This study ignored the causes, effects and strategies students use to overcome their suicidal ideation.

According to Owusu (2008), statistics derived from the 2008 GSHS in Ghana indicated that, in the year leading up to the survey, 14.6% of students had contemplated suicide, and 15.4% had formulated plans to end their lives through suicide.

A study conducted by Salifu (2021), aimed at ascertaining the prevalence of suicidal ideation among students in the University for Development Studies (UDS) employing a cross-sectional quantitative survey method, wherein a random sample size of 400 students were selected. The findings revealed that the prevalence of suicidal ideation among UDS students was 24.5%, which surpasses the national average in Ghana as reported by other studies. Furthermore, this rate falls within the global range of 2.6% to 25.4% for suicidal ideation. The study further showed that other significant factors, including academic stress, difficulties in relationships, and drug abuse, were identified as risk factors and associated with the presence of suicidal ideation among students. His research noted that, Universities should institute programmes that will bring about periodic checks-in by professionals such as counsellors to help recognize the high risk of suicidal ideation and assist them. The study recommended that help-seeking among students should be

9

encouraged at all levels. Again, this study failed to consider the causes and their related effects on students as well as strategies students use to overcome their suicidal ideation in the university.

Adom-Mensah, Bentil, Lawer, Akofo and Omotosho (2022) conducted a study to find out the prevalence of suicide ideation among undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast, discovered that, 2 out of every 15 UCC students experienced suicide ideation persistently and continuously. The study recommended that constant screening of suicide ideation should be made part of the university programme, mandating the counselling centre to organize such exercises to help create awareness among students. This study is relevant in pointing out the rates of suicide ideation in UCC, however, the study utilized the quantitative approach neglecting the qualitative approach. Again, a major variable such as the causes of suicide ideation was not considered creating two research gaps.

Records have shown that five students of KNUST killed themselves between 2017-2024. Again, through personal experience of the researcher as a counsellor and reports from other colleague counsellors at the counselling centre showed that, suicide related case has been in the increase over the years. The researcher recorded 22 cases of suicidal ideation and related behaviours between 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 academic year. Analyzing the trend of reported incidences, that portrays a worrying situation in the university which as a counsellor, should be interested in. Suicide related behaviour among students became a causes of concern and caught the attention of management. Thirteen students within this period drank various chemicals to commit suicide while one student tried jumping from the third floor of his hall but all of them

were saved. Ten other students were diagnosed with suicidal ideation. The researcher is curious that the phenomenon of suicidal ideation which leads to suicide could be very high among students.

Some studies have been done in this area, Koomson-Yalley, Kyei and Dwumah, (2022) conducted a study on students intrapersonal experiences on suicidal ideation in KNUST but did not cover the causes, effects and strategies students use to overcome their suicidal ideation. The findings of their study showed that individuals' intrapersonal experiences, self-directed thoughts regarding suicide and unfulfilled expectations of achievement, as well as self-directed emotions such as pride, remorse, and shame, were influenced by inadequate academic performance. Prayer, institutional support, and therapy/counselling was found to be effective in alleviating the weight of suicidal ideation.

Research conducted on students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) has shown that suicide-related issues are on the increase. Specifically, the findings indicate that 6.3% of students reported having had suicidal ideation, 24.3% attempted suicide, and 6.8% disclosed having made plans for suicide (Owusu-Ansah et al., 2020). The findings of the study indicate how big the phenomenon is. The authors further asserted that the presence of psychological distress was identified as a significant risk factor for both the occurrence of suicidal ideation and the subsequent engagement in suicide attempts. The study reaffirmed the necessity of implementing school-based initiatives aimed at promoting mental health, specifically targeting the enhancement of self-esteem among young individuals. However, the causes, impact, and strategies students use in managing their suicidal ideation were not

11

considered. Their study was limited to only the risk and protective factors creating a dearth of complete understanding of the subject matter.

Review of literature revealed that several studies had been conducted in this area. The qualitative approach appears to be largely ignored as most of the studies seen used quantitative approaches. This study was to fill these gaps. Suicidal ideation among students in KNUST.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore suicidal ideation among students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Investigate the causes of suicidal ideation among students.

2. Find out the impact suicidal ideation has on students life.

3. Find out strategies that students use to overcome their suicidal ideations in the university.

Research Questions

1. What reasons do students in KNUST give for their suicidal ideation?

2. What impact has suicide ideation on students life in KNUST?

3. What strategies do students in KNUST use to overcome their suicide ideation?

Significance of the Study

The study would be of significance to several stakeholders within the educational sector, including university administrators, academic advisors, students and counsellors. The findings would shed light on suicidal ideation among students in KNUST. Management and other stakeholders would get insight into the causes of suicidal ideation among students, the impact suicidal

12

ideation has on students life and the strategies students use to overcome their suicidal ideation. This would help the Counselling Centre to organize suitable programmes aimed at assisting students in overcoming their suicidal ideation and assist university authorities, faculty members, counsellors, professional psychologists, and social workers in making informed choices about developing guidance programmes and implement interventions aimed at improving students' well-being within the university.

Finally, upon publication, the findings of this study would make a significant contribution to the current literature on suicidal ideation among university students in Ghana. This research would provide a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of mental health studies, therefore providing a valuable resource for future researchers and students who wish to conduct similar studies.

Delimitations

The study was conducted in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The study covered the causes of suicidal ideation among students, impact of suicidal ideation, and also identify strategies that students use to overcome their suicidal ideations. In terms of the sample for the study, the study focused on only undergraduate students excluding distance education and postgraduate students from three colleges in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana.

Limitations

Due to the use of the qualitative study design approach, it is important to acknowledge that the findings could not be generalized or applied beyond other colleges in KNUST. The findings and results of the study could not also

13

be generalized since it was delimited to only undergraduate regular students in KNUST.

Operational Definition of Terms

Key terms within the study are defined according to their contextual usage in this study.

Suicide: involves the voluntary act of a student ending his/her own life.

Suicidal or suicide ideation: refers to a student contemplating self-harm, encompassing cognitive processes, reflection, and deliberate consideration of the act of suicide in the university environment.

Suicidal behavior: refers to a student by his or her behavior falls into any of these three distinct categories: suicide ideation, suicide attempts, and completed suicides.

A suicide attempt: refers to a situation in which a student attempts self-inflicted harm with the intention of ending their own life but survives the act.

Undergraduate student: a university student studying for a first degree.

College: means a collection of faculties.

Organization of the Study

The research was divided into five chapters. The first chapter dealt with the study's introduction involving the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitations, limitations and definition of terms.

The literature review was the focus of Chapter Two, which included a theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and empirical review. The research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instrument, data collection procedure, and data processing and analysis were

14

covered in Chapter Three. Results and discussions were the focus of Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five dealt with the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. Areas for further studies were also be provided.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore suicidal ideation among university students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. This chapter presents a review of related literature to the study. The review covered the following sub-headings:

Theoretical Framework

This section reviewed the theories that were pertinent to the investigation.

1. Interpersonal Theory of Suicide by Joiner (2005),

2. The Three Step Theory (3ST) and

3. The Integrated Motivational Volitional Model of Suicidal Behaviour (IMV)

Conceptual Review

The conceptual review covered the following sub topics.

1. The concept suicide ideation

2. Causes of suicidal ideation

3. Effects of suicidal ideation

4. Management strategies of suicidal ideation

5. Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

The empirical review covered the following sub topics.

1. Causes of Suicidal Ideation among students

2. Impact of Suicidal Ideation among students

3. Strategies to manage students with Suicidal Ideation

16

Theoretical Framework to the study

The theoretical framework for the study were: Interpersonal Theory of Suicide by Joiner (2005), The Three Step Theory (3ST) and The Integrated Motivational Volitional Model of Suicidal Behaviour (IMV) were used to underpin the study.

The key tenets of the three theories

Joiner's (2005) Interpersonal Theory of Suicide posits that individuals develop suicidal thoughts when they perceive themselves as a burden to others and experience a sense of social alienation, coupled with the capability to enact lethal self-harm. The Three Step Theory (3ST) by (Klonsky and May, 2015) suggests that suicidal behavior results from the interaction of three processes: the desire for death, the capability for suicide, and the presence of proximal stressors. Finally, the Integrated Motivational-Volitional Model of Suicidal Behavior (IMV) by O'Connor and Kirtly (2018) emphasizes the role of motivational factors, volitional factors, and external stressors in shaping suicidal ideation and behavior among individuals. These theories collectively provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interplay of interpersonal, psychological, and environmental factors contributing to suicidal ideation among students.

Interpersonal Theory of Suicide by Joiner (2005)

Joiner's theory (2005) suggests that a person desiring suicide and having the capacity to carry it out is more likely to engage in manifested suicidal behaviours. Joiner highlights two critical interpersonal-psychological factors contributing to the desire for self-death. These factors are perceived burdensomeness, or feeling like a burden to family, society and others and the

17

believe that others would value one's death. When these two psychological states converge within an individual, it leads to heightened suicidal ideation.

The theory states that our bodies by nature tend towards self-preservation (Joiner Jr, Steer, Brown, Beck, Pettit & Rudd, 2003). The individual self-preservation instinct fights for preservation, however, painful experiences harboured for long could lead to suicide (Van Orden et al., 2008). The individual's past suicidal attempts can predict higher level of acquired capabilities which can lead to suicide as compared to persons with no suicidal exposures (Joiner, 2005) and those with past interrupted suicide attempts were three times more likely to die by committing suicide than individuals who had actual previous suicide attempt (Barber, Marzuk, Leon & Portera, 1998).

Interpersonal-psychological statuses and tenets of Joiner's theory of suicidal ideation of an individual include:

Perceived Burdensomeness

This aspect elucidates that an individual's presence imposes a burden on family, friends and society as a whole, leading to the perception that "my death would hold greater value to family, friends and society, than continued life" This perspective leads to the belief that one's demise holds greater value for their family, friends, and society, among other entities. This view importantly emphasizes and represents a potential fatal misconception of reality in life. Perceived burdensomeness towards family members, friends and society provides rich ground for suicidal ideation among students (individuals) (Joiner, 2005).

Low Belonging (Social Alienation)

Individuals who experience a lack of belongingness, characterized by feelings of alienation and a lack of integration into family, social, or other significant groups, may be at an increased risk for suicidal ideation. Consequently, there is a discernible correlation between the presence or absence of belonging and the occurrence of suicide-related concerns among young adults, particularly students. This correlation is observed to decrease during periods of celebration, wherein individuals are drawn together by the shared interest in commemorating events. Conversely, during times of adversity or tragedy, individuals are brought together to express sympathy and support, resulting in a heightened correlation between belonging and suicide-related issues (Joiner, Hollard, & Van Orden, 2006).

For example, the United States had a decrease in suicide rates during two significant events: the September 11, 2001 attack on the Pentagon and the week following President Kennedy's assassination (Biller, 1997). Additional research conducted by Van Orden, White, Bender and Joiner (2008) provided more support for the notion that students suicidal ideations reach their highest levels during the summer semester, namely during the late spring to early summer period. Furthermore, these studies have also indicated that students have a decreased sense of belonging during the summer months, when campus activity is at its lowest. Belongingness is an important part of human life and the absence of it has psychological impact which leads to suicidal ideation among people.

Acquired Ability to Enact Lethal Self-Injury

Despite the presence of sentiments of burdensomeness and low belongingness, these factors alone do not sufficiently establish a causal link to suicidal behaviour. For suicide to occur, the individual needs to be faced with suicidal urge and develop the ability for deadly self-injury after struggling with self-preservation impulses. Repeatedly engaging in combat, in various forms, cultivates the ability to confront and overcome the self-preservation impulse, leading the individuals to acquire a propensity for suicidal ideation (Joiner Jr, et al., 2003).

Repetitive exposure to emotional stimuli, with shifting reactions over time, can lead to the desensitization of the stimulus, strengthening opposite responses instead (Solomon, 1980). Accordingly, the theory posits that the ability to engage in suicidal acts is predominantly acquired through recurrent encounters with painful experiences, resulting in habituation and ultimately, an increased tolerance for pain and a diminished fear of death. The theory suggests that suicidal ideation becomes habituated within the individual to the point where pain and the fear of self-inflicted harm give way to suicidality.

According to a study conducted with undergraduate students, it was revealed that the presence of a high level of interaction between burdensomeness and low belongingness led to the occurrence of suicide ideation in students (Van-Orden, et al., 2008). According to another study conducted by Smith, Stanley and Orden (2016), the Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of suicide suggests that individuals who contemplate suicide may only acquire a wish to die and really carry out the act if they possess the necessary capacities to do so. The authors did a comprehensive analysis of the relationship

20

between suicide, the capacity to endure suffering associated with death, and the occurrence of suicidal ideation and prior suicide attempts. The study discovered that those who have suicidal ideations were more like to disclose a history of previous suicide attempts compared to those who had never experienced current suicidal ideation. The authors emphasized the need for conducting a thorough assessment of individuals' prior suicide behaviours.

How the theory relates to the Study

The researcher selected this theory due to its analytical framework, which examines the factors contributing to suicidal tendencies among tertiary students, including risk factors such as depression, loneliness, academic pressure, and financial difficulties. Furthermore, the theory provides a comprehensive elucidation that students are unlikely to experience death unless they possess both the inclination to terminate their lives and the means to carry out such an act.

The theory also stated that a student who has prolonged psychological obstacles, including burdensomeness and poor belongingness or social alienation is likely to harbour suicidal ideation. It furthermore posits that self-preservation constitutes a potent urge that may be used to surmount contemplations of self-destruction. Hence, students who possess a sense of self-preservation would be capable of surmounting their psychological challenges and thoughts of suicide.

The desire of students to end their lives due to perceived burdens on their family, friends, and society offers valuable insights into understanding the interpersonal and psychological states of students. When their emotional conditions, both interpersonal and psychological, persist without resolution, it

21

can lead to the emergence of suicidal ideation. Positive interpersonal relationships with friends, peers, and society contribute to a sense of belonging among students. Conversely, students who naturally feel alienated may experience low belongingness, and when combined with interpersonal and psychological challenges, this makes them more vulnerable to suicidal ideation.

Additionally, students with a history of suicidal experiences and access to the means of carrying out suicide face a higher risk. Students at universities, including KNUST, may encounter these circumstances. The theory provides a comprehensive perspective for understanding the complex issues surrounding students with suicidal ideation.

The Three Step Theory (3ST)

Many theories have attempted explaining suicide and suicidal ideation, however, these theories did not consider deeply differentiating the explanation of suicide from suicidal thoughts and suicidal behaviour. It is crucial to separate suicidal thoughts from the actual occurrence of suicide attempts, since individuals who experience suicidal ideation may not always engage in suicidal behaviour (Klonsky & May, 2015; Nock et al., 2008). The proposed three-step theory by Klonsky and May (2015), offers a concise framework for understanding suicide ideation. The theory explains the four fundamental components of the three-step theory, namely pain, despair, connectivity, and suicide capacity.

The tenets of the Three Step Theory (3ST) by Klonsky and May, (2015).

Development of Suicidal Ideation.

The emergence of suicidal ideation within the context of the Three-Step Theory (3ST) is initiated by the experience of distress. Pain typically, but not

22

invariably, pertains to the psychological or emotional distress experienced by an individual. Basically, people are shaped by what they refer to as behavioural conditioning (Skinner, 1953). Individuals engage in activities that are reinforced and exhibit avoidance towards behaviours that are subject to punishment. If an individual endures a life marked by persistent suffering in their daily pursuits, thereby serving as a kind of punishment for their existence, it is likely to diminish their desire to continue living, ultimately leading to contemplation of suicide.

Various causes of suffering can result in a corresponding reduction in the will to continue living. These may include factors such as physical suffering Ratcliffe, Enns, Belik & Sareen (2008), social isolation (Durkheim, 1897, 1951), burdensomeness and low belongingness (Joiner, 2005), defeat and entrapment O'Connor, (2011), negative self-perceptions (Baumeister, 1990) and other aversive thoughts, emotions, sensations and experiences. The first step toward suicidal ideation starts with pain, regardless of its source.

Furthermore, it is important to note that, the experience of suffering alone does not offer sufficient justification for the development of suicidal ideation. For example, when an individual experiences persistent pain and maintains a sense of optimism over the potential for improvement, their efforts become directed towards seeing a future characterized by less suffering, rather than contemplating self-harm. In this context, the presence of hopelessness is a significant factor contributing to the emergence of suicidal ideation. If a person's daily life experiences are characterized by pain and he/she feels hopeless in such a way that the pain will not diminish with time, he/she will

23

consider suicide. In brief, pain and hopelessness put together causes suicidal ideation (May & Klonsky, 2013).

The initial principle of the Three-Step Test (3ST) aligns with findings from prior research. The review of several studies on 3ST has indicated that multiple characteristics, including burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, need for help, and impulsivity, have been found to be associated with suicidal ideation. This link has been observed in both clinical and non-clinical samples, as well as in different age groups (May & Klonsky 2013). It is crucial to note that the 3ST framework places significant emphasis on the correlation between the experience of pain and feelings of hopelessness, which contribute to the emergence of suicidal ideation in individuals.

In the event that a student experiences discomfort, nevertheless maintains an optimistic outlook for a more promising future, he/she will persist in carrying out his/her routine tasks with vitality. Moreover, in the absence of persistent daily anguish, a student may not contemplate suicide, even if they have a sense of hopelessness over their future prospects. The second circumstance may be perceived as less obvious compared to the former. The coexistence of pain and hopelessness is a necessary condition for the emergence of suicidal ideation.

Strong Versus Moderate Ideation

The second stage in the progression towards possibly suicidal behaviours occurs when the level of suffering experienced surpasses the individual's sense of connectivity. Connectedness encompasses perception of interpersonal connection and a sense of attachment to a work, project role, hobby, or any form of purpose or meaning that sustains one's engagement in

24

life. The significance of connectedness lies in its ability to moderate thoughts of pain, hopelessness, and suicide. When an individual's connectedness to life surpasses their level of pain, such thoughts tend to remain at a moderate level, such as occasional contemplation of being better off dead, rather than intensifying to the point of expressing a desire to actively end one's life.

Disrupted connectedness, as proposed in Joiner's Interpersonal theory, shares similarities with low belongingness and burdensomeness. Connectedness plays a fundamental role in shielding individuals at high risk from developing feelings of suicidal ideation due to pain and hopelessness. It is believed that disrupted connectedness may result in pain and hopelessness but not necessarily lead to the development of suicidal ideation. Some people may experience disrupted connectedness without having suicidal ideation, just as having suicidal ideation doesn't always imply disrupted connectedness.

Psychological disorders like depression, self-criticism, and certain personality traits (e.g., borderline personality) are significant risk factors for suicidal ideation. However, according to the 3ST, these factors are relevant in various ways, through their contributions to pain, hopelessness, and/or disrupted connectedness. For instance, suicidal ideation can contribute to these factors, but it may not go beyond that in its influence on an individual.

Progression from Ideation to Attempts.

In this phase, the central inquiry revolves around whether an individual, harboring a desire to end his/her own life, will proceed to act upon that inclination. The critical aspect to consider is whether the individual possesses the capability to carry out a suicide attempt (Joiner, 2005). Joiner highlights the formidable human instinct, the fear of death, which makes the act of suicide

25

extremely challenging, even in the presence of intense suicidal ideation. Therefore, an individual can only undertake a suicide attempt if they have not developed the capacity to overcome this instinct.

Joiner places significant emphasis on what he refers to as "acquired capability." Acquired capability pertains to an individual's capacity to endure pain, fear, and thoughts of death, which results from life experiences such as physical abuse, non-suicidal self-injury, the suicide of a close loved one, or any other encounters exposing them to distressing and provocative situations. Acquired variables, as described by Joiner (2005), involves the concept that habituation to experiences related to pain, injury, and death can, over time, lead to an increased capacity for suicide attempts. Practical variables, representing concrete factors, facilitate suicide attempts. For example, an individual with knowledge of and access to lethal means, such as a firearm, is more likely to act on suicidal ideation compared to someone who lacks knowledge of and access to such lethal means (Joiner, 2005).

How the theory relates to the Study

According to Klonsky and May (2015), several dispositional, acquired, and practical variables influence an individual's propensity for attempting suicide. It is posited that a student with intense suicidal ideation will only proceed with a suicide attempt provided he/she possess the necessary capability to carry out such an act. The theory explains that a university student daily physical or emotional pain may decrease his/her desire to live, however, pain in school alone may not lead to suicidal ideation.

The student having hope in the future could be a protective factor. Hopelessness and burdensomeness could lead a student to suicidal ideation and

26

the absence of connectedness with psychological disorders such as depression and other comorbid may also lead a student to suicidal ideation. Klonsky and May (2015) further explained that, in combining all these factors for instance, a student having the means or capabilities to act on his/her suicidal ideation will proceed to act on suicide.

Students who go through pain in silence seem hopeless and could feel burdensome to family members and society. Such students who may not have resilient coping skills and connectedness to something for instance, appreciation of academic performance despite his/her challenges may lead to suicide if the student has the means or capabilities to act. This concept is pertinent to the study as it covers the various stages involved in progression from suicidal ideation to the manifestation of an actual suicide attempt, specifically focusing on the process from ideation to action (May, 2015).

The Integrated Motivational Volitional Model of Suicidal Behaviour (IMV)

The IMV theory developed by O'Connor and Kirtly (2018), is regarded as a three-part model outlining the biopsychosocial context in which suicidal ideation and behaviour can potentially develop (pre-motivational phase), the factors contributing to the emergence of suicidal thoughts (motivational phase), and the factors governing the transition from suicidal ideation to suicide attempts or death by suicide (volitional phase). Along with acute and chronic stressors, vulnerability factors raise the chances of an individual experiencing an escalated psychological response to stress. A fundamental aspect of the motivational phase of the IMV model revolves around the relationship between defeat, humiliation, and entrapment, which gives rise to suicidal ideation (O'Connor & Kirtly 2018).

27

Phases of the IMV

Phases of the IMV include:

The Pre-Motivational Phase; Background factors and triggering events.

The pre-motivational phase, as the initial stage of the IMV model, comprises a diathesis-environment-life event triad (Turecki & Brent, 2016; O'Connor & Nock, 2014). Diathesis refers to biological, genetic, cognitive vulnerability factors, and individual differences that increase the risk of suicide. An example of an individual difference vulnerability factor is socially prescribed perfectionism, which involves unrealistically high expectations perceived as significant by individuals (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). This factor has been linked to suicide risk (Smith, Sherry, Chen, Saklofske, Mustaquashi, Flett & Hewitt, 2017). Negative life events experienced at any point in life are also associated with high risk (McLaughlin, O'Connor, & O'Connor, 2012; Pompili, Serafini, Innamorati, Dominici, Ferracuti, Kotzalidis, Serra, Girardi, Janiri, Tatarelli, Sher & Lester, 2015). A fundamental premise of the IMV model is that pre-motivational factors have their effect on suicide risk through their influence on constructs within the motivational and volitional phases.

The tenets of the Integrated Motivational Volitional Model of Suicidal Behaviour (IMV) by O'Connor and Kirtly (2018),

The Motivational Phase:

The emergence of suicidal ideation is a phase in which psychological processes play a crucial role in the development of thoughts and intent related to suicide. Key factors contributing to suicidal ideation are feelings of defeat and humiliation, combined with a perceived lack of escape and a sense of entrapment. Entrapment can manifest both internally, where individuals feel

28

trapped by internal thoughts and emotions, and externally, where it relates to the desire to escape from external events or experiences (Gilbert & Allan, 1998). Feelings of entrapment often lead to agitation. It's important to note that entrapment is distinct from hopelessness, which represents a pervasive pessimism about the future (Olie, Jollant, Deverdun, de Champfleur, Cyprien, Le Bars, Mura, Bonafe & Courtet, 2017). The presence of suicidal ideation is a process that typically begins with a sense of defeat and humiliation, often characterized by experiences of social rejection and loss, which are frequently associated with suicidal distress (Turecki & Brent, 2016; Olie, Jollant, Deverdun, de Champfleur, Cyprien, Le Bars, Mura, Bonafe, Courtet, 2017; Williams, Doorley, Esposito-Smythers, 2017).

It's worth noting that entrapment does not always follow feelings of defeat or humiliation. According to the IMV model, the presence or absence of a threat to self-moderation (TSM) determines whether defeat leads to entrapment. Studies have confirmed the relationship between social problem-solving and suicidal ideation and behavior (Chu, Walker, Stanley, Hirsch, Greenberg, Rudd & Joiner, 2017; Pollock & Williams, 2001).

The final component of the motivational phase involves the transition from entrapment to suicidal ideation. This transition is influenced by motivational moderators (MMS), which are factors that either increase or decrease the likelihood that entrapment will evolve into suicidal ideation. MMS include factors that, when present and protective, enable the trapped individual to see alternatives for a more positive future and experience less pain. Examples of such factors include reasons for living (Linehan, Goodstein, Neilsen &

29

Chiles, 1983) and attainable positive future thinking (MacLeod, Pankhania & Mitchell, 1997).

The Volitional Phase: from suicide ideation to suicide attempt/suicide.

The final phase of the IMV model delineates the factors, referred to as volitional moderation (VMs),that oversee the progression from suicidal ideation/intent to actual attempts. While factors entrapment can be linked to suicide attempts, largely due to entrapment associated with suicidal ideation, a central principle of the IMV model underscores the importance of VMs in this transition. Drawing from Joiner's Interpersonal Theory (IPT), the IMV model posits that components related to the acquired capability for suicide, include fearlessness about death and increased physical pain tolerance (Van Orden, Witte, Cukrowicz, Braithwaite, Selby & Joiner, 2010; Stanley & Brown, 2012). These are factors of VMs.

It's essential to acknowledge that the factors governing the shift from ideation to suicide attempts are multifaceted and extend beyond capability. In this context, VMs can encompass environmental, psychological, social, or physiological elements (Van Orden, Witte, Cukrowicz, Braithwaite, Selby & Joiner, 2010; Stanley & Brown, 2012).

How the theory relates to the Study

The IMV model was relevant in determining factors that lead university students to suicidal ideations and whether students act on their thoughts. It gives a comprehensive picture of suicidal processes that students may follow, that is precedence from ideations, intention formation and transition from enactment of such suicidal behaviours. The IMV model further presents strategies in the prevention of students suicidal behaviours by tailoring or targeting the phases

30

that a student is within (distress and feeling trapped) especially the motivation phase (O'Connor, Smith, Ferguson, Ryan & Williams, 2013).

The IMV in perspective provided a ground for understanding students psychological and mental processes that account for suicidal thoughts among them due to self-defeat or humiliation, where there is no escape route in their lives. If a student experiences entrapment in the university including psychological, emotional and social conditions in life, where there are no escape routes to resolve such circumstances, the psychological conditions could lead to suicidal ideation. In view of this, the model is relevant in understanding suicidal ideations (behaviours) of students in universities (O'Connor & Kirtley, 2018).

Complements of the three theories used for the study

The Interpersonal theory by Joiner (2005) highlights the significance of social connectedness and perceived burdensomeness in suicide ideation. The Three-Step Theory by Klonsky and May (2015) emphasizes thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness, and acquired capability as precursors to suicidal behavior. Kirtley and O'Connor's (2018) Integrated motivational theory integrates these perspectives, emphasizing the interaction between interpersonal factors and intrapersonal factors sch as acquired capability in predicting suicidal behaviour. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive understanding of student suicide ideation, emphasizing the interplay between social relationships, psychological distress, and capability for self-harm, offering valuable insights for prevention and intervention efforts.

Conceptual Review

The Concept Suicide Ideation

The conceptual review

The term "suicide" originates from the combination of two Latin words, "*sui,*" meaning "of oneself," and "*cidium*," meaning "slaying" (Obasola & Austin, 2014). Emile Durkheim further expounded on this concept in his influential work, "Le Suicide" (Durkheim, 1897, p. 43). Suicide is described as "a conscious self-inflicted annihilation, best understood as a multidimensional distress in a needy individual who perceives a problem for which suicide is seen as the optimal solution" (Maris, 1997).

According to Shneidman (1985, p. 203), suicidal ideation refers to the contemplation of suicide, including thoughts regarding methods of self-harm or ending one's own life. These ideas can range from general musings to well-thought-out plans, but they may not necessarily involve the actual act of suicide. While most individuals with suicidal ideation do not progress to actual suicide attempts, a subset of this group does make intentional efforts to end their lives. Suicidal ideation spans a spectrum of experiences, from fleeting thoughts to meticulous planning, simulated actions, and thwarted attempts. These attempts may be designed to fail intentionally or may be intended to succeed but are hindered by discovery.

The term suicidal ideation refers to the cognitive process of desiring to end one's own life or contemplating suicide without necessarily involving concrete plans or preparations for carrying out the act (Gliatto & Rai, 1999). O'Carroll, Benman, Maris, Moscicki, Tanney and Silvenman (1996); National Research Council Institute of Medicine, (2002), define suicidal ideation as the

32

contemplation of self-inflicted harm or death. Suicidal ideation, also known as suicidal thoughts, involves the cognitive processes involved in contemplating or formulating plans related to self-inflicted harm or suicide. Although not listed in the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria, the American Psychiatric Association (2013) acknowledges the presence of symptoms associated with various mental disorders.

Suicide ideation can occur in two different ways among students. This pertains to the categorization of the subject matter into active and passive forms. In this regard, active suicidal ideation involves actual preoccupation of the mind to wish to be dead with a plan on how to carry out the action (Tucker & Wiesen-Martin, 2015). However passive suicidal ideation comprises the wish to die but without an actual plan on how to execute the act. In all this, the individual might be facing some psychological challenges such as worthlessness, distortion in thoughts and hopelessness which influences his/her suicide ideation (Klonsky & May, 2015).

The manifestation of suicidal ideation encompasses a range of cognitive processes, including role acting, fleeting thoughts, and meticulous planning. The majority of individuals who have suicidal ideation do not engage in suicidal behaviour; nonetheless, it is important to recognize that suicidal ideation is seen as a significant risk factor for suicide (Uddin, Burton, Maple, Khan & Khan, 2019; Klonsky, May & Saffer, 2016).

Suicidal ideation, according to Ahmad, Cheong, Ibrahim and Rosman (2014), involves the inclination, preoccupation, and propensity towards engaging in self-destructive behaviour. The phenomenon described may be seen as a spectrum of suicidal ideation, ranging from a mere desire for death to the

33

contemplation of intricate strategies for carrying out suicide (Joiner Jr, Steer, Brown, Beek, Pettot & Rudd, 2003). According to Klonsky, May and Saffer (2016), suicide ideation refers to the cognitive process of contemplating self-inflicted death, including a spectrum of experiences ranging from sporadic thoughts and desires to end one's life, to seeing existence as without value or purpose. This process involves the cognitive processes of conceptualization and strategizing in order to execute a certain course of action.

Others also see it to be ideas that facilitates taking one's own life (Khan, Khan, Kolts, & Brown, 2003). The preoccupation of suicide involves series of mental interaction and reasoning, individuals do extensive thinking, detail planning, demonstration of how to do the act and subsequently deliberately committing to the act leading to death or may survive (Ahmad et al, 2014). Wanting to die through suicide is a psychological issue which disconnects one's ability to view things in a normal way, self-defeating thoughts such as worthlessness and hopelessness will set in which eventually dominate the mind where the individual becomes obsessed with self-destruction feelings (Abasse, Oliveire, Silva & Souza, 2009).

Suicidal ideation is the feeling of the wish to die by suicide. There is a thin line between suicide and suicidal ideation. Many researchers who attempted shedding light on the two concepts have had to combine them for better understanding. There exists a significant correlation between thoughts of suicide and subsequent engagement in suicidal actions, including the formulation of plans and actual attempts (Klonsky, et al., 2016).

Suicidal ideations are often linked to depressive disorders and other mood disorders. It is also linked to several life events, including academic

34

pressure, financial challenges, feelings of loneliness, and drug use, among students. A student with the wish to die would consider suicidal thought. This phenomenon, while potentially transient in nature, might pose a significant threat to the well-being of students, perhaps leading to suicidal ideation or attempts (Cassidy, O'Connor & O'Keane, 2004).

Levels of suicidal ideation

The levels of suicidal ideation are described in two categories. These are active and passive suicidal ideation.

Active suicidal ideation: This refers to having thoughts and intension to actively end one's own life. The thoughts may include specific plans and method to carry out suicide. Individual experiencing active suicidal ideation may actively seek out means to carry out their plans or exhibit behaviours indicating self-harm or suicide (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Passive suicidal ideation: This involves thoughts about death or dying without specific plan or intent to act on these thoughts. Individuals experiencing passive suicidal ideation may express feelings of hopelessness, wishing they were dead, or that life is not worth living, but they do not have a clear intention or plan to harm themselves (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Nature of suicidal ideation

Demonstrable signs and symptoms of individuals with suicidal ideation which could lead to suicide if not managed are:

1. **Suicide threat** – This pertains to a situation where an individual threatens to end his/her own life, even if he/she may not have a genuine intention to carry out the act. For instance, they might make threats to a romantic partner, such as saying, "If you leave me, I will commit

35

suicide." While this in no way diminishes his/her distress or the presence of suicidal thoughts, the term describes the act of verbalizing the threat and attempting to persuade others to believe in the seriousness of the threat (Silverman, Berman, Sanddal, O'Carroll & Joiner, 2007).

2. **Suicide gesture** – This involves engaging in self-injurious behavior as an outward expression of emotional pain, often with the intention of convincing others that they desire to die, even if their actual wish is to continue living (Heilbron, Compton, Daniel & Goldston, 2010).

3. **Non-suicidal self-injury or self-injurious thoughts** – This involves deliberate self-harming behaviors or thoughts characterized by causing harm to one's own body without an intent to bring about one's own death (Moutier, 2022; Klonsky, Victor & Saffer, 2014).

Signs and Symptoms of Suicidal Ideation

The signs and symptoms of suicide have been documented by several organizations (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2011; Canadian Mental Health Association, 2012; American Association of Suicidology, 2013) and are typically classified into three categories: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional.

Behavioral Symptoms: These include talking about death, giving away prized possessions, using phrases like "I am going to kill myself" or "when I am gone." The individual may exhibit an attitude that appears as if they are saying goodbye to friends and family, start gathering items necessary for a suicide attempt, reduce social interactions, increase substance (drugs and alcohol) use, withdraw from previously enjoyable activities, threaten self-harm or suicide, and engage in risky behavior (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2010;

36

Canadian Mental Health Association, 2012; American Association of Suicidology, 2013).

Cognitive Symptoms: These involve a preoccupation with death and the belief that suicide is the best way to end emotional suffering. The person may transition from suicidal thoughts to ideation (Hawton, et al., 2012).

Emotional Symptoms: Emotional signs and symptoms of suicide may include feelings of helplessness, being overwhelmed by emotional pain, experiencing psychosis, self-loathing, hopelessness, paranoia, intense emotional irritability, sadness related to a situation, mood swings, sudden changes in personality, severe anxiety, and agitation (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2010; Canadian Mental Health Association, 2012; American Association of Suicidology, 2013).

Causes of Suicidal Ideation

Common causes and risk factors for suicidal ideation can be categorized as follows:

Hereditary: Individuals with a family history of mental illness or suicidal thoughts are at a heightened risk of developing suicidal thoughts or emotional disorders themselves. However, there is a genetic component to suicidal ideation and mental health issues. Not everyone with a family history will develop suicidal ideation, and not all individuals with suicidal ideation have a family history of the disorder (Cannon & Hudzik, 2014).

Physical: The physical causes involve changes in brain structure and function due to low levels of neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin. This can increase the risk for mental health issues, including those that lead to suicidal thoughts and behavior (Goodwin & Jamison, 2007).

37

Environmental: Individuals exposed to repeated negative life events and enduring chronic high levels of stress that overwhelm their coping abilities are at a higher risk of suicide. Those who have been exposed to others who have died by suicide are also at a more significant risk of developing suicidal ideation themselves. Common life events or situations that may trigger suicidal thoughts include grief, sexual abuse, financial problems, guilt, rejection, relationship issues, divorce, and unemployment (Rockefeller, 2017).

Risk Factors of Suicidal Ideation

Risk factors for suicidal ideation are characteristics or circumstances associated with an increased likelihood of individuals experiencing thoughts of suicide. While some risk factors are not modifiable, like a history of past suicide attempts, they can help identify individuals vulnerable to suicide (Nadorff, Nazem & Fiske, 2011; Whitlock, Muehlenkamp, Eckenrode, Purington & Baral, 2013).

Some risk factors for suicidal ideation among students include:

Hopelessness

Hopelessness is a belief that one's circumstances will not improve in the future, often accompanied by a sense of helplessness or a belief that negative outcomes are beyond one's control (Abramson, Metalsky & Alloy, 1989). According to the hopelessness theory of suicide (Cornette, Abramson, & Bardone, 2000), a negative subjective view of life serves as a precursor to hopelessness. Hopelessness can lead to depression, including suicidal thoughts and behavior (Van Orden et al., 2008). It's characterized by feelings of impossibility, negative future expectations, loss of control, and a sense of worthlessness (Campbell, 1987).

Loneliness

Loneliness is an unpleasant emotional response to isolation or lack of companionship. It often involves anxious feelings related to a lack of connection with others. Loneliness can result from various social, psychological, or emotional factors. It is associated with feelings of general disappointment, depression, anxiety, emptiness, and restlessness (Peplau & Perlman, 1982). Lonely individuals tend to be overly alert about their interpersonal relationships (Perlman & Peplau, 1981).

Depression

Depression is a significant mental health concern characterized by high prevalence rates, chronicity, and the difficulty of treatment and recovery (Carillo, 2012). It can lead to a range of mental health challenges and has a profound impact on individuals, families, and society (Sarokhani, Delpisheh, Veisani, Sarokhani, Manesh & Sayehmiri, 2013). Depression can lead to a lack of energy, difficulties in thinking, concentrating, and making career decisions (Schimelpfening, 2020).

Family Environment

Looney, Oldman, Clamman, Crunmley and Walker (1985) stated that family in combining with depression, personal and sociocultural factors account for students (youth) suicidal incidence. Leder (1987) opined that blocked communication with family, lack of parental bonding poses as risk factors for suicidal issues among students.

Richman (1986) identified the following as characteristics of families with suicidal potentials on students (young adults) in school:

1. Interpersonal failures resulting in role confusion and conflict

39

2. Necessary changes are not accepted

3. Dysfunctional family structure

4. Communication problems

5. Existence of family emotional difficulty pattern

6. Not tolerating crises

7. Confused family relationship, symbolic or double-binding.

Academic Pressure

Parents expectations for their ward in school could turn to grow into burden that they cannot carry anymore. This result in many students committing suicide, according to statistics by National Crime Records Bureau, (Saha, 2017). Academic stress is defined as the body's response to academic-related demands that exceed the adaptive capabilities of students (Wilks, 2008).

Causes of Academic Pressure

Khue (2022) espoused the following as cause of academic pressure among students.

Examination

Because of its impacts in ensuring better career prospects, some students are expected to excel in doing exams because grades are considered to be the absolute measurement of their skills. Therefore, examinations are one of the main sources of academic pressure.

Family & Parental Pressure

It is common for parents to keep an eye on students' performance at schools and encourage them to be proactive. However, if they put too much burden and have an extreme intention that forces students to gain outstanding academic results on top of everything, this will be counter-effective. Parents

40

usually rank the success of their offspring by "how others are performing" instead of a true evaluation of their child's strengths and weaknesses. This might lead to parents setting too high expectations for students' results without caring about students' actual improvement.

Poor Stress & Time Management

Students' own anxiety and insufficient time management are underlying reasons why they find school exhausting. Students who procrastinate and do not plan their schedules well are more likely to feel stressed out because of the rush deadlines and examinations.

Furthermore, pressure can appear because some students set unrealistic goals for their academic achievement. Therefore, when they did not reach their goal, they might consider themselves to be incompetent and think in an even more negative and self-sabotage way than before they prepare for a test.

Substance Use/Abuse

Inadequacy feeling as a result of the use of alcohol and drugs increases the probability of student's suicidal ideation and attempt. Substance abuse reduces the ability of students to think rationally which leads to risky-behaviours including suicidal tendencies (Davis, Sandoval & Wilson, 1988).

The consumption of alcohol leads to decreased inhibition and affects a student's ability to think clearly (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). As a result, they may be more likely to act on their thoughts, including those that might be related to suicide or self-injury. Alcohol also affects mood, which can make students more prone to experiencing suicidal thinking. The combination of worse mood, more negative thinking, and lower self-control

41

means that students are more likely to act on suicidal thoughts when they are drinking.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2017) notes that alcohol increases psychological distress and aggressiveness while decreasing cognition. Alcohol may sometimes give students the motivation to act on their suicidal thoughts, while also reducing their ability to utilize other coping strategies. In many instances, students may attempt to use alcohol to self-medicate mental health symptoms. This co-occurrence of substance use with other mental health conditions can further elevate suicide risk.

Drugs and alcohol can also influence students who are feeling suicidal, making them more impulsive and likely to act upon their urges than they would be while sober. Substance and alcohol use can contribute to other reasons people commit suicide, such as the loss of jobs and relationships (Pompili, et al., 2010). The rates of substance use and alcohol use disorder are also higher among students with depression and other psychological disorders. Put these together and the risks increase.

Impact of Suicidal Ideation

Holding too long to unhealthy psychological thoughts can have disastrous long-term consequences for everyone concerned. Suicidal ideation can have a variety of consequences for the individual who experiences suicidal thoughts such as:

1. Severe psychological injury,

2. Guilt, neglect stigmatization and

3. Social alienation, resentment, sadness, shame, anger

4. Deep depression and extreme guilt.

The impact of suicidal ideation on students life (individual) is enormous, suicidal thoughts can range from short to long term on the person having suicidal ideation which could result in severe psychological problems, depression, death, coma and seizures. Suicidal ideation brings about conflicting emotions such as guilt and anger at people or oneself (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).

Management strategies of suicidal ideation

Johnson and Maile (1987) mentioned that the role of institutions in suicide management and preventions should start from equipping personnel in the school system with training to let them learn about warning signs of suicidal ideation, replacing the many myths about suicidal issues and promote good mental health of all students through seminar.

Capuzzi (1987) also stressed the need to train faculty members first before approaching students, give them information about suicide and encourage them to open up on their suicidal thoughts. Also, managing suicidal ideation is all about how to control or deal with the ideas and thoughts that can result in you committing suicide.

Parents and family members should show interest in monitoring students as a way of identifying early warning signs of suicidal ideations and provide an environment that enhance social support, coping strategies and help seeking habit among students, SAMHSA (2020). SAMHSA added that, a collaborative approach by professionals in institutions and community should provide a linkage between the student which is geared towards helping to improve

43

behavioural change and engage students to be motivated in initiating self-help seeking approach.

The assistance of academic advisor who is available and ready to listen to students (individuals) with suicidal ideations greatly help them bring back hope. In moment of crises related to suicide ideation, spending time, talking about victim feelings, thoughts and getting deep into the centre of the sources of strong ambivalence that brings about pain or worry that leads to thinking about suicide helps in managing such students (Suicide Prevention Programme, 2020).

Other approaches to managing suicidal ideation includes:

Identify Triggers: Students should be vigilant in identifying triggers or situations that lead to feelings of despair, such as the loss of a loved one, alcohol use, or relationship stress. They should minimize these triggers and consider talking to a counsellor, a close friend, or other significant individuals for support.

Remember Feelings: It's essential for students to recognize that temporary feelings of despair are not permanent. Seeking therapy or counselling can help individuals regain perspective and address their difficulties. Additionally, taking a short nap or going to bed when feeling down can sometimes help reset one's mood enough to alleviate suicidal thoughts. Students should also develop strategies to relieve stress, such as meditation, sensory techniques for relaxation, simple breathing exercises, and challenging self-defeating thoughts.

Get Active: Overcoming suicidal ideation often requires breaking free from old habits and embracing new interests. Students can pursue personal and

44

professional interests, engage in enjoyable activities, explore volunteer opportunities, or find activities that provide a sense of purpose. Engaging in activities that bring joy can lead to improved self-esteem and reduced feelings of despair.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2017) emphasizes the importance of being aware of both risk and protective factors for students who abuse alcohol. Risk factors for suicidal thoughts among students with alcohol abuse may include academic problems, bullying, peer rejection, family conflicts, other mental health conditions, previous suicide attempts, social withdrawal, and trauma. Protective factors to reduce the risk of suicide and ideation and promote recovery from alcohol use disorders may include effective mental health and substance use treatment, the development of coping skills that foster resilience, self-esteem, and perseverance, social support from friends and the university community, and a positive outlook, Centre for disease control and prevention (CDC, 2018)

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2021), family members, educators, administrators, and loved ones can contribute to managing suicidal ideation by being attentive to symptoms and behaviours such as expressing a desire to die, feelings of shame or guilt, self-perceived burden to others, hopelessness, sadness, withdrawal from social interactions, sudden mood changes, alterations in sleep patterns, and increased use of alcohol or other substances. Being observant and providing support can make a significant difference in helping individuals cope with suicidal thoughts.

Empirical Review

This section reviewed research studies that have been conducted on the topic.

Causes of suicidal ideations among students

Azasu, Quarshie, Messiah, Lamyoh, Ali and Joe (2024) in their study to explore early individualities and patterns of suicide behaviours among students found that 1 out of 5 had experience suicidal ideation in the previous year. The study found that dating, stress, substance abuse and hunger were correlations of suicide ideation among students. Their study ignored the impact of suicide has on students and how they overcome their suicide.

Koomson-Yalley, Kyei and Dwumah, (2022) in their study conducted at KNUST established that individuals' intrapersonal experiences, self-directed thoughts regarding suicide behaviours were link to unfulfilled expectations of achievement, due to academic performance. Students resorted to prayer, institutional support, and therapy/counselling in alleviating their suicidal ideation.

The media have also report two incidence of suicide among students from KNUST between in 2023 alone (Ghanaweb.com, 2023, Kessbenonline, 2023). This presents a worrying situation in the university.

Pandey, Bista, Dhungana, Aryal, Chalise and Dhimi (2019) conducted a research study involving 6531 students from 74 schools. Their research using multivariable logistic regression to estimate the prevalence of suicidal ideation and attempts. The study found that factors such as food insecurity, anxiety, loneliness, and gender were associated with causing suicidal ideation among the student participants. Additionally, anxiety, loneliness, truancy, cigarette use,

and gender were identified as significant factors contributing to suicidal attempts within the same group of students.

In a cross-sectional study conducted by Asfaw, Yigzaw, Yohannis, Fekadu and Alemayehu (2020) at Harmaya University in Ethiopia, 757 respondents were involved. The data were analyzed using bivariate and multivariate analysis techniques. The results of the study revealed that students' cumulative grade point average, alcohol use, depression, anxiety, and poor social support were statistically significant risk factors associated with causing suicidal ideation. Moreover, depression and anxiety were identified as influential factors in suicidal attempts among students. This study methodically ignored qualitative approach which would have at the end of the study showed in-depth analysis.

Urme, Islam, Begum and Awal-Chowdhury (2022) in their study postulates that the major cause of suicide ideation among tertiary students include; depression, hopelessness, family conflict, and financial and academic stress. They utilized a qualitative research design in five public universities. The study also adopted the purposive and snowball sampling technique. They suggested that authorities should organize seminars, workshops and awareness creation campaigning urgently to bring about behavioural change among students on suicide related issues. The study failed to investigate the strategies students used to overcome their suicidal ideation.

Clearly from the literature reviewed, the causes of suicidal ideation among students differ due to their experiences and interaction in the university environment including depression, loneliness, hopelessness, academic issues, psychological, anxiety etc.

Depression and Suicidal Ideation

Maleka and Nafiza (2016), conducted a study to examine the relationship between depression and other correlates on suicide ideation among students of Dhaka University using a sample of 112 students comprising 157 males and 61 females. Their study utilized the Pearson product moment correlation and simple multiple correlation. Their study found that suicidal ideation positively correlates with depression, loneliness and hopelessness.

Arria, O'Grady, Caldeira, Vincent, Wilcox and Wish, (2009) investigated to find out whether there exists suicidal ideation among 1249 college students using a multivariate analysis, with or without depression found that, affectionate depressive symptoms effects were strongly related with suicide ideation among students with suicide ideation. They pointed out that 40% in addition recorded high depressive symptoms effects. The absence of social support was a major risk factor for suicidal ideation even with depressive symptoms, depression among students is predominant among students in most institutions of higher learning. Major psychosocial and socio-demographic factors play important roles in student's daily life on campus.

Accordingly, Nagendra, Sanjay, Goulin, Kalappanavar and Vinodkumar (2012) who researched on the prevalence of depression, suicidal ideation and their relation to socio-demographics of college students established that, 57.7% of students who participated in the study had predominance of depression and among this group of students 41.7% depressive levels was strongly related to suicidal ideation as compared to 11.4% of non-depressive. Academic performance, family issues, relationship with other people made them depressed which became a risk factor in suicide ideation.

Other studies by Reynolds (2015) showed that there is moderate significant effect between depression and suicidal ideation (behaviour). The finding of the researcher was consistent with previous studies of Garlow, Rosenberg, Moore, Haas, Koestner, Hendin and Nemeroff (2008) who conducted a study on undergraduate students in collaboration with American Foundation for Suicide Prevention college screening project at Emery University. Their study showed that there was a strong collaboration between severity of depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation among students. Suicidal thoughts and behaviour were common among the group.

Richardo and Carlos (2018) who did a systematic review of literature on the prevalence of suicidal ideation and related factors on medical students of seventeen studies comprising 13,244 students in 13 Western and Non-Western countries revealed that, the incidence of suicidal issues ranges from 1.8% to 53.6%. They discovered that depression and depressive symptoms were the leading course of suicidal ideation. The study suggested for planning and implementing treatment programmes targeting identified causes of suicide ideation among students. Their study failed to explore the effects and preventive measures in managing students with suicidal ideation.

Kabugi (2020) did an overview of the causes of suicide and preventive strategies among students in Kenya and revealed that depression became a leading cause of suicidal ideation. His studies were consistent with (Handley, Rich, Davies, Lewin & Keely, 2018) who mentioned that depression is a strong correlate of suicidal tendencies.

Deducing from the literature reviewed, it is clear that depression is a common cause of suicidal ideation among university students

49

Hopelessness and Loneliness, and Suicidal Ideation

Pervin and Ferdowshi (2016) conducted a study to examine the relationship between depression, loneliness and hopelessness among a sample of 112 university students in Dhaka using a stepwise multiple regression analysis showed that, significantly, hopelessness, loneliness and depression were associated with suicidal ideation among students. The study was consistent with Kwok and Shek (2010) who also found that hopelessness correlated with suicidal ideation in adolescent secondary school students in Hong Kong using regression analysis. Their study sought to find out the relationship between hopelessness, cognitive, emotional and cognitive behaviour correlates of suicidal ideation among students. the study did not find out how students manage their suicidal ideation in the university unlike Adom-Mensah et al. (2023) where in their study found that both Individual Psychology (IP) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) were effective therapies in the reduction of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students.

Baiden, Kuuire, Sherstha, Tonui, Danko-Gyeke and Kersley (2017), examined the effects of bullying and victimization on suicidal ideation and suicide attempt among 1633 adolescents in Ghana between 14-18 years and data was analyzed using logistic regression showed that, factors including loneliness and anxiety were positively associated with suicidal ideation among students.

Risk factors and correlates of suicidal ideation such as loneliness and drugs are factors that continue to attract researchers, a study conducted by Lamis, Ballard and Patel (2014) using a sample size of 207 among undergraduate college students established that suicidal ideation significantly correlated with loneliness and drug use. The same study revealed that loneliness

strongly mediated suicide ideation through drug use. Abdullahi, Tlib, Yaacob and Ismali (2013) in their study also revealed that hopelessness partly mediated the relation between problem-solving skills and suicidal ideation. Relatedly, the reaction between hopelessness and suicide related action of 206 students showed that hope and coping were firmly associated with suicidal actions than hopelessness (Range & Penton, 1994).

Shu-yue and Yan (2014) conducted a research to examine the relationship between suicidal ideation and loneliness among college students with a sample of 110. Their study showed that loneliness mediated in the correlation between self-consistency and suicidal ideation. Additionally, loneliness significantly predicted suicide among students when a regression analysis was done o 54 males and 174 female students according to Chan et al., (2017). Shu-yeu and Yan (2014) did not consider qualitative approach in their study and the strategies that students used to overcome their suicidal ideation was also largely ignored.

Dachew, Bifftu, Tiruneh Anlay and Wassie (2018), in their study to determine suicide ideation issues among students found that loneliness (lack of social support) became very important risk factor for suicidal ideation among students. Students who had low or no social support were exposed two times to suicidal thoughts than those with high social support. Social support increases the feeling of belonging and reduces the risk of suicidal thoughts (Kleiman & Liu, 2013). Evidently, students who feel loneliness could lead to suicidal thoughts. The overall detachment from people, peers, family members and friends expose students significantly to mental disorientation, in that loneliness provides an environment for suicidal thoughts. A recent study by Prusty (2018),

51

discovered that, loneliness has a significant and positive correlation between suicidal ideation among students. The same study pointed out that loneliness is a predictor of suicidal ideation among college undergraduate students.

It is therefore clear from all the studies reviewed that, hopelessness and loneliness are major causes of suicidal ideation among students.

Psychological/Mental Challenges and Suicidal Ideation

Dachew et al., (2018) conducted a study to identify factors related to suicide ideation among university showed that, students who had mental distress, family history of mental issues had a high rate of suicidal thoughts. The study added that students with low social support financial challenges alcohol use and substance use significantly related to suicidal ideation or the respondents. The study recommended that prevention strategies should be geared targeting risk factors for students.

Owusu-Ansah et al., (2020) did a cross- sectional design study on 1003 students with a mean age of 20.5years. The study was to find out the lifetime and prevalence of suicidal ideation or attempts and associated risk factors among universities students in Ghana. The study revealed that, psychological distress and low self-esteem greatly predicted suicidal ideation among universities students. The study recommended that school based mental health-promotion programmes should be put in place to help young people reduce psychological distress and improve their self- esteem

Fang, Majella and Ping (2018) assessed psychological distress and suicidal behaviour of six university students in China with a sample of 5972 students revealed that, 40.7% students reported positively to a psychological symptoms dimension assessed SCL-90-R. 7.6% of these students reported

52

suicidal behaviour in the last one year. That psychological distress highly led to students suicidal behaviours including depression, phobic anxiety and obsessive-compulsiveness. Psychological distress among students in most universities are eminent accordingly. The study did not give reasons for what accounted for this. They recommended for care for students with mental issues due to the common incidence of suicide behaviour.

The above literature reviewed has shown that, psychological and mental challenges of students contribute to suicidal ideation among students.

Family Relationship and Suicide Ideation

A mixed method study conducted by Ayolede and Ojo (2021, discussion and finding pg. 11-12) to examine potential social factors that leads students to suicidal ideation among 500 university students between the ages of 18-25 years in Nigeria showed that family challenges such as separation of parents, poor parental relationships and poor social support accounted for students suicidal thoughts, marital issues among parents negatively affected the family members cohesion which brought about students inability to express themselves but kept mute resulted in suicidal thoughts. Other studies which are consistent with students inhibiting suicidal thoughts on academic and personal relationship challenges (Aloba, Adefemi & Aloba, 2018; January, Madhombiro, Chipamaunga, 2018; Asante & Andoh-Arthur, 2015).

An investigative study conducted by Eshun (2003) to investigate the role of gender, family cohesion and other variables as potential determinants of cultural difference in suicidal ideation among 375 college students from both Ghana and the United States of America showed that, family cohesion and gender significantly predicted suicidal ideation among Ghanaian students.

A cross-sectional study conducted by Wang, Kou, Bai, Song, Liu, Yu, Li, Hua & Li (2019, pg. 169) in China provided that suicide ideation within the last 12 months was 9.2% among college students. Family factors, depression symptoms, daily habits and social interactions of students exerted pressure on student to wanting to have suicide. The student appealed to authorities to note the main concerns of students in preventing suicide ideation. A univariate logistic regression analyses also showed that family and social interactions survey were associated with suicidal ideation ($p<0.05$). Poor relationships with classmates, having few friends and outings lead to suicidal ideation ($p<0.05$). Their study failed to adequately explore the effects and how to prevent suicidal ideation among students. The study revelation of the prevalence rate of 9.2% was lower than other studies in the U.S (9.5%) (Kisch, Leino & Silverman, 2005) but higher than Mexico (7.8%) (Fang et al., 2018).

Zhai, Bai, Chen, Han and Wang (2015) in their study to investigate the association between suicidal ideation and family environment using a sample of 5183 in Chinese university students revealed that, poor parental relationship and parental problems such as separation, divorce, loss of partner and abusive nature of parents also bring about suicidal ideations. Mostly, students dependency on parents, relations and loved ones for psychological and financial support and other basic needs in their lives may be affected greatly in the absence of adequate social cohesion among parents, friends. Family ties such as not being loved, cared for and supported makes students vulnerable as a result they do not have the capacity to be resilient to the challenges which makes them quick to think of suicide and are overwhelmed.

It is evident from all the studies reviewed have shown that, family relationship is one of the causes of suicidal ideation among students in universities.

Substance and Suicidal Ideation

A number of circumstances may lead students to suicide ideation. Circumstances such as relationship issues, substance abuse, academic pressure and financial constraints contributes to suicidal ideation among students.

Amoah (2019) did a descriptive cross-sectional survey using both bivariate and multivariate analyses to investigate the relationship between demographic and psychosocial factors and suicidal ideation among adolescents attending school in Ghana. The findings indicated that substance use and depression were identified as significant factors contributing to suicidal ideation among in-school adolescents. The study suggested among others that, the Ghana Education Service and the Ghana Health Services should intensify their education on avoidance of suicide among young people especially students and that schools should organize programmes for students on drugs and substance abuse.

Studies of Azasu, et al. (2023) to found that substance abuse, stress and dating accounted for students suicidal ideation among students. The study explored early characteristics and patterns of suicide behaviours among students within 12 months in Greater Accra among using a sample size of 800. The study again failed to examine the strategies that students used to fight their suicidal ideation.

A quantitative study conducted by Kehinde (2022) to investigate risk factors associated with suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students in

Nigeria using a multistage sampling method showed that, alcoholism among students was associated with suicidal thoughts among students with 7.5% out of 151 students surveyed. The study discovered that, students normally consume alcohol due to curiosity and as a coping mechanism to get away with distressful situation.

Ayolede et al., (2021) studies further found that substance abuse and too much intake of alcohol among students was a common problem despite their health implications. Their study found enough grounds that substance abuse could aggravate student's thoughts of suicide during their low moments due to alcohol consumption because it inhibits students' ability to disclosure of suicidal thoughts to other significant others. Their study confirms studies of (Nock, Borges, Bromet, Cha, Kessler & Lee, 2008) who found that drug abuse was connected with suicidal ideation repeatedly over time. Substance abuse is a means of acquiring the capability to entertain suicidal thoughts and subsequently give a sense of fearlessness in the face of death. The study recommended that the university systems should develop protective factors and strategies to motivate students prompt disclosure of suicidal ideation to professionals.

Veloso, Lima, Sales, Monteiro and Silva Jnr. (2019) in their study to find out the prevalence of suicidal ideation and its associated factors among students in the health field institutions of higher education using cross-sectional method on 142 students found that, the prevalence rate of suicidal ideation among this group of students was 22%. Their study established that, substance use such as alcohol, tobacco and other drugs influenced students suicidal ideation. There is therefore the need to design a multifaceted approach to

tackling of students behavioral mental challenges leading them to suicidal tendencies even in the medical field. The study further added figures to describes the situation, in that 90.3% reported to drink alcohol 58.8% used tobacco and 54.8% used other drugs. In the summary of the report, the above variables significantly influenced students suicidal ideation.

Another study conducted by Dachew et al., (2018) to determine the prevalence of suicidal ideation and factors associated with suicidal ideation among 836 Ethiopia university students using a binary and multivariable logistic regression models found that, students suicidal ideation was influenced by current substance use. Students who chew Kat or take alcohol were 1-8 and 1-6 times more likely to have suicidal ideation. The intake of alcohol and Khat predisposes them to depression and suicidal ideation. Their study was in line with other studies done by (Aria et al., 2009, Wilcox et al., 2010, Zhang & Wu, 2014).

From the literature reviewed, substance use has been established as one of the major causes of suicidal ideation among students in tertiary institution of learning.

Cyber/Social Media and Suicidal Ideation

María, Beatriz, Ángela and José, (2020) conducted a study to ascertain the relationship between suicidal thinking, anxiety, depression and stress in university students who are victims of cyberbullying and found that, cyber bullying was related to most emotional challenges of students which leads them to develop suicide ideation. The study further revealed a trend of high levels of anxiety, stress and depression among students who are victims, 72.2%, 65% and 75.2% respectively.

57

Jose, Fuensanta and Manuel (2018) did a study to assess the association between sexting, Cyber-victimization, depression and suicidal ideation among university students using a sample size of 303 with a mean age of 19.73 in Mexico University revealed that, cyber victimizing and sexting were significantly associated with suicidal thoughts among students. They added that online risky behaviour of students such as sexting poses negative consequences among students which leads to depression and suicide ideation. Again, online risky behaviour accumulates into psychological challenges among students.

In a qualitative study to identify factors that influence suicidal ideation among students, Embing, et al., (2020, pg. 81) found that social media contributes to students' suicidal thoughts in higher institutions of learning. The study added that, because social media offer wide range of information to student and people it contributes negative effects to among students. People posting issues on suicide on social media makes others feel it as a healthy trend which affects their perception about it.

Giving the work done cyber/social media by previous researchers, social media or cyber issues among student's influences students suicidal ideation and therefore one of the causes of suicidal ideation among students.

Academic Pressure and Suicidal Ideation

A study conducted by Salifu (2021) to determine the prevalence of suicidal ideation among the University of Development Studies found that, 35.5% of students reported having challenges in failing courses, struggling with courses and above all had challenges meeting academic goals. The study found out that students suicidal ideation was traced to their inability to pass their courses, failing to accomplish academic goals and struggling with other course

58

work. Statistically, 50% of respondents showed suicidal ideation due to academic related pressure and a significant p-value of (p=0.009) predicts students suicidal ideation with a corresponding odd ratio of (OR=2)

A mixed method study conducted by Ayodele and Ojo (2021) on undergraduate students showed that academic problems and other circumstance of students leads to suicide ideation. The study also revealed that, poor academic performance of students who are left unaddressed greatly became a critical source of suicidal ideation among students. The perception of people towards their poor academic performance was a cause of worry which resulted in their thought of suicide. Their study was consistent with an earlier study by Amare, Meseret, Haile and Tebikew, (2018) base on a cross-sectional study on student in high schools, indicated that students who became disappointed in their academic scores were more likely to have suicidal ideation than their peers who performed well. Academic pressures and inadequate support from the university increases students vulnerability to suicidal thoughts. Students feel self-hated because of academic challenges and expecting from parents which puts a burden on when they do not perform up to expectations. The high expectations attached to academic performance put pressure on students which contributes to suicidal ideation if they do not perform, they tend to think that they are a failure.

Jace, (2021, pg. 61) did a systematic review of 60 studies to explore the global prevalence of studies on suicide on students suicidal behaviours, risks and protective factors associated with students suicide revealed that, academic stressors (university stressors) including transition, entrance examination requirements, ability to cope with academic work, pressure to succeed and planning posed as risks factors to suicide and suicidal behaviours among

students. In such overwhelming situation, students feel overburdened and as such think of ways of getting rid of the circumstance and suicidal ideation becomes an option. Studies of Modi, Kumar and Dogra, (2017) in their study confirmed that academic pressure, finance, accommodation and health concerns of students compel students to think about suicide.

An exploratory study done by Koomson-Yalley et al. (2022) on intrapersonal experience and suicide ideation among university students in KNUST revealed that, academic pressure (performance) from 3 respondents (7.5%) stated that, they had suicidal ideation when they were not successful in their examination. The study added respondents who had suicidal ideation received counselling from the KNUST Counselling Centre.

It is also clear that academic pressure also poses challenge to students which leads to suicidal ideation. It is important to state that, academic pressure is one of the causes of suicidal ideation among university students.

Finance and Suicidal Ideation

Ayodele and Ojo (2021), who did a mixed method study in determining the potential social factors that leads students (young) people to suicidal ideation in Nigeria universities brought to light that, the cost of living in the daily life of a student in the university is quite huge. Financial burden of students in buying course materials, feeding and other miscellaneous are inadequate for most students. These dwindling financial resources and educational expenses expose students to severe distressful situation and they are unable to cope which leads to disappointment in life which in the long run force them to think of suicide in order not to be a burden. Students with enough financial abilities are likely not to think about suicide. The findings were consistent with (Sharma, et al., 2015)

who reported in their study that economic conditions forced them into activities and actions that compromised that psychological well-being. Their study revealed that lack of financial played a key role in students thinking of suicide. This was because of unmet personal needs and other financial commitments.

Similarly, Richardo and Carlos (2018) did a systematic review of literature to determine the prevalence of suicidal ideation and associated factors in medical students found that, students' financial instability poses threat their students' ability to concentrate on their studies. Students need finances to pay for social amenities such as water, electricity and transport. Other cost includes course materials and mobile phones communication. Since most of these things are daily expenses that should be met, most students who are financially not strong have the feeling that they are hopeless if remittance from family is insufficient. The feeling of hopelessness with other comorbidity factors may bring about suicidal ideation.

Studies of Dachew et al., (2018) using a cross-sectional method involving 836 students of a university in Ethiopia to determine suicidal thoughts among students have shown that distress (AOR=3.05, 95%, 1.89-4.92) statistically was related to suicidal thoughts of students who participated in the study. Financial burden on students greatly plunge students into myriad of adjustment issues which has psychological implications in their well-being. Empty pockets of students make their daily activities unstable financially which could bring about negative thoughts including suicide. Their study was in line with other studies of Eisenberg, Gollust, Golberstein, and Hefner (2007) in the United States of America and Poland where financial burden was reported as having influence on student's suicidal ideations.

61

A qualitative study conducted by Khadijah, Sumardino, Yusuf and Nihayati (2021) with eight students using a purposive sampling technique showed that, financial challenges among students risk them to thinking about suicide. Cost of living in many universities have been quiet high. However, students are expected to find means of sustaining themselves in such difficult times. Due to a number of obligation that the student should fulfil financially with their meagre income gets out of hand and if such situation is not managed very well such students can withdraw, become lonely and go into depression which can lead to suicidal ideation or suicide (Kabugi, 2020).

Students academic success largely depends on finance and if such obligations are not met daily they risk facing so many challenges. Financial stress among students predisposes them to thinking of worthlessness and burden to parents and society. In order to deal with the situation most times students think about ending their lives.

Students financial challenges has also become one of the causes of suicidal ideation among students per the literature reviewed.

Impact of Suicidal Ideation among Students

According to Wanyoike (2015), who conducted a study to examine the causes, implication and preventive measures of suicide and risk factors leading to suicidal behaviours among university students in Kenya with 300 sample size of students and 40 Mental Health Practitioners indicated that, suicide ideations and attempts leads the individuals to feeling of ashamed and alienation from family and friends. The individual involved and the family are often times ridiculed and treated differently as a result of the actions of the person. This is consistent with Beautrais (2004) who also postulates that suicide ideations and

attempts may make the individual feel ashamed and helpless, fear parental and family rejection. Suicide and suicidal intention of higher significance can lead to stigma. Suicide is a mental health issue which is looked a differently by bystanders.

Pamela and Frank (2000) conducted research to determine the level of excess psychological morbidity among students and to find out about students attitude towards coping and help-seeking methods in schools. The study found out that the impact of suicidal ideation, higher levels of students suicidal ideation led to lower levels of help-seeking intention for suicidal ideation. The study called for interventions from appropriate professionals to increase students' awareness of help-seeking.

Rezapur-Shahkolai, Khezeli, Hazavehei, Ariapooran, Soltanian and Ahmadi, (2020) also conducted a cross-sectional study on 923 respondents using a multi-stage sampling method from Gilan-e Gharb County in Iran showed that, suicidal ideation had a direct strong positive total effect on suicidal thoughts. The study suggested for counselling programmes should be put in place to reduce suicidal thoughts among women.

Strategies Students Use to Overcome Suicidal Ideation

Ways of managing students suicidal ideations starts with comprehensive knowledge and awareness. Understanding what motivates students into suicide attempts can inform researchers in the field in developing conceptual models that provides direct interventions strategies in managing suicidal ideations that leads to suicide. These intervention programmes and strategies should be able to resonate with the challenges and help those at risk.

63

Ayodele and Ojo (2021. pg. 12) in their mixed method study on the potential social factors that lead students to suicidal ideation in two universities in Nigeria suggested that, the management and prevention of suicide ideation should be paramount to institutions of higher learning if students are to gain meaningfully from the knowledge imparted in them. Universities should include mental health modules in their curriculum programmes mounted. Authorities should contextualize suicidal thoughts geared towards helping students with coping skills to avoid suicide as an option. Managing students suicidal ideation has become a worrisome issue among institutions where suicide is prevalent.

Additionally, Urme et al., (2022) did a qualitative study on university students in Bangladesh revealed that, authorities identifying common suicide risk factors among students and assisting them in building a resilient support system and engagement of mental health professionals to help ensure good psychological well-being among students is key in the management of suicidal ideation.

Perley (2015) puts suicidal ideation (suicide) prevention/control into three main domains namely: educational strategies, technological strategies and institutional strategies. He explained that educational prevention strategies can be a too-way approach inside and outside of lecture halls which must be geared toward preparing the campus community members to identify suicide signs among students and make appropriate referrals. In his view, technology can be employed to enhance and supplement educational strategic preventing interventions. Institutional policies and programmes must address identifiable distress conditions of students in relation to suicidal issues. He added that

protocols should be put in place not to put bystanders of suicidal incidence into suicidal ideation. Suicidal ideation should not be motivating factor for students.

Owusu-Ansah et al., (2020) in their study to determine lifetime current prevalence of suicidal ideation or attempts and risks and protective factors among students using a cross-sectional design on 1,003 students with a mean age of 20.5 years reported that self-esteem was established to be a factor that reduces student's suicidal tendencies. Having positive self-esteem boost the individual's general well-being to thinking of positive things that would improve the risk and daily functioning of the person. A logistic regression analyses proved that self-esteem as a factor recorded (AOR=1.05; CI 0.90) statistically.

Richardo and Carlos (2018), in their research to examine suicidal ideation in medical students considering current insights suggested that in order to help or manage students with suicidal ideation, institutions should provide intervention strategies that would improve the general well-being of students. Students who have suicidal ideation should be taught help-seeking approaches and above all self-care which will reflect the need for social support in times of suicidal ideation.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed literature related to the current study. The review covered areas relating to suicidal ideation, causes, effects, and how to help students overcome suicidal ideation. The conceptual framework upon which the study was based on was researcher's own model i.e., the causes of suicidal ideation, the impact of suicidal ideation and management strategies that students use to overcome their suicidal ideation. The conceptual review looked at the

concept suicide and ideation, causes of suicidal ideation, impact of suicidal ideation and management strategies of suicidal ideation. The study was based on three main theories. This comprised the interpersonal theory, the 3ST and IMV theory of suicide. In the review, the prevailing literature on the topic in KNUST, Ghana was limited when it comes to analyzing the actual trend, the empirical review looked at the causes, the impact and how to help students in such situations. As a result, there exists a dearth of local literature on suicidal ideation among university students in KNUST. Hence, the exploration of suicidal ideation among university students.
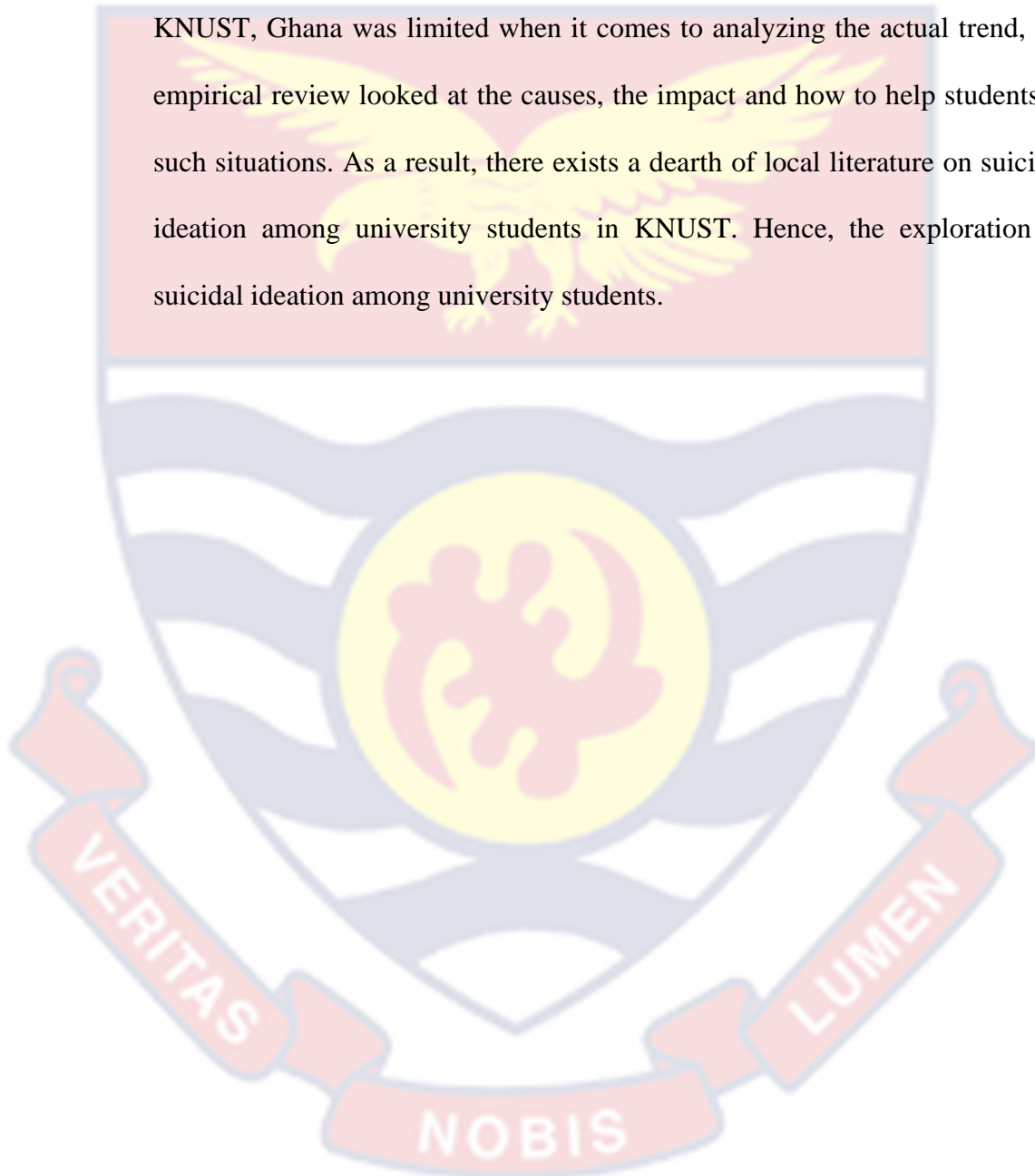
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore suicidal ideation among university students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. This chapter was devoted to explaining the research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and data processing and analysis.

Research Paradigm

A research paradigm encompasses the philosophical foundations and assumptions guiding scientific inquiry. Dieronitou (2014) defined a paradigm as the "worldviews and beliefs about the nature of reality, knowledge, and values" held by a researcher. According to Hussein (2009), paradigm provide guidance not only in selecting the most appropriate methodological approach but also in shaping ontological and epistemological perspectives. Research philosophy plays a crucial role in determining the type of research conducted. Researchers have categorized research paradigms into positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism (Berkovich, 2018).

Positivism, as stated by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), is primarily associated with deductive approaches in research. It asserts the existence of a singular reality, which can be explored through quantifiable data collection methods. According to Jankowicz (2005), positivism rely on measurable or quantifiable data. Therefore, quantitative data collection tools are preferred in positivist research to gather information. Positivists believe in the ability to quantify and measure phenomena through independent observations,

67

allowing for objective analysis without direct involvement in the system under study (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This approach emphasizes control over the research subject and tends to be experimental in nature (Saunders et al. 2009). Quantitative tools enable researchers to assess relationships between variables and understand research outcomes from a quantitative perspective (Bryman, 2012).

Interpretive paradigm, on the other hand, focuses on the subjective aspects of research (Creswell, 2009). It employs inductive approaches and often deals with unquantifiable phenomena (Saunders et al., 2007). Interpretive research relies on qualitative methodologies, such as case studies and ethnographic studies (Saunders et al., 2007). Unlike positivism, interpretivism allows for flexibility in research design (Tuli, 2010). Maxwell (2006) emphasizes that interpretive research is suitable when the subject matter cannot be quantified. This paradigm acknowledges multiple realities and emphasizes the researcher's role in interpreting the data (Bryman, 2012). Researchers using interpretivism focus on understanding social reality within its context and consider subjectivity in their analysis (Cohen et al., 2007). Critics argue that the interpretive paradigm is perceived as "soft," lacking the ability to generate theories applicable to broader populations and involving researchers with participants, potentially compromising objectivity (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Despite the critiques of the interpretivism approach, this study finds it suitable to utilize this approach together with the qualitative approach.

Research Design

In studying suicidal ideation among university students, a qualitative research design was justified, rooted in naturalism. The researcher employed a

qualitative case study approach, chosen for its ability to provide nuanced exploration of individuals' experiences and perceptions related to suicidal thoughts. Through techniques like in-depth interviews, insights into causes, impacts, and coping strategies within university life were gained (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Qualitative methods enable identification of patterns and themes not apparent in quantitative approaches, offering a comprehensive understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach is valuable for uncovering subjective meanings and social dynamics surrounding suicidal ideation among students (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Additionally, qualitative methods promote participant engagement, allowing them to express experiences and perspectives, aiding in understanding contributing factors and informing interventions (Patton, 2015). In summary, a qualitative research design is well-suited for exploring suicidal ideation among university students, capturing complexity, identifying themes, and engaging participants effectively.

Study Area

The study was conducted in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana. It is one of the major public universities in Ghana. Which was established in 1952. KNUST is located at Ayigya in the Oforikrum Municipality in the Ashanti region, Kumasi. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) was originally established as Kumasi College of Technology by a Government Ordinance in 1951 in transformed into a full-fledged university in 1952. It is a world-class academic Centre of excellence, spearheading West Africa's pursuit of technological advancement which offers a wide range on courses. There are

69

six halls of residence at the Kumasi campus, each administered by a hall council consisting of senior and junior members.

The mandate of the university essentially is to provide higher education, undertake research, disseminate knowledge and foster relationships with the outside persons and bodies. The strategic mandate of the University is derived from Science and Technology in its name.

The university operates the collegiate system which has six colleges headed by Provosts, fifteen faculties headed by Deans, ninety-two departments also headed by Head of Departments. The university has four schools and sixteen research centres. Institute of Distance Learning is also part of the setup of the university.

Ayigya is a residence town which houses the community members, most students and staff of the university. Twi is the native language of the people of Ayigya, with farming and business operations as the traditional occupation of the indigenes. There is a market in the community which also serves both its inhabitants as well as students from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

The Oforikrom Municipality is located between latitude 6.35oN and 6.40oS and longitude 1.30oW and 1.35oE and elevated 250 to 300 meters above sea level. It has a surface area of approximately 4,978.47 hectares (49.78 kilometers square) which is about 0.0192 percent of the total land area of Ashanti Region. The Municipality shares boundaries with Ejisu Municipal to the east, Bosomtwe District to the south, Asokwa Municipal to the south-west, Asokore Mampong Municipal to the north and Kumasi Metropolitan to the west. According to the 2021 National Population and Housing census,

Oforikrom Municipal Assembly's population is 213,126 made up of 107,426 males and 105,700 females. The researcher sought to assess suicidal ideation among students in KNUST.

In reviewing existing literature in the study area, the researcher identified gaps in understanding the underlying causes, impacts and management strategies students use to overcome their suicidal ideation. The literature review revealed inconsistencies and overlooked variables providing fertile ground for the study. Moreover, methodologically, the study area stimulated grounds for research in the area of methodology and approach tailored to capture the complex dynamics of suicidal ideation within university settings. As a result, addressing these gaps comprehensively helped in contributing to knowledge and informed evidence-based interventions and support systems to mitigate the impact of suicidal ideation among students in the area.
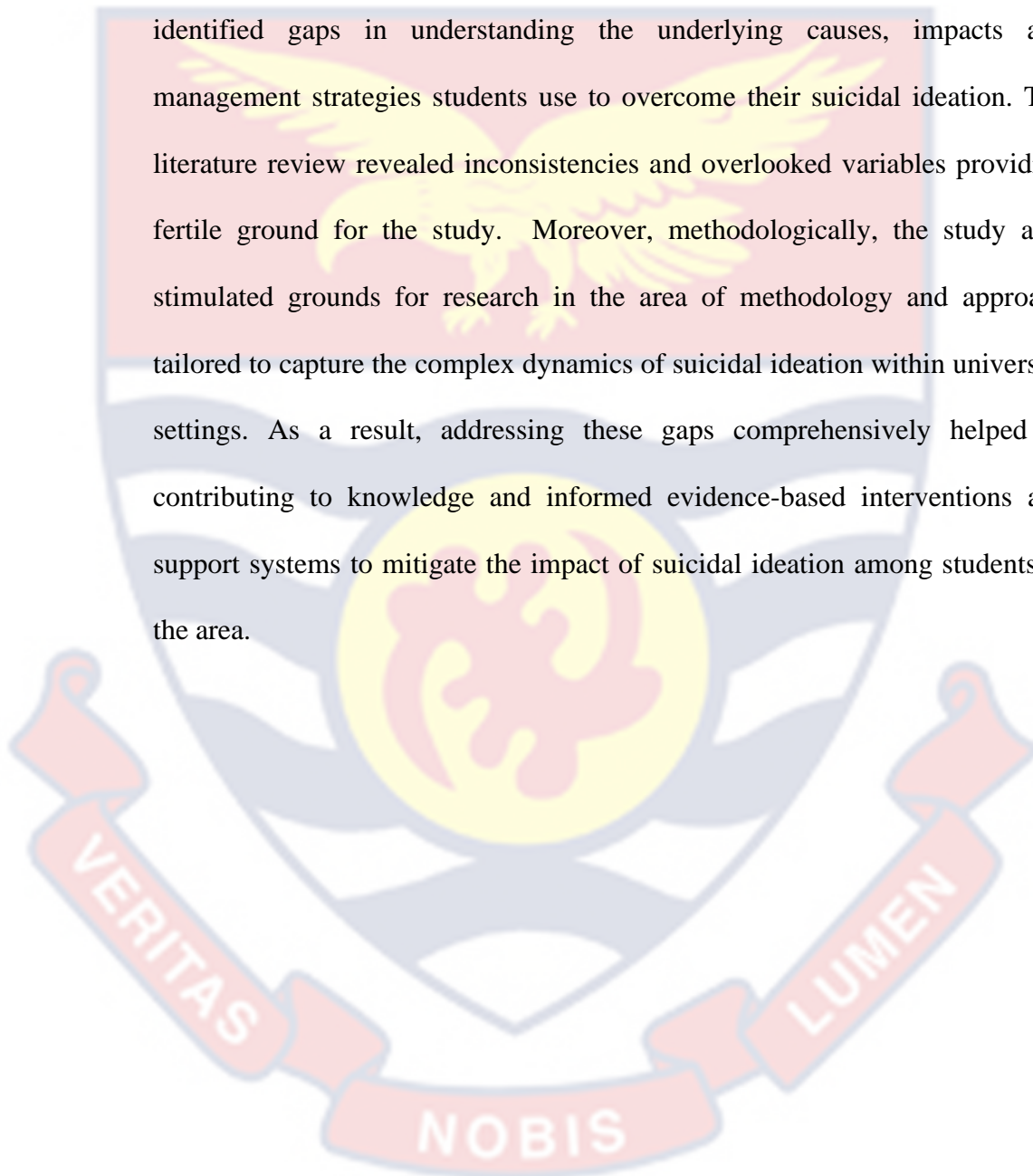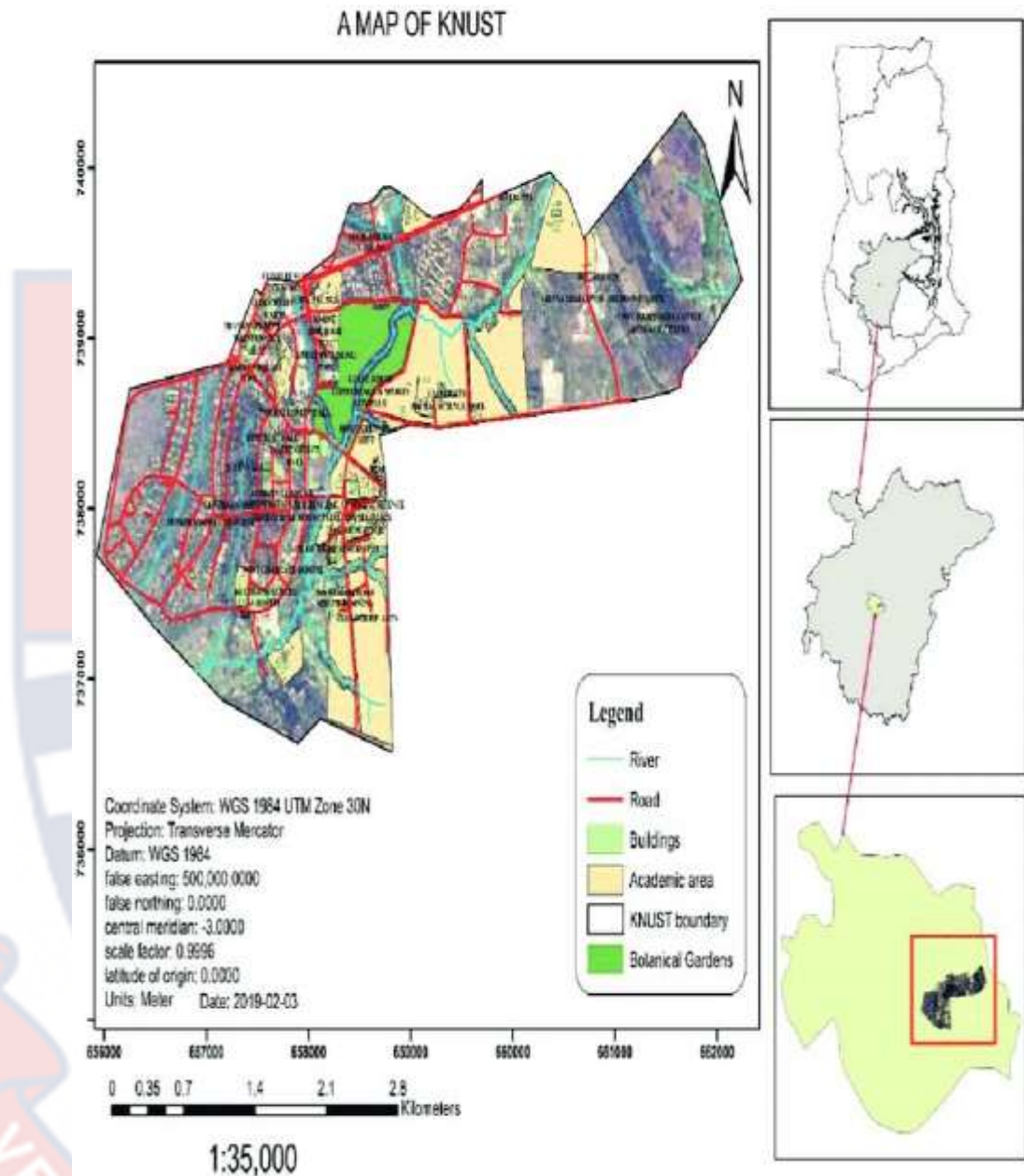
Figure 1: Map of KNUST

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Population

The target population of 71,844 included all undergraduate students at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology where the research was conducted. The accessible population of 45,021 comprised all undergraduate regular students (males/females) from three selected colleges (Humanities and Social Sciences, Art and Built Environment and

72

Engineering). The three colleges were chosen due to rise in reported cases of suicidal ideation among students by their counsellors over the years more than the other three colleges in the university. The other reason is that, the selected college counsellors accepted to assist with data on students they are handling or handled with suicidal ideation unlike the other college counsellors when contacted.

Table 1: *Distribution of Population by Colleges and Gender*

College	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Humanities and Social Sciences	9,000	8,368	17,368
Art and Built Environment	10,025	6,253	16,278
Engineering	9,167	2,208	11,375
Total	28,192	16,829	45,021

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 2: *Distribution of selected students for the study*

College	Population	Total selected
Humanities and Social Sciences	17,368	6
Art and Built Environment	16,278	9
Engineering	11,375	5
Total	45,021	20

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Sampling Procedure

73

The researcher employed both purposive and snowball sampling techniques to identify and select participants for the study from undergraduate students from three selected colleges in the university.

In addition to purposive sampling, the researcher also utilized snowball sampling techniques to identify participants for the study. Participants were purposively selected by the researcher due to their suicide ideation as reported by their college counsellors. Snowball sampling is often employed when it is challenging to locate participants, particularly in qualitative research. This method involved the initial identification of one participant, who then provided referrals to additional participants (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2003). As a result, the researcher contacted the three selected college counsellors, who served as informants and connected the researcher with students. This process continued until data saturation was achieved. Data saturation occurred when the researcher was reasonably confident that additional data collection would yield similar results and support emerging themes and conclusions, and when no new cases were identified within the time a time frame of the conduct of the study (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017). The snowballing technique was used and in the end 20 participants were used for the study after reaching data saturation. This met the required sample size for qualitative studies (Creswell, 2015). Creswell opined that qualitative sample sizes generally range from five (5) to thirty (30) sample cases. The sample size was selected out of a number of students who have had or reported with suicidal ideation before.

Data Collection Instrument

The researcher collected qualitative data using a semi-structured interview guide consisting of 3 items derived from the research objectives with

74

open ended questions. The interview guide concentrated on the causes of suicidal ideation among students, the impact of suicidal on students life and the strategies students use to overcome their suicidal ideation. The semi-structured interview guide sought to find out reasons students give for their suicidal ideation the impact suicide ideation has on their lives and what strategies students in KNUST use to overcome their suicidal ideation. The construction of the semi-structured interview guide was based on a self-developed approach informed by existing literature. Individual, comprehensive, in-person interviews were conducted with twenty (20) participants to focus on their personal experiences. These interviews allowed participants to engage in open and detailed discussions about their experiences related to the research themes and respond to the presented questions (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996).

Pilot Testing

To pilot test the interview guide, 2 students from Akenten Appiah-Menkah University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED) were selected due to their similar characteristics. Connelly (2008) recommends that a pilot test sample should constitute 10% of the projected sample size for the larger parent study. In this case, 10% of the main study's sample size of 20 students equated to 2. A counsellor at the pilot test institution identified two students who had reported experiencing suicidal ideation before. The sample size was also influenced by time and cost considerations. Following the pilot test, no changes were made to the interview guide.

A pilot test is a crucial step in any research study, as Bryman (2012) points out, to ensure that self-completed questionnaires or structured interviews work effectively before administering them to the main sample.

Validity

During the data collection process, participants' views were recorded manually and then read back to them to confirm the accuracy of their recorded responses. The semi-structured interview guide underwent checks for face validity, which was cross-verified and validated by the researcher's supervisor, who is an expert in guidance and counselling. The researcher's supervisor made suggestions where statements that were not relevant to the study's aim were removed. Also, the researcher employed member checking, where manually recorded participant views were reviewed with them, allowing them to confirm the accuracy of their views. The researcher made an expert in guidance and counselling and a researcher to review the instrument and statements that did go well regarding the semi-structured interview guide were modified.

Reliability

The pilot test was instrumental in verifying the reliability of the instrument and also facilitated the identification and correction of ambiguities, such as issues related to clarity of expression and questions that were overloaded or overlapping. Corrections were made based on the feedback obtained from the pilot test, and the researcher cross-referenced the instrument with data from the field collected on students, as reviewed in the existing literature. The views,

76

comments, suggestions, and concerns raised during the pre-testing phase were taken into account to ensure the reliability of the instrument.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the validity and reliability of the interview schedule. According to Pekeberg (2012), qualitative studies can be evaluated based on various criteria. Babbie and Mouton (2001) emphasize the importance of credible, dependable, transferable, and confirmable data.

Credibility involves gathering data consistent with respondents' constructed realities (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Member checking was utilized to ensure credibility, with the researcher summarizing information during interviews to verify interpretations. By employing multiple methods, the researcher ensured complementarity of findings, allowing for adjustments to accurately represent the investigated concept (Bryman, 2008). Additionally, presenting data, discussion, and conclusions to participants facilitated adjustments to suit the explored issue.

Transferability, akin to external validity, concerns the applicability of findings in different contexts (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Purposive and snowball sampling aided in ensuring transferability by selecting suitable participants, thereby enhancing the potential for broader application of findings.

Dependability pertains to the consistency and reliability of study findings upon repetition (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Transparent documentation of research data and procedures is essential for ensuring dependability. In this study, all methods were transparently disclosed, and conclusions were drawn based on accurate data.

77

Confirmability addresses ensuring that research findings reflect participants' narratives rather than researcher bias (Bryman, 2008). The researcher sent the study results to participants before final submission helped prevent misinterpretations, ensuring accurate reflection of participants' voices in discussions and conclusions.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process extended over two months from 6th June to 7th August, 2023 with the specific objective of assessing suicidal ideation among students in KNUST. To aid in data collection, a research assistant who had undergone training was basically instructed to assist in contacting the participants via phone and giving them directions to the researcher's office for data collection. He assisted in the transcription of the audio recordings. He was also taught how to handle ethical issues that might arise during the data collection period.

The sole method of data collection was in-depth face-to-face interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the researcher's office at the counselling centre. The face-to-face interviews established rapport between the interviewer and interviewee, enabling the interpretation of non-verbal communication and gestures, this was appropriate (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). In-depth interviews effectively elucidate and clarify issues, increasing the likelihood of obtaining valuable responses (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This approach was particularly relevant to the present study.

Interviews, on average, lasted between 40 minutes to 55 minutes and were conducted mainly in English. The interviews were conducted by the

78

researcher himself who holds a master of education in guidance and counselling and a professional counsellor in the university. The interviews were audio recorded due to the literacy level of the participants at the researcher's office at the counselling centre. Notes were also taken by the researcher during the interviews. The transcribed versions of the interviews were returned and read to participants for their comments. Participants were contacted via phone calls, and appointments were scheduled based on their availability to meet the researcher at the counselling centre. Only participants selected for the study were interviewed one-on-one after a pilot test of the semi-structured interview guide. Before the interviews, each participant's consent was obtained. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and a consent form was signed by each participant. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and they were allowed to ask questions and seek clarification before proceeding with the interviews. At the end of the data collection, 4 participants did not take part in the study due to personal reasons and 2 repeats of the interviews were conducted. There were no biases recorded.

Data Processing and Analysis

In this study, thematic issues derived from the conceptual framework were extracted and ordered. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Reflexive thematic analysis gives a researcher an accessible method for exploring and interpreting qualitative datasets and describing the meaning of the patterns. As a result, audio recordings of the participants were transcribed verbatim for analysis. In processing and doing the analysis of the data, the codes were assigned to participants for identity and easy referencing. A suicidal ideation student was referred to as **PP** (Participant), Male or Female. The data

processing and analysis were done in line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) process for thematic analysis:

1. Familiarizing with the data:

   The transcribed data was reviewed repeatedly to become familiar with the content, and notes were taken based on the main ideas from the interview data.

2. Generating the initial code:

   Unique features were systematically coded throughout the data.

3. Finding themes:

   Codes were grouped into potential themes driven by the research objectives. Data related to each theme were gathered and presented under the appropriate theme.

4. Examining the theme:

   Themes were cross-referenced with the coded extracts from the beginning and the entire data set from the second phase, guided by the research objectives.

5. Refining and naming the theme:

   Themes were refined, and accurate definitions and names were assigned based on the specific content of each theme. In the final step, vivid and significant extracts and examples from the data were selected for presentation in alignment with the research objectives. The analysis was linked to the research questions and existing literature. The results were discussed and analyzed in connection with the related literature reviewed.

Table 3: *Themes and thematic codes for the study*

Objectives	Themes	Thematic Codes	Example Phrases/ Words
Causes of suicidal ideation	Depression	PP-5	"severe sadness", "lack of satisfaction",
		PP-3	"hopelessness",
	Stress	PP-11	"Feeling overwhelmed", "exhausted", "hard to concentrate",
		PP-4	"frustration"
	Financial challenges	PP-6	"Struggling to pay fees", "no money to buy sanitary pads", "hardly get 50ghc"
		PP-2	"No money to make photocopies and buy sachet water"
	Academic performance	PP-10	"Repeating in the final year", "family pressure",

			"grade point has come down to 50.02".
	PP-9		
Poor relationship	PP-15		"Break up with a girl", "no love anymore"
	PP-13		
Loneliness	PP-8		"Feels rejected by friends", "had low self-esteem", "isolation due to perception about people", "think unloved"
	PP-9		
Sickness	PP-16		"Stigmatized as a sickler", "mostly admitted at the hospital", "inability to afford medicines"
Impact of suicidal ideation	Poor academic performance	PP-6	"Performance dropped", "cannot concentrate on studies", "could not focus on academic work"
		PP-15	
	Substance abuse	PP-7	"Became addicted to cigarette and marijuana", "self-medication, induce coma"

82

		PP-9	
	Psychological issues	PP-16	"Felt worthless, had low self-esteem",
			"altered thinking, social withdrawal"
		PP-9	
	Isolation/ Loneliness	PP-98	"Withdrawal from social media",
			"felt stigmatized", "withdrawal from people and friends"
		PP-3	
	Low self esteem	PP-11	"Had negative self-perception", "feeling of worthlessness"
	Anxiety	PP-9	"Experience increased heart rate", "restlessness", "avoidance of social situation"
Management strategies students use to overcome suicidal ideation	Building self-resilience	PP-16	"Building positive mind set", "hopefulness", "positive talking", "self-confidence", "effective coping skills"
		PP-14	
	Counselling/ psychotherapy	PP-11	"Utilizing counselling services", "increased understanding of issues",
		PP-13	"self-encouragement after counselling"

83

	PP-15	
Academic advisor's help	PP-3	"Support and empathy from academic advisor", "seeking non-judgmental listener"
Social support	PP-5	"Emotional support from friends and lecturers", "sharing experiences with friends", "psychosocial support"
	PP-7	
Motivational speeches/messages	PP-6	"Reading motivational messages", "encouragement from motivational messages"
	PP-11	

Source: *Field Survey, 2024*.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher followed ethical procedures throughout the study. Approval was obtained from the College of Education Studies Ethical Review Board (IRB) of the University of Cape Coast, ensuring that the research adhered to established ethical guidelines. Additionally, an introductory letter was secured from the Department of Guidance and Counselling. The well-being and ethical treatment of the participants were a priority in this study. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and autonomy, were integral to the research process. Leedy and Ormrod (2005)

emphasized that research participation should be entirely voluntary. Informed consent was pivotal in upholding this principle. Participants had the freedom to choose whether to participate in the study or decline participation. Each participant was presented with a consent form to sign to before the interviews were conducted. This practice aligns with the concept of participant autonomy, ensuring that individuals have full and voluntary control over their level of engagement in the research.

  Anonymity was also rigorously maintained. Participants were explicitly instructed not to divulge any personal information, such as their names, addresses, or places of residence, during the interview sessions. These measures were implemented to safeguard the participants' identities and protect their privacy throughout the study. Participants who developed psychological issues triggered by the interview were provided with post interview counselling and follow ups were done to ensure that no psychological harm was caused.

Chapter Summary

  The chapter describes the various processes, techniques, and methods that the researcher used, adopted, and designed in order to reach, interact, and gather the empirical data required for the analysis and discussion of the research questions. The purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to obtain 20 participants. Furthermore, the chapter detailed how participants' rights were protected and how issues were managed during data collection and empirical data analysis.

<div align="center">

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

</div>

Overview

<div align="center">85</div>

The purpose of the study was to explore suicidal ideation among university students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. This chapter reports the outcomes and discussion of the data collected in the study. In essence, the chapter discusses the themes that emerged from participants' responses. By utilizing themes, the chapter also provided a qualitative overview of the contributions made by participants using a sample size of 20 participants.

Results and findings of the three research questions from the study's objectives were. This chapter relied on quotes from participants, which helped to understand how each participant understood the study. Analysis of the data, and conclusions were organized according to the following main topic areas: causes of suicidal ideation, impact of suicidal ideation, and strategies students use to overcome suicidal ideation.

Findings of the Study

Main Themes of the Study

1. Causes of suicidal ideation

2. Impact of suicidal ideation

3. Management strategies for suicidal ideation

The study aim was to assess suicidal ideation among university students. The study showed that the causes of suicidal ideation and its impact are a major concern to participants interviewed. It was revealed that students employed diverse means in managing the impact of suicidal ideation in order to continue to live their lives. In the circumstance, several causes and impact of suicidal ideation among participants were discovered. Management strategies that students used were also revealed by participants in the university, KNUST.

Results of the Main Data.

Research Question One

What reasons do students in KNUST give for their suicidal ideation among?

The research question one sought to investigate the causes of suicidal ideation among students in KNUST. In order to attain this goal, the study collected qualitative data from participants on the causes of suicidal ideation among them. The study brought evidence to show that the causes of suicidal ideation are numerous. As a result, the themes that emerged from the analysis are: depression, stress, financial challenges, academic performance, poor relationship issues, loneliness, and sickness/illness.

Depression

Students' mental health and well-being are linked to their general success in school, any condition that thwarts this opens the way for more challenges to fester. A happier and satisfied student is a step ahead of any student without psychological hurdle including depression. Analysis of the data from the interviews conducted showed that students developed suicidal ideation due to symptoms of depression. Some of the participants had this to say:

> *"I think it's severe sadness, hopelessness and my continuous tiredness. I used to go for medication but I stopped. I find it difficult to sleep, walk and concentrate on my daily activities, especially studies. I don't just get life satisfaction. Sir, I feel too tired of making decisions. When I think about all this, I feel like I should just die'' (PP-5).*

Another participant added that:

> *"It feels like I'm trapped in a whirlwind of intense hopelessness. The thought of my future and my academic journey in university*

87

overwhelms me with profound sadness, especially considering the constant struggle with time management and staying focused on my studies. Despite putting in all my efforts to cope, my once burning passion for education has slowly faded away. Whenever I take a moment to reflect on myself, I can't seem to find any glimmer of hope, and it leads me to contemplate ending everything silently, without anyone noticing" (PP-3).

From analysis of the data, participants had the desire for suicide due to sleep problems and inability to concentrate in their daily activities. Again, the results showed that participants unhappiness and dislikes for things in their lives led to their suicidal ideation. The resultant effect of these depressive symptoms among participants affected their desire to make proper decisions about their lives. This implies that, causative factor of students suicidal ideation was caused by depression which gravely had serious implications among participants.

Stress

It was observed from interviews conducted that suicidal ideation occurred when students find it difficult to handle varying circumstances in their lives. A participant stated that:

"The semester is drawing to a close, yet I still feel completely overwhelmed. Sir, everything in my life feels like it's escalating out of control from presentations to assignments to quizzes. I constantly find myself in a state of confusion, struggling to keep my finances in check. I'm exhausted and overwhelmed by relentless headaches that make it hard to think or concentrate. The system seems designed to frustrate me at every turn. As a perfectionist, the constant disappointments have

taken their toll on me. There are moments when I feel like giving up,

like ending it all, as I grapple with my problem"(PP-11).

In confirming this, one participant mentioned that:

"...my mind is constantly clouded with confusion and sadness, making it

difficult to focus on my studies. I fear I will fail. Sir, managing both my

personal and academic life has become a daunting challenge. I often

receive negative comments from my classmates and roommates, which

adds to my discomfort. At times, the overwhelming stress makes me wish

I could escape it all" (PP-4).

It can be found that, the emergence of many unmanaged stressful experiences among participants increased their psychological challenges which led to suicidal ideation. The participants agreed that suicidal ideation made them feel tired overwhelmed and exhausted in their lives. They also became confused and frustrated. Also, the analysis showed that participants found it difficult to concentrate on their studies. This implies that, a student with myriad stressors is likely to develop several other psychological conditions which could lead to suicidal ideation. In the circumstances, stress was a serious issue expressed by participants.

Financial challenges

It was shown from the results that, students difficulties in getting money to finance their education and afford their daily expenses or upkeep in the university led them to suicidal ideation. Results of the interview data have shown that challenges in their financial strength influenced students suicidal ideation.

A participant stated that:

> *"Sir, I am struggling to pay for my school fees and get accommodation on campus. My family is very large and poor too to the extent that they hardly send 50ghc a month. I find it very difficult to get one meal a day. I foot to campus daily and get to class sometimes late or miss lectures due to the distance from where I am perching with somebody. No money to buy sanitary pads and course materials. I am going through a lot so I always think about ending it to avoid all these sufferings"* (PP-6).

Another participant articulated that:

> *"Sir, the reason why I think about suicide is that, I find it difficult to buy pomade, soap for bathing and washing. I do not have money to make photocopies of course materials and present my assignments because of financial hardship after the divorce of my parents. Sir, I cannot even buy common sachet water to drink and to make things worse, the only phone I was using as an improvised laptop was also stolen from me"* (PP-2).

The analysis of the results has shown that, financial challenges affected participant's academics activities. They faced severe financial challenges while pursuing their studies. Participants struggled to pay fees, accommodation and sometimes foot to campus for lectures and hardly get 50ghc or a meal to eat daily. The finding of the also revealed that, lack of basic necessities such us pomade, bathing soap and water including the inability to make photocopies accounted for their suicidal ideation. The implication is that, students financial challenges are predicates of stress and psychological challenges and if not resolved leads to suicidal ideation in the circumstance.

Academic performance

90

University education is primarily intended to help students get academic degrees. This comes with the ability to perform during the period in order to earn the degree. Therefore, it is crucial for students academic performance to continuously improve before he/she can earn such an opportunity. One of the biggest sources of stress for students has been identified as the pressure to perform academically or meet targets/expectations. Anything sort of that becomes a daunting task especially if the person's performance drastically reduces or has to repeat his/her programme of study. In most instances, students find it difficult to cope. It therefore becomes stressful to them leading to suicidal ideations. For example, a participant said that:

> "...I find it difficult to meet my goals. I expected to get a first class from KNUST but due to health and financial challenges, I cannot achieve that. I aimed to be a valedictorian   considering my records. Sir, I cannot buy my medicine. My grade point has come down to 50.02 so getting even second-class lower is a problem. A brilliant student too. When I think   about this, I think I have to kill myself" (PP-9).

A participant noted that:

> "I haven't been able to achieve my expectations. I wanted to get first class from KNUST so that I could obtain a scholarship abroad but now a grade point of 49.62 is not possible. I have always been a good student too but due to a myriad of challenges I am performing poorly. I think like committing suicide because I cannot withstand the disgrace" (PP-7).

It can be inferred from the results that, performance is an important element of students life but if suddenly the performance declines, the student

91

will face some challenges. Participants expressed that they found it difficult to meet goals and that their grade points started coming down leading to their suicidal ideation. This implies that students academic performance and targets/expectations to get a first-class to get a scholarship are important factors in students' mental stability. However, if that is missed, it could to suicidal tendencies. Academic performance led the participants to their suicidal ideations.

Poor Relationships

In trying to obtain the views of participants regarding the causes of suicidal ideation, participant gave relationships challenges as the reasons that pushed them into suicidal ideation. Relationships in school as a factor played a significant role in students' lives. As a result, data from the interview revealed that students in ability to keep their relationships were attributed to participants suicidal ideation. The participants interviewed indicated that relationships led them to suicidal ideation. A participant contributed by saying:

> "My reason for wanting to die was a breakup that I had with a lady I had dated for about three years in school. I have sacrificed and spent so much on her, accommodation, feeding and I even bought a laptop for her. I lied to my dad who is on retirement to get money for all these. It hurt me so much that I could not bear it. What I was going through was very hard, no food no water" (PP-15).

One other participant lamented by saying:

> "I was over-thinking and I felt like I needed to let out certain pains by killing myself due a relationship issues with my girl. She jilted me without any apparent reason. I felt she disappointed me, no love

anymore. The painful thing was that she was going out with one of my course mates" (PP-13).

The data from participants revealed that, relationships among students and making friends with the opposite sex was an important factor for their sustainable well-being. As a result, it was clear that students experienced no love anymore from the opposite sex and the break-ups influenced participant's suicidal ideation. The absence of all these culminated in the desire to commit suicide. This implies that relationships are ingredients for students psychological wellbeing and the absence of it leads to suicidal ideation. If students experience poor relationships among themselves, it leads to their suicidal ideations.

Loneliness

Loneliness is the sensation of being to be by oneself. When students begin their university study with face several unexpected challenges that could lead them to be isolated from other people. The attempt to cope with these circumstances could result in stressful issues. The analysis revealed that, participants said that loneliness was the main reason for their suicidal ideations. For example, a participant noted:

"I feel rejected even by friends. I think I have low self-esteem after undergoing a surgery which affected my physical make up, it makes me sad. People and friends do not want to come near me so I withdraw myself from them and be hiding. There is no hope for me. I feel I am rejected and not loved, I have been coiling back with the hope of ending it" (PP-8).

One other participant corroborated the above statement by saying:

93

"I usually isolate myself due to my perception about people on campus here. I feel anxious about my surrounding because of the trauma meted out to me which is still fresh in my mind so I don't get close to people. I think unloved and I cry most times to shake off my bitterness, however, its draining me. I think if I die my life will be better somewhere" (PP-9).

The results revealed that, participants suicidal ideations came from loneliness due to feeling rejected, sad, isolation due to their perception of people and the thinking of not being loved brought about suicide ideation. Post-traumatic disorders and bitter experiences meted out to participants in school accounted for suicidal thoughts.

Sickness/illness

One striking cause of suicidal ideation was found as sickness. Results from a participant revealed how the participant fell victim to all kinds of accusations due to ill health caused by an unknown person. The participant is accused of draining the coffers of her family. The participant had this to say:

"My roommates including my poor parents have stigmatized me as a sickler and somebody who waste money. So, they are fed up with me. Due to sickness I am mostly admitted at the university hospital so I miss lectures, I cannot meet deadlines, my performance is going down. I am increasingly anxious about it. I am stressed due to my inability to buy some medicines and pay for other bills. Looking at all this I just wanted to die" (PP-16).

The results from the participant demonstrate the fact that, being stigmatized and mostly admitted to the hospital and the inability to afford

94

medicine led to suicidal ideation. The participant felt like committing suicide because of the stigmatization attached to the sickness and the financial burden on her parents. This indicates that sickness brings about frustration and financial challenges to students. Balancing studies with reoccurring sicknesses led to their suicidal ideation.

Research Question Two

What impact has suicidal ideation on students life in KNUST?

The main aim of research question two was to find out the impact of suicidal ideation on life students in KNUST. In order to attain this goal, the study collected qualitative data from participants on the impact of suicidal ideation students life. As a result, the themes that emerged from the data analysis are; poor academic performance, substance abuse, psychological, isolation/loneliness, low self-esteem and anxiety.

Poor academic performance

Analysis of interview data from participants has shown that, suicidal ideation also has its toll impact on students academic performance. Suicidal ideation is a psychological condition which brings about stressful situations among students in their studies. A student who goes through serious mental health challenges could significantly record poor performance if not handled properly. Fundamentally, the impact of suicidal ideation on students impedes their academic performance. A participant shared his experience by saying:

> *"It affected me in my academics I wasn't able to go to lectures for about one month. There was no motivation for studies. I could not focus on academic work. My performance dropped and my interest in my learning was a different thing altogether" (PP-15).*

95

A female participant expressed her frustration by saying:

> *"The impact was that I was not able to concentrate on my studies and books because of overthinking and the agony I was passing through. I would absent myself from class and skip lectures. I could not do assignments and presentations given to us and the lecturers would complain about my dwindling CWA. From 57.03 to 49.8" (PP-6).*

Inferring from participants interviewed, the data showed that suicidal ideation has an impact on students performance. According to the findings available, some students performed poorly because they could not focus and concentrate on their academics. Their performance dropped at the end of the day due to their suicidal thoughts. Suicidal ideation destabilizes students mental focus on learning.

Substance abuse

The intake of substances by students due to suicidal ideation was recorded during the data collection period. Suicidal ideation had impact on students so they had to take in substance to bring down their stressors including depression and the idea of self-medication to relieve pain. A participant who went into substance expressed this:

> *"It made me addicted to cigarettes and occasionally marijuana (weed) to calm down my stressors and depression. Sir, the other impact was also that I was smoking a lot to calm the emotional pains temporarily" (PP-7).*

A participant had this to say:

96

"I had to resort to doing self-medication, I tried not to kill myself but to induce a coma on myself by taking overdose of anti-depressant drugs to numb my pain. I wanted to shut myself away from the world" (PP-3).

The results of participants found that, substance abuse was a common thing due to suicidal ideation. Participants got addicted to marijuana and cigarettes. Substance abuse also led to a participant practicing self-medication to induce coma by taking an overdose of drugs to suppress difficult stressors as a result of continued suicidal ideation. This implies that the impact of suicidal ideation among students was a major concern among participants which led to their substance abuse.

Psychological issues

Additionally, it was revealed from the results that participants had psychological challenges due to their suicide ideation. The findings showed that suddenly, participants had the fear of being a burden on others in their daily lives. A participant shared the following experiences:

"The effect on me was that I felt worthless and anxious about the future. Sir, I had low self-esteem so I feel that I am a burden on others. I tried to build confidence in myself yet it still affects my mind" (PP-16).

Confirming this statement above, another participant stated that:

"Suicidal ideation affected my thinking pattern. I would not talk to people but think that I am being punished. I thought that would be better life in other place than earth where I could go. One other mental distortion was that, it doesn't worth taking in food" (PP-8).

The results from the data revealed that, participants experienced difficulties in stabilizing their minds and generally felt worthless and anxious

97

about the future. They experienced low self-esteem and social withdrawal syndrome. Suicidal ideation had a big impact on students psychologically.

Isolation /Loneliness

One theme that emerged from participant's narrations on the impact of suicidal ideation was the issue of self-isolation or loneliness. Isolation and loneliness are mainly characterized by suicidal individuals in that, they do not want people to be aware of what is happening within them or want to solve their problems by themselves alone. A participant who went through isolation shared this:

> *"... the impact was that I took myself out from social media and withdrawn from people, no calls, WhatsApp chat and Facebook. I felt stigmatized because people did not understand what I was going through psychologically. I was not sociable again to people and stopped participating in other sporting activities. I find somewhere and sit alone thinking about myself" (PP-8).*

One other participant explained that:

> *"It made me to withdraw from people and games that I previously enjoyed. I wanted to spare friend their freedom and not to be a burden on them. My withdrawal from people denied me of social interactions. Sometimes I shed tears" (PP-3).*

Findings from this theme showed that, participants did not have any reason to have social integration. As a result, they withdrew from social media and people and friends due to the impact of their suicidal ideation. Participants felt stigmatized by people around them. The impact of suicidal ideation points to the fact that, participants could not socialize the way they used to do. The

98

data implies that loneliness or social alienation had impacted negatively on participants due to their suicidal ideation. Belongingness is an important part of a students life and the absence of it has a psychological impact students.

Low self-esteem

Some other impact that emerged from the interview data related participant self-confidence. This perception negatively influenced the way a participant believed in the self and responded to daily issues as evidenced in the following statement a participant shared:

"Sir, suicidal ideation made me develop negative self-perception about myself, I was self-inadequate in doing things and the belief that I am worthless and inadequate. I said to myself that I was a failure in life. My academic performance also went down because of academic pressure and social stress which I could not cope" (PP-11).

From the above, the participant had negative self-perception about people and was self-inadequate in doing things. The participant also expressed feelings of worthlessness due to suicidal ideation. The participant had self-defeating thoughts of worthlessness due to suicidal ideation experiences. From this data, it can be seen that low esteem has emerged as an important aspect of life if one wants to succeed. This implies that, students suicidal ideation accounted for their low self-esteem. Suicidal ideation had an impact on how they see themselves.

Anxiety

Anxiety was identified as one of the impacts of suicidal ideation on students lives. Fear brings about mental confusion and the lack of inertia to undertake meaningful decisions about life. Students who are anxious due to

suicidal ideation may cultivate the habit of postponing their set goals which could lead to the ability to achieve them eventually. For instance, a participant expressed that:

> "I get afraid of people. I often experience increased heart rate, restlessness and sweat when I am with people due to fear as a result of my traumatic experience. I have always had the feelings that I am being watched and noticed. During my down times, I don't even like going to class to mingle with my classmates for fear of being stigmatized" (PP-9).

The results from the data confirmed the fact participants developed anxiety issues due to the impact of their suicidal ideation. Participants pointed out that they had an increase in heart rate and restlessness. They also started avoiding social situations in their lives due to suicide ideation. Students' phobic anxiety does not provide the ambience for social interaction. It implies that anxiety impeded the desire for the participant to participate adequately in class and other academic endeavours.

Research Question Three.

What strategies do students in KNUST use to overcome their suicidal ideation?

This research question sought to find out strategies that students use to overcome their suicidal ideation in KNUST. In order to attain this goal, the study collected qualitative data from participants on strategies they use to overcome their suicidal ideation. In all, six themes emerged from the analysis

100

of the data. These are; building self-resilience, counselling/psychotherapy, academic advisor's help, social support and motivational speeches/messages.

Building self-resilience

Positive mindset, hopefulness and high self-esteem are vital ingredients in resolving psychological conflicts in the mind of an individual. Students who can be resilient and stand up to the task of reasoning positively would certainly have the courage to fight back at self-defeating thoughts thereby erasing the idea of suicidal ideation. A participant who was able to build self-resilience had this to say:

> *"I built a strong feeling in myself for having stayed out for long without voicing out my problems to people. I built that positive mindset in such a way that I am hopeful and   convinced that other people out there are facing similar situations and they are still living. Sir, these strategies help me cope every passing day" (PP-16).*

Another resilient participant also remarked:

> *"In managing my suicidal ideation, I do positive talking to myself to reduce the tension in me. I built effective coping skills in reducing the stressors. Sometimes I think about a brighter future where I imagine myself being in a different environment without any hardship so no need to kill myself" (PP-14).*

A participant, for instance stated that:

> *"I always tried to be resilient when I am psychologically down so that I can boost my self-esteem and reduce the pain and distress. I believe that I will overcome all these one day. This self-confidence inspires me to value my life (PP-12)".*

101

The findings of the data brought light to the fact that, participants fought suicidal ideation differently by building inner mechanisms that controlled their ideation to a lower level. Participants mentioned that, self-encouragements through positive talk, building strong feelings and effective coping strategies helped in reducing their suicidal ideation. Having hope for the future encouraged them to hold on to life. The implication of all of this meant that building of resilience boosted participants confidence and the wish to live despite their problems

Counselling/psychotherapy

The findings of the present study indicate that a significant proportion of students opted for counselling or psychotherapy as a means of addressing various issues they encountered in their lives. The individuals said that they were able to effectively manage their symptoms, particularly their sources of stress, as a result of the professional support from counsellors. The interview data reveals quotes from some participants on how psychologists through counselling assisted with their suicidal management strategies. A participant said that:

> *"I didn't manage it by myself I went to a health psychologist at the counselling centre. We explored a lot of things and through that I got to know a lot such that I am no more ignorant of what I was passing through so I manage my suicidal thought" (PP-11).*

This was supported by another participant, who indicated that:

> *"The safe and caring atmosphere presented me the opportunity to discuss my concerns and feelings freely. I did not have the opportunity to open up and speak about my problems for a very long time. I felt very*

102

relieved after the sessions where I realized the meaning of life and the

feeling that people care and hold me in high esteem, so death won't

make any much difference" (PP-13).

One of them also said in support of the earlier participant said that:

"Sir, what helped me manage or come out of me wanting to die was the

counselling that came in. I encouraged myself thereafter that I will not

die because of a lady who will marry another person one day. The

counsellor comforted, empathized and advised me not to end my life

because of someone. There is hope even after breakup" (PP-15).

The findings on this theme suggest that participants resorted to receiving professional support from counsellors. A participant indicated that, after seeing a counsellor, the counsellor explained things clear which brought meaning and the value of life to bear. The counsellor showed unconditional positive regard and empathy helped participants in managing their suicidal ideation. The participant felt cared for by the counsellor. This implies that seeking professional support helped minimize suicidal tendencies among participants.

Academic advisor help

Helping individuals to express themselves about what is happening in their minds facilitates the process of mental healing. In most cases, students with suicidal ideations after talking to individuals they can confide with relieve them of the burden of carrying such thoughts. In some instances, students would want to be heard but with minimal guidance as to how to manage their psychological stressors including suicidal ideation. An academic advisor's intervention is useful when a student is in distress. Being there for the student who needs help

103

may be all that is necessary to make a change. Academic advisors' words of assurance which comes with non-judgmental and evaluative encourages suicidal students. One of the participants said:

> *"In most episodes, I looked for somebody who would listen and not want to suggest solutions to me. A person who can validate my feelings and experience without judging me. I tried always to approach my academic advisor who always have time for me, empathizes and encourages me to hold on to live despite my problems" (PP-3).*

The results showed that, the participant looked for somebody who would be available and have time to listen to them in a non-judgmental way. They had empathic support from their academic advisor which was done in a non-judgmental manner. This implies that participants going through suicidal ideation in most instances need somebody such as an academic advisor to connect with to enable them to share their problems but not anybody to direct them as to what to do.

Social-support

Several students expressed gratitude for the presence of important relationships in their lives that provided help in managing their daily activities and overall well-being, resulting in a considerable reduction in their suicidal thoughts. It was observed that parents and friends assisted him throughout this challenging period. A participant mentioned that the sporting group helped him manage his suicidal ideation. The statements of these participants are:

"One thing that helped me in managing my suicidal ideation was the assistance from the pool of friends and some lecturers who cared about me. They connected very well with me in times of difficulties. They came around to encourage me and that helps in managing my negative thoughts" (PP-5).

Another participant had this to say:

"I had some friends I confided in. I realized that I wasn't alone and some of them were   facing similar challenges but they held on to their lives. After I heard their experiences, I realized that I was thinking negatively. That gave me hope. So, I encourage myself to continue living. My friends gave me psychosocial support during such thoughts of hopelessness and worthlessness" (PP-7).

The study's findings revealed that social support from individuals had a crucial role in mitigating suicidal thoughts. Friends and peers cared about the participants problems. People who shared similar experiences brought about hope and encouragement to hold on to life. The study also revealed that significant others such as pers support was very important in maintaining psychological well-being and low suicidal ideation. This implies that friends/peers and lecturers are individuals who must constantly give psychosocial support to students when they are going through life challenges, especially suicidal ideation.

Motivational speeches/messages

Inspirational speeches by renowned people in society such as motivational speakers also have a place in building psychological resilience, help-seeking and problem-solving skills. Suicidal ideations come with several

105

distorted thinking and the way of viewing things becomes blurred in the face of a suicidal student. Students who listen to or watch motivational quotes or read messages from professionals in the university try to implement such information. Analysis of the results showed that respondents use motivational speeches and messages to manage their suicidal thoughts. A female participant had this to say:

> *"When I woke up in the morning, I will download/read motivational messages from the weekly emotional tit bits from the counselling centre and some videos from the university podcast discussions on mental health which mainly centres on encouragement. So, I listen to the videos twice a day. These messages bring hope, encourage and teaches how to build resilience so that one does not become suicidal"* (PP-6).

Another female participant also said:

> *"I always listened to motivational messages every day from the school counsellors and chaplaincy to be strong and get in touch with my spiritual side. I also downloaded some videos especially those that talk about life and worthiness to get myself up every time I was down"* (PP-11).

The data obtained from participants showed that, students often listen to motivational speeches from professionals such as counsellors in the university or read emotional titbits from them frequently, it brings hope and encouragement to build positive way of thinking. From the results of the study, participants listened to these messages or speeches to have hope. Some of the messages inspire hope and encourage resilience and self-worthiness. The findings imply that, motivational messages help participants to reduces their

106

suicidal ideation. In the circumstance, motivational messages are very important remedies in mitigating students suicidal ideation.

Discussion of the Results

The purpose of the study was to assess suicidal ideation among university students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, in Ghana. The results were discussed in accordance with the research questions.

Causes of Suicidal Ideation

The first objective of the study was to investigate the causes of suicidal ideation among university students in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. The findings of the study revealed that, the main causes of suicidal ideation include; depression, stress, financial challenges, academic performance, poor relationship issues, loneliness and sickness/illness.

One major theme that emerged from the study was depression. The result of the study revealed that, students who had suicidal ideation was due to depression. The finding of this study is consistent with studies of Maleka et al., (2016), whose study established that suicidal ideation positively correlates with depression, loneliness and hopelessness. The findings of the current study also agree with studies of Arria et al., (2009); Richardo and Carlos (2018) who also established that, depressive symptoms effects were strongly related with suicide ideation among students. Furthermore, the absence of social support was a major risk factor for suicidal ideation with depressive symptoms, which has become predominant among students in most institutions of higher learning.

Another theme that emerged from the results of the study was stress. Participants expressed their frustration on stress which pushed them to suicidal

ideation. The results indicated that participants became overwhelmed and exhausted of life and experiences of deep sense of frustration brought about by confused thoughts. As a result, simple decision-making processes was a problem. Participants expression of confusion states and frustration made them unable to concentrate leading to suicidal ideation. This study corroborates the position of O'Connor and Kirtly, (2018) IMV theory, where the exposition is that if a student (individual) feels entangled with psychological condition such as stress and where there are no motivational factors to mitigate those stressors the student could develop suicidal ideation. This implies that stress bring about accompanying psychological challenges and if not handled well would lead to students suicidal ideation.

Also, financial challenges were revealed as one of the causes of suicidal ideation among participants. The results showed that students who experience financial instability led them to serious psychological problems. Findings of this study confirmed the studies of Wanyoike (2015) whose studies established that students who have had low amount of money encounter challenges in their studies at the university. Insufficient money to cover fees, daily upkeep, accommodation and other course materials could lead to financial stress among these students. Due to economic hardships of parents /guardians most students are faced with challenging issues which affects their mental strength. The findings of the study are also congruent with Ayodele & Ojo (2021); Khadijah, et al., (2021), who brought to light that, financial burden in buying course materials and feeding expose students to severe distressful situation and if they are unable to cope leads to disappointment in life which in the long run force them to think of suicide in order not to be a burden. Students with enough

108

financial abilities are likely not to think about suicide. The findings are similar to studies of Sharma, et al., (2015) who reported that economic conditions forced students into activities and actions that compromised their psychological well-being resulting in suicidal ideations.

Additionally, academic performance was also found as a leading cause of suicidal ideation among students. Academic stress if not controlled could lead students to suicidal ideation and most importantly a student who is lagging behind in their studies. It can be inferred from the findings that academic performance is an important element of student's life but if suddenly the performance declines, they would be quite upset and end up overthinking. The results revealed that participants suicidal ideation was traceable to academic performance. The results of this current study are consistent with findings of Salifu (2021) whose research revealed that students suicidal ideation were traced to their inability to pass their courses, failing to accomplish academic goals and struggling with other course work. This current study also confirmed studies of Ayodele and Ojo (2021) who revealed that academic problems and other circumstance of students leads to suicide ideation. They added that, poor academic performance of students who are left unaddressed greatly became a critical source of suicidal ideation among students. This study was also consistent with Amare et al., (2018) whose study indicated that students who became disappointed in their academic scores were more likely to have suicidal ideation than their peers who performed well. The findings further, revealed that participants having suicidal ideation was due to their inability to meet their goals/expectations. This study agreed with the 3ST by Klonsky (2015) theory which posits that different causes of pain may leads to a corresponding decrease

in desire to live including academic challenges. This implies that participants view of not achieving enough in their lives led to the experience of psychological pain hence their suicidal ideation.

Furthermore, poor relationship accounted for participant suicidal ideation. Significant others in students life such as friendship played major role in their lives. As a result, the findings from the study revealed that poor relationship contributed to their suicidal ideation. The results of this study are in line with studies conducted by Ayolede et al., (2021) who examined relationship issues among students and found poor relationships and poor social support accounted for students suicidal thoughts, and brought untold problems to students. The results from this study showed that students relationship with others including friends of the opposite sex was key to their very existence.

Again, one other cause of suicidal ideation was loneliness. The findings of the study also revealed that students experiencing loneliness accounted for their suicidal ideation. The results of this study are consistent with Baiden, et al., (2017) whose study showed that loneliness and anxiety were positively associated with suicidal ideation among students. The study's results are also in agreement with Lamis, et al., (2014); Shu-yue et al., (2014) whose studies also showed that suicidal ideation significantly correlated and predicted loneliness and drug abuse. Loneliness mediated the correlation between self-consistency and suicidal ideation. Clearly, loneliness is a challenge among participants in that it prepares the way for other mental health issues to emerge due to its influence on the idle mind. Participants attribution of loneliness to their suicidal ideation confirms that if a student is unable to manage traumatic experiences

meted out against the person that could fester serious health challenges including suicidal ideation.

Relatedly, sickness/illness among participants surfaced as one factor leading to suicidal ideation. The findings of this study revealed that, participant's suicidal ideation was due to chronic sickness with irresponsiveness to treatment. This brought in severe financial burden on her parents resulting in stigmatization. The name calling and stigmatization from friends/mates made the participant fed up in life. Participant thought that death could relieve her parents from this burden. This finding is line with Joiners (2005) theory, which posits that if an individual feels burdensome to family and friends, he/she would develop the desire to die because death is worth more than living. The study is also consistent with DeCantanzano (1995) who opined that, an individual who feels burden on others would think about death to avoid being a burden on people. The participant suicidal ideation came as a result of sickness but the family and roommates think that it is a burden on them. Suicidal ideation would emerge on that account and the student wish death worth living to the family and society.

Again, the Integrated Motivational Volitional Model of Suicidal Behaviour (IMV) by O'Connor and Kirtley (2018) indicates that, the emergence of suicidal ideation arises as a result of psychological issues including depression, stress and unresolved challenges leading to humiliation. In view of the theory, if there is no perceive escape or way of resolving such psychological issues, they become predictors of suicidal ideation.

Impact of Suicidal Ideation

The second objective of the study was to find out the impact of suicidal ideation on student life in KNUST. The findings of this study revealed that suicidal ideation had so many impacts on the participants lives. These findings attest to the fact that, suicidal ideation have negative implication on their daily lives and this includes; poor academic performance, substance abuse, psychological issues, isolation/loneliness, low self-esteem and anxiety.

To begin with, suicidal ideation resulted in students poor academic performance. In analyzing the findings, the impact of suicidal ideation implies no hope for the future in relation to academic work. Participants could not focus on their academic. Participants could not also concentrate on their studies leading to a drop their performance. They could not concentrate on anything in life. Suicidal ideation blurs students' way of reasoning and if they find themselves in such confusing state as a result of suicidal ideation, developing effective coping strategies becomes problematic.

Again, suicidal ideation made participants to abuse substances such as drugs and cigarette The result of the study is consistent with Pompili, et al., (2010) studies who found that, substance abuse contributed to the reasons why some students had suicidal ideation.

Furthermore, suicidal ideation accounted for other psychological challenges among participants. The findings of the study show that, suicidal ideation on students brought about serious psychological conditions which led to massive impact on their mental instability. Results of the study were consistent with the opinion of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2022) who indicated that suicidal ideation on students (individual) are major, including psychological problems, depression and conflicting emotions such as

112

guilt and anger at people or oneself. Deducing from the results suicidal ideation affects students due to psychological issues they could not handle.

Additionally, isolation/loneliness emerged as one of the impacts of suicidal ideation among students as some of the students become isolated or lonely. The study's result is in agreement with the interpersonal theory of suicide Joiner (2005), who opined that, loneliness or social alienation significantly influence students desire for suicidal. From the findings, the experience of low sense of belongingness or social alienation among students due to suicidal ideation gravely had an effect on their lives. This implies that, socialization, is an essential component of students life and the absence of it leads to suicidal ideation and the possible enactment of suicide.

Also, from the findings of the study, low self-esteem emerged as one impact of suicidal ideation on students life. Results from the study suggests that, suicidal ideation pushed students to experience negative self-perception about people , self-inadequacy about doing things and feeling worthiness with exhibition of lack of confidence in themselves and their studies. A student who has high self-adequacy will develop high self-esteem, self-perspective in his/her dealings. This study corroborated strongly with Malkan et al., (2018) that, a student with low self-esteem could have suicidal thoughts. That, low self-esteem combined with low self-concept tend to have serious suicidal ideation effect on students.

Again, one other theme that emerged as an impact of suicidal ideation on students life was anxiety. Participants traumatic experience led to severe fear and anxiety on people and the general. Due to that, the participant always experiences increase heart rate resulting in social avoidance situation.

113

Therefore, the participant avoids places and people including skipping classes. This implies that the impact of suicidal ideation on students life is enormous in relation to the fear of people when participants are in the state of suicidal ideation.

Strategies Students Use to Overcome their Suicidal Ideation

The third objective was to find out strategies that students use to overcome their suicidal ideation. The findings of the study revealed that, the main strategies that students use to overcome their suicidal ideation include; building self-resilience, counselling/psychotherapy, academic advisor's help, social-support and motivational speeches/messages.

The first strategy students use to overcome their suicidal ideation from the findings of the study was building self-resilience. The study found that building self-resilience was the first step in coping with adversities in life especially suicidal ideation. The findings of this study are consistent with Urme et al., (2022) who's study discovered that school authorities engagement with students and assisting them to build resilience through positive mindset ensured good psychological well-being among students and reduce suicidal tendencies. The management strategies used by participants also confirmed studies of Owusu-Ansah et al., (2020) who mentioned that building positive self-esteem and resilience boost the individual's general well-being to positive thinking.

In the second place, counselling/psychotherapy emerged as one important strategy that students use to overcome their suicidal ideation. The current study showed that, most of the students resorted to counselling when faced with challenges regarding suicidal ideation. The study's findings are similar to the findings of Richardo and Carlos (2018) whose findings suggested

114

that students who practice help-seeking approaches, self-care including counselling are able to overcome suicidal ideations. The results revealed that, through counselling and psychotherapy that participant received from professional counsellors, they were able to accommodate their conditions including as a result of love and care.

Thirdly, the findings showed that academic advisor's help was a strategy students use to overcome their suicidal ideation. The study found that people who devoted their time on students with suicidal ideation helped them resolve their suicidal tendencies. Being there for the students who calls for assistance might be all that students wanted in order to develop coping skills. The implication of the results has shown that, naturally, people have internal mechanisms in dealing with psychological challenges. However, such individuals may need a significant person who could devote time and energy for them to vent out their frustrations which relates to suicidal tendencies. The current study findings confirmed the position of the Western Michigan University Kalamazoo (2020) who established that, individuals such as academic advisors who are being available to listen to students (individuals) having suicidal ideation significantly help bring back hope to such persons. It further states that in matters of suicide ideation, crises set in so spending time and talking with such students non-judgmentally helps in managing suicidal ideation.

Fourthly, social-support became an important finding as a strategy students use to overcome their suicidal ideation. From the results, social support extended to students with suicidal ideation was important in managing their suicidal ideation. The study affirmed studies of Ayodele and Ojo (2021) who

pointed out that students seeking social support from others such as friends and peers reduce their suicidal ideation. This implies that psychosocial support is needed for students battling with suicidal ideation.

Finally, motivational speeches/messages also emerged as a strategy student use to overcome their suicidal ideation. Inspirational speeches by professionals in the university also had a place in building psychological resilience, help seeking and problem-solving skills. Suicidal ideations come with a number of distorted thinking and the way of viewing things become blur in the face of suicidal. Students who listen to or watch motivational quotes or messages from the counselling centre or the university podcast and chaplaincy try to implement such messages. Findings of the study showed that participants used motivational speeches and messages to manage their suicidal thought. alone may not lead to suicidal ideation.

Klonsky et al., (2015) theory explains that in managing suicidal ideation, the inclination of hope becomes a protective factor in fighting suicidal ideation. If psychological disorders such as depression and other comorbid such as hopelessness and burdensomeness are resolved, it will lead to decrease in students wish to die.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reported the findings and discussions of the study. Results of the study showed that the major causes of suicidal ideation among students were; depression, stress, financial challenges, academic performance, poor relationship issues, loneliness and sickness/illness. The findings of the study also revealed that, the impact of suicidal ideation among students include; poor

academic performance, substance abuse, psychological, isolation/loneliness, low self-esteem, and anxiety.

The study further established that strategies students use to overcome their suicidal ideation were; building self-resilience, counselling/therapy, academic advisor's help, social support and motivational speeches/messages.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore suicidal ideation among university students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. This chapter summarizes the entire study and its major

findings. It also gave the results derived from the data analysis. It was also necessary to state that the study's conclusions were based on its major findings with regard to the available literature.

Summary

The current study explored suicidal ideation among students in KNUST. Specifically, the study assessed causes of suicidal ideation among students in KNUST, impact of suicidal ideation on students life in KNUST, and strategies that students in KNUST used to overcome their suicidal ideation. The study was guided by three research questions. These are;

1. What reasons do students in KNUST give for their suicidal ideation?

2. What impact has suicide ideation on students life in KNUST?

3. What strategies do students in KNUST use to overcome their suicide ideation?

The theoretical framework which underpinned this study covered the following theories; Interpersonal Theory of Suicide by Joiner (2005), the Three Step Theory (3ST) by Klonsky & May, (2015) and the Integrated Motivational Volitional Model of Suicidal Behaviour (IMV) by O'Connor & Kirtley (2018).

The conceptual review covered the concept of suicide ideation, causes of suicidal ideation, impact of suicidal ideation and management strategies of suicidal ideation.

The empirical review covered the causes of suicidal ideation among students, impact of suicidal ideation among students and strategies students use to overcome suicidal ideation. The qualitative case study method was adopted for the study. This means that the study employed qualitative methods to obtain

responses from university students using a semi-structured interview guide. The study utilized the purposive and snowball sampling techniques to sample participants for the study. The study was conducted at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana.

In all, twenty (20) students were selected for the study, a decision made in consideration of data saturation. Data was collected from these participants through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were recorded only after obtaining the participants' consent. The collected data was then coded and analyzed thematically, with the resulting themes aligned with the research questions of the study.

Key Findings

The following findings emerged from the study:

1. The study revealed that the main causes of suicidal ideation among students were depression, stress, financial challenges, academic performance, poor relationship issues, loneliness and sickness/illness. This implied that varied reasons accounted for students suicidal ideation.

2. The study showed that the major impact of suicidal ideation among students included poor academic performance, substance abuse, psychological, isolation/loneliness, low self-esteem and anxiety. To this end, these impacts adversely affected students psychologically leading to some level of instability in their daily lives.

3. The study showed that most of the students developed self-resilience methods in overcoming suicidal ideations. The following were revealed as strategies that students used to overcome their suicidal ideation:

119

building self-resilience, counselling/psychotherapy, academic advisor's help, social-support and motivational speeches/messages.

Conclusions

The findings of the study led to the following conclusions. It is evident to conclude that suicidal ideation among students was influenced by a multitude of factors. The causes identified comprise a range of mental health challenges emphasizing interplay between personal struggles and environmental stressors among students.

Also, it can be concluded that the impact of suicidal ideation on students lives extends beyond the realm of mental health affecting various aspects of their academic and social functioning. Despite the challenges posed by suicidal ideation, the study illuminated that, students adopted resilience and coping strategies embedded with self-resilience techniques, counseling support, and social networking to navigate through their struggles in KNUST.

Implications for Counselling

The present study has identified several factors contributing to suicidal thoughts among students at KNUST. Consequently, it provided a comprehensive explanation of the nature of suicidal ideation among students. Knowing and understanding these causes of suicidal ideation provides room for professional counsellors to provide appropriate and effective counselling services that will meet the psychosocial needs of students in the university. Counsellors in KNUST should organize programmes that will expose students to the possible causes of suicidal ideation and help them with coping skills to mitigate the impact

Again, the study revealed that poor academic performance, substance abuse, psychological, isolation/loneliness, low self-esteem, and anxiety were some of the impact of suicidal ideation. Lecturers, Examination officers and Heads of Departments should collaborate and put in place intervention programmes that will ameliorate the impact of suicidal ideation on students life. Students experiencing suicidal ideation need the attention of counsellors and psychosocial support from other stakeholders in the university.

Furthermore, psychoeducation and sensitization programmes are needed with activities geared toward harnessing students already mental resilience and coping skills in times of difficulties. Periodic workshops should be organized for staff of the university on how to identify students in distress and how to assist them.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Counselling Centre in the university should develop mental health and prevention programmes targeting the issues of depression stress, academic and relationship issues. Also the university authorities and the Student Representative Council (SRC) should increase their budgets for supporting needy students to meet their financial challenges.

2. The University administration, should collaborate and engage students to know the impact of suicidal ideation on their lives and raise awareness among the students in the university.

121

3. The KNUST counselling center should organize programmes for students on how to reduce suicide ideation or cope up with the situation.

Suggestions for Further Studies

After a thorough analysis of the results, conclusions and recommendations, the following are suggested for future research:

1. It is suggested that future research, particularly in suicidal ideation among students, should consider a more comprehensive research design, possibly adopting a mixed-method design. Such an approach would allow for a larger sample size and a more thorough assessment of the situation within the university.

2. This current study should be replicated in other colleges, including Distance Education and postgraduate students, to assess what persists there since they are part of the university population.

3. Future studies should also concentrate on the impact of psychoeducation on reducing the incidence of suicidal ideation among students in the university.

REFERENCES

Abasse, M. L. F., Oliveira, R. C. D., Silva, T. C., & Souza, E. R. D. (2009). Análiseepidemiológica da morbimortalidadeporsuicídio entre adolescentesem Minas Gerais, Brasil. *Ciência and Saúde Coletiva, 14*, 407-416.

Abdullahi, A., Talib, M. A., Yaacob, S. N., & Ismail, Z. (2015). Problem-solving skills and suicidal ideation among Malaysian college students: The mediating role of hopelessness. J*ournal of the American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training and the Association for Academic Psychiatry, 40*(2), 261-267.

Abramson, L. Y., Metalsky, G. I., & Alloy, L. B. (1989). Hopelessness depression: A theory- based subtype of depression. *Psychological Review, 96*(2), 358-372.

Adinkrah, M. (2011). Epidemiologic characteristics of suicidal behavior in contemporary Ghana. *Crisis*, *40*(11), 722-730.

Adom-Mensah, A. B. (2022). Individual characteristics predisposing undergraduate students to suicide ideation in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. *Journal of Advanced Psychology 4*(2), 1-8. ISSN:2791-3244 (Online).

Adom-Mensah, B. A, Bentil, J. A., Lawer, T. D, Akofo, J. S. & Omotosho, J. A. (2022). Prevalence of suicidal ideation and its gender distribution among undergraduates of UCC, Cape Coast, Ghana. *Journal of Advanced Psychology, 4*(1),45-53.

Adom-Mensah, B. A., Omotosho, J. A., Bediako, E. & Kwarteng-Nantwi (2023). Relative efficiencies of Individual Psychology and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in the reduction of suicide ideation among undergraduate students in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. *Journal of Advanced Psychology, 5*(1),18-31.

Ahmad, N., Cheong, S. M., Ibrahim, N., & Rosman, A. (2014). Suicidal ideation among Malaysian adolescents. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health*, *26*(5), 63S-69S.

Aloba, O., Adefemi, S., & Aloba, T. (2018). Positive and Negative Suicide Ideation (PANSI) Inventory: initial psychometric properties as a suicide risk screening tool among Nigerian university students. *Clinical Medicine Insights: Psychiatry*, *9*, 1-9.

Amare, T., Meseret Woldeyhannes, S., Haile, K., & Yeneabat, T. (2018). Prevalence and associated factors of suicide ideation and attempt among adolescent high school students in Dangila Town, Northwest Ethiopia. *Psychiatry Journal, 2018.* doi: 10.1155/2018/7631453. PMID: 29992132; PMCID: PMC6016154. 7631453.

American Association of Suicidology. (2013). *Facts & statistics: Warning signs*. www.suicidology.org/web/guest/stats-and-tools/warninggsigns. Retrieved on 19th May 2023,

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. (2020). *Suicide statistics*. Retrieved October, 27, 2022, from https://afsp.org/about-suicide/ suicide-statistics/.

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostics and statistics manual of mental disorders (DSM-5). American psychiatric publication among social work students. *Advances in Social Work, 9*(2), 106-125.

Amoah, A. (2019). *Suicidal ideation among in-school adolescents in Ghana*. University of Cape Coast. URI: http://hdl.handle.net/12345678 9/4004. Retrieval 2/10/2022.

Arafat, S. M., (2016). Suicide in Bangladesh: a mini review. *Journal Behaviour Health 6,* 66–69.

Arria, A. M., O'Grady, K. E., Caldeira, K. M., Vincent, K. B., Wilcox, H. C. & Wish (2009). Suicide ideation among college students: A multivariate analysis. *Archives of Suicide Research, 13*(3), 230-246.

Asante K. O., Kugbey, N., Osafo, J., Quarshie, E. N. & Sarfo, J. O. (2017). The prevalence and correlates of suicidal behaviours (ideation, plan and attempt) among adolescents in senior   high schools in Ghana. *SSM Population Health 6*(3)427-434. doi: 10.1016/j.ssmph.2017.05 .005. PMID: 29349236; PMCID: PMC5769048.

Asante, K. O., Andoh-Arthur J. (2015). Prevalence and determinants of depressive symptoms among university students in Ghana. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 171*, 161-166.

Asfaw, H., Yigzaw, N., Yohannis, Z., Fekadu, G., & Alemayehu, Y. (2020). Prevalence and associated factors of suicidal ideation and attempt among undergraduate medical students of Haramaya University, Ethiopia. A cross sectional study. *Plos One 15*(8). https:// doi.org/10.1371/.

Ayodele O. A., & Ojo M. A. (2021). Suicide Ideation and Its Correlates Among University Undergraduates in South Western Nigeria. *Community Health Equity Research Policy, 43*(1), 45-58.

Azasu, E., Quarshie, E. , Messias , E , Lamyoh , M. , Ali , E. , & Joe , S. (2024). *Psychological and Sociological correlates of 12-month suicide behaviour among J.H.S students in Greater Accra of Ghana*. DOI: 10.21203/rs.3.rs-3178824/v1. Retrieved on 16/01/2024.

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research*. Oxford University Press.

Baiden, P., Kuurie, V., Z.Sherstha, N., Tonui, B. C., Darko- Gyeke, M. & Kersley, P. K. (2017). Bullying victimization as a predator of suicidal ideation and suicide attempt among senior high school students in Ghana: Results from the 2012 Ghana Global School Based Health Survey. *Journal of School Violence 18* (2), 300- 317.

Barber, M. E., Marzuk, P. M., Leon, A. C., & Portera, L. (1998). Aborted suicide attempts: A new classification of suicidal behavior. *The American Journal of Psychiatry, 155*(3), 385–389. https://doi.org/10.1 176/ajp.155.3.385.

Baumeister, R. F. (1990). Suicide as escape from self. *Psychological Review, 97*(1), 90-113.

Beautrais, A. L. (2004). Suicide *post-vention-support for families, and significant others after a suicide: a literature review and synthesis of evidence*. http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/0/bereavedbysuicide-litreview.pdf. Retrieved 10/10/2022.

Berkovich, I. (2018). Beyond qualitative/quantitative structuralism: the positivist qualitative research and the paradigmatic disclaimer. *Quality and Quantity, 52*(5), 2063-2077.

Biller, O. A. (1977). Suicide related to the assassination of President John F Kennedy. *suicide and life-threatening behaviour, 7*, 40-44.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative   Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*(4), 589-597.

Bruss, F. T. (1988). Invariant record processes and applications to best choice modelling. *Stochastic Processes and their Applications, 30*(2), 303-316.

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods.* 3rd Edition, Oxford University Press., New York.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods (2nd ed.).* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2003). *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Buch, K. A., Fawcett, J., & Jacobs D. (2003). Clinical correlates of inpatient suicide. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry 64*(1), 14–19.

Campbell, D. T. (1987). Selection theory and the sociology of scientific validity. In W. Callebaut & R. Pinxten (Eds.), *Evolutionary Epistemology: A Multiparadigm Program* 139–158. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.

Canadian Mental Health Association. (2012). *Mental health first aid and manual.* Ottawa. Canadian Mental Health Association.

Cannon, K. E., & Hudzik, T. J. (2014). *Suicide: Phenomenology and neurobiology*. Springer International New York Dordrecht London. (e-book, pp.125-130).

Capuzzi, D. (1987). *Intervention strategies for youth at risk*. In A. McEvoy (Chair), Suicide prevention and the school. Learning publication, Orlando, EL.

Carillo, M. A. (2012). Depressive symptoms among Mexican medical students: high prevalence and the effect of a group psychoeducation intervention. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 136*, 1098-103.

Cash, S. J., & Bridge, J. A. (2009). Epidemiology of youth suicide and suicidal behavior. *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*, *21*(5), 613.

Cassidy, E. M., O'Connor, R., O'Keane, V. (2004). Prevalence of post- stroke depression in an Irish sample and its relationship with disability and outcome following impatient rehabilitation. *Disability and Rehabilitation, 26*(2), 7-7).

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2004). *Suicide*. 1-800-CDC-info (232-4636). Web-based injury statistics query and reporting system (WISQARS). Retrieved on 5th July, 2022, from www.Cdc.Gov/Ncip c/Wisquars/Default.Htm.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). *10 leading causes of death by age group, United States-2016*. https://www.cdc.gov/index.htm. Retrieved on 23/07/2023.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2011). *Suicide prevention and assessment handbook*. CAMH Publications, Toronto, Canada.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory*. Sage.

Chu, C., Walker, K. L., Stanley, I. H., Hirsch, J. K., Greenberg, J. H., Rudd, M. D., & Joiner, T. E. (2018). Perceived problem-solving deficits and suicidal ideation: Evidence for the explanatory roles of thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness in five samples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *115*(1), 137-160.

128

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education (6th ed.)*. London   and New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.

Collins, S., & Cutcliffe, J. R. (2003). Addressing hopelessness in people with suicidal ideation: Building upon the therapeutic relationship utilizing a cognitive behavioural approach. *Journal of Psychiatry Mental Health Nursing, 10*(2), 175-185.

Connelly, L. M. (2008). Consideration in determining sample size for pilot studies. *Research in Nursing & Health, 31*, 180-191.

Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2006). *Business Research Methods* (9th edition). USA: McGraw - Hill.

Cornette, M. M., Abramson, L. Y., & Bardone, A. M. (2000). Toward an integrated theory of suicidal behaviors: Merging the hopelessness, self-discrepancy, and escape theories: *suicide science; expanding boundaries*. Springer, Boston, MA. N.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (5thed.).* Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Sage publications.

Curtin, S. C., Warner, M., & Hedegaard, H. (2016). *Increase in Suicide in the United States,* 1999–2014. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ data/databriefs/db241.pdf. Retrieved on 16/08/2023.

Cutcliffe, J. R. (1997). Evaluating the success of clinical supervision. *British Journal of Nursing, 6*(13), 725.

Dachew, B.A., Bifftu, B. B., Tiruneh, B. T., Anlay, D. Z. & Meseret, A. W. (2016). Suicidal thoughts among university students in Ethiopia. *Annals of General Psychiatry 17*, 1(2016). https://doi.org/10.1186 /s12991-017-0172-0

David, M., & Sutton, C. (2003). *Social Research: An Introduction*. London: Sage

Davis, J., Sandoval, J., & Wilson, M. (1988). Strategies for the primary prevention of adolescent suicide. *School Psychology Review, 17*, 558-569.

DeCantanzano, D., Wyngaarden, P., Griffiths, J., Ham, M., Hancox, J., & Brain, D. (1995). Interactions of contact, odor cues, and androgens in strange male-induced early pregnancy disruptions in mice (Musmusculus). *Journal of Comparative Psychology, 109*(2), 115.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative* research. Sage.

Dieronitou I. (2014). The ontological and epistemological foundations of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research with particular reference to content and discourse analysis of textbook. Retrieved 24/02/2024 from

Durkheim, E. (1951). *Suicide: A study in sociology*. New York: The Free Press.

Durkheim, E., & Simpson, G. (1952). *Suicide, a study in sociology*. (Simpson, G., Eds.). (Spaulding, J. A., & Trans, G. S.), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Dyer, J. A. T, & Kreitman, N. (1984). Hopelessness, depression and suicidal intent in parasuicide. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 144*(2), 127-133.

Eisenberg, D., Gollust, S. E., Golberstein, E., & Hefner, J. L. (2007). Prevalence and correlates of depression, anxiety, and suicidality among university students. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *77*(4), 534-542.

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study: *The Academy of Management Review, 14*(4), 532 -550.

Embing, J., Yusoff, S. M., & Othman, M. R. (2020). Exploration on perception suicidal ideation among students of Higher Institutions. *Journal of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development*, *6*(2), 37-51.

Eshun, S. (2003). Sociocultural determinants of suicide ideation: A comparison between American and Ghana college samples. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behaviour, 33*(2), 165-171.

Ewa, K., & Zielinska, S. 2018). *Suicide among college students: College death statistics*. University of New Haven.

Fang, Majella., & Ping. (2018). Psychological distress and risk for suicidal behavior among university students in contemporary China. J*ournal of Affective Disorders 228, 101-108.*

Faulkner, S. L. & Trotter, S. P. (2017). *Data saturation*. Wiley Online Library. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0060.

Feroz, A. H.., M., Islam, S. M. N., Reza, S., R.ahaman, A. K. M., Sen, J., Mowla, M., Rahman, M. R., (2012). A Community survey on the

prevalence of suicidal attempts and deaths in a selected rural area of Bangladesh. *Journal of Medicine 13, 3-9.*

Frost, N. (2011). *Qualitative research methods in psychology, combining core approach*. New York, NY: MC Graw-Hill Education

Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J.P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Gallagher, R. (2009). National survey of counselling centre directors. Washington, DC: International Association of Counselling Services Inc.

Garlow S. J., Rosenberg J., Moore J. D., Haas A. P., Koestner B., Hendin H., Nemeroff C. B. (2008). Depression, desperation, and suicidal ideation in college students: results from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention College Screening Project at Emory University. *Depress Anxiety 25*(6), 482-488. Doi: 10.1002/da.20321. PMID: 17559087.

Ghanaweb.com (2023). *KNUST student commit suicide at Wassa Akropong*. https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/KNUST-student-commits-suicide-at-Wassa-Akropong-1847999. Retrieved on 22nd September 2023.

Gilbert, P., & Allan, S. (1998). The role of defeat and entrapment (arrested flight) in depression: An exploration of an evolutionary view. *Psychological Medicine*, *28*(3), 585-598.

Gilham, B. (2000). *Cass study research methods*. London: Continuum.

Gliattoo, M. F., & Rai, A. K. (1999). Evaluation and treatment of patients with suicidal ideation. *American Family Physician, 59*(6), 1500-1506.

Goodwin, F. K., & Jamison, K. R. (2007). *Manic-depressive illness: Bipolar disorders and recurrent depression* (2nd eds. 327). New York, Oxford University Press.

Grossman, A. (2017). *Learn about emile durkheim's classic study of suicide in sociology*. Retrieved from http://www.thoughtco.com/studyof-suicide-by-emile-durkheim-3026758. Retrieved on 22/01/2023.

Haatainen, K., Tanskanen, A., Kylma, J., Honkalampi, K., Koivumaa-Honkanen, H., et al. (2004). Factors associated with hopelessness: A population study. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 50*(2), 142-152.

Hallgren, M., Herring, M. P., Owen, N., Dunstan, D., E. Kblom, O., Heladoltir, B., ...& Forsell, Y. (2016). Exercise, physical activity, and sedentary behaviour in the treatment of depression; broadening the scientific perspective and clinical opportunities. *Frontier in Psychiatric, 7*, 36.

Hamilton, T., & Schweitzer, R. (2000). The cost of being perfect: Perfectionism and suicide ideation in university students. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 34*, 829-835.

Handley, T., Rich, J., Davies, K., Lewin, T., & Kelly, B. (2018). The challenges of predicting suicidal thoughts and behaviours in a sample of rural Australians with depression. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 15*(5), 928.

Hawton K, Saunders K. E., & O'Connor R. C. (2012). Self-harm and suicide in adolescents. *Lancet. 23;379*(9834):2373-82.

Heilbron, N., Compton, J. S., Daniel, S. S., & Goldston, D. B. (2010). "the problematic label of suicide gesture: alternatives for clinical research and practice". *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice 41*(3), 221–227. doi:10.1037/a0018712. ISSN 0735-7028.PMC2904564. PMID 20640243

Heisel, M. J., Flett, G. L., & Hewitt, P. L. (2003). Social hopelessness and college student suicide ideation. *Archives of Suicide Research,* 7(3), 221-235.

Henden, H. (1987). Youth suicide: a psychological perspective. *Suicide and Threatening Behaving, 17*, 151-166.

Hewitt, P. L., & Flett, G. L. (1991). Perfectionism in the self and social contexts: Conceptualization, assessment, and association with psychopathology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*, 456–470. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.60.3.456.

Hjelmeland, H., Akotia, C. S., Owens, V., Knizek, B. L., Nordvik, H., Schroeder, R., & Kinyanda, E. (2008). Self-reported suicidal behavior and attitudes toward suicide and suicide prevention among psychology students in Ghana, Uganda, and Norway. *Crisis, 29 (1), 20-31.*

Horowitz, L. M., French, R., De, S., & Andereson, C. A. (1982). The prototype of a lonely person. In Peplau, L. A., & Perlman, D. (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and   therapy,* 183-205. New York; Wiley-Inter-science. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268522163.

Hussein, A. (2009). The use of triangulation in social sciences research: Can qualitative and quantitative methods be combined? *Journal of Comparative Social Work 4*(1):106-117.

Jace, P. (2021). Suicidal behaviour among university students: a systematic review. *South African Journal of Psychology 51* (1) 54-66.

Jankowicz, A. (2005). *Business research projects*. Chapman and Hall, London.

January, J., Madhombiro, M., Chipamaunga, S., Ray, S., Chingono, A., & Abas, M. (2018). Prevalence of depression and anxiety among undergraduate university students in low-and middle-income countries: a systematic review protocol. *Systematic Reviews*, *7*(1), 1-5.

Johnson, S., & Maile, L. (1987). *Suicide and the school*. Springfeild, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Joiner Jr, T. E., Steer, R. A., Brown, G., Beck, A. T., Pettit J. W., & Rudd, M. D. (2003). Worst point suicidality predictor of past suicide attempts and eventual death by suicide. *Behaviour Research and Therapy 41, 1469-1480.*

Joiner, Jr, T. E., Hollard, D & Van Orden K. A. (2006). On Buckeyes, Gators, Super Bowl Sundry and the miracle on Ice "Pulling Together" is associated with lower suicide rates. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 25*, 180-196.

Joiner, T. (2005). *Why people die by suicide*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

135

Jose, L. J. M., Fuensanta L. R., & Manuel G. (2018). Assessing the links of sexting, Cyber-victimization, depression and suicidal ideation among university students. *Archives of Suicide Research, 221, 153-164.*

Kabugi, P. (2020). An overview of the causes of suicide and preventive strategies in Kenyan Universities. *African Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 6(3),* 2312-0134.

Kaggwa, M. M., Nuwamanya, S., Ashaba, S., Rukundo, G. Z., & Harms, S. (2021). An adolescent's use of veterinary medicines: A case report exploring addiction. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 53*(4), 339-44.

Kehinde, P. (2022). Prevalence of suicide tendencies and associated risk factors among Nigerians Students; a quantitative survey: A Quantitative Survey. *The Open Psychology Journal 1874-3501/22.*

Kessbenonline (2023). *Level 300 KNUST female student commits suicide in her room.* https://kessbenonline.com/2023/06/30/level-300-knust-female-student-commits-suicide-in-her-room/. Retrieved June 30, 2023

Khadijah, S., Sumardino, S., Yusuf, A., & Nihayati, H. E. (2021). Analysis risk factors for suicidal thoughts among students in Surakarta: A case study approach. *STRADA. Jurnal Ilmiah Kesehatan*, *10*(1), 1348-1355.

Khan, A. R., Arendse, N., Ratele, K., (2021). Suicide prevention in Bangladesh: the current state and the way forward. *Asian Social Work Policy Review 15 (1), 15–23.*

Khan, A., Khan, S., Kolts, R., & Brown, W. A. (2003). Suicide rates in clinical trials of SSRIs, other antidepressants, and placebo: analysis of FDA reports. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *160*(4), 790-792.

Khue, M. L., (2022). *What are the causes of academic pressure?*

https://project-sprouts.com/what-are-the-causes-of-academic-pressure.

Retrieved 16/09/2023.

Kisch, J., Leino, E. V., & Silverman, M. M. (2005). Aspects of suicidal

behavior, depression, and treatment in college students: Results from the

spring 2000 National College Health Assessment Survey. *Suicide and*

Life-Threatening Behavior, 35(1), 3-13.

Kleiman, E. M., & Liu, R. T. (2013). Social support as a protective factor in

suicide: Findings from two nationally representative samples. *Journal*

of Affective Disorders, *150*(2), 540-545.

Klonsky, E. D., & May, A. M. (2015). The three-step theory (3ST): A new

theory of suicide rooted in the "ideation-to action" framework.

International Journal of Cognitive Therapy, 8(2), 114-129.

Klonsky, E. D., May, A. M., & Saffer, B. Y. (2016). Suicide, suicide attempts,

and suicidal ideation. *Annual Reviews of Clinical Psychology, 12*, 307–

330.

Klonsky, E. D., Victor, S. E., Saffer, B. Y. (2014). Nonsuicidal self-injury:

What we know, and what we need to know. *Canadian Journal of*

Psychiatry 59(11):565-568, 2014. doi:10.1177/070674371405901101.

Koduah, A., Apedani, D., Azie, A. R.., Amankwah, A. C., Odotei, R..,

Brempong, A. E. & Okere, P. (2023). Knowledge on availability of

suicide preventive services among undergraduate students of a public

university in Ghana. https://dx.doii.org//0.2139/ssrn.44/806. Retrieved

on 10/01/2024.

Koomson-Yalley, E., Kyei, O. R. J, & Dwumah, P. (2022) intrapersonal experience and suicidal ideation of university students: The case of KNUST, Ghana. *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS) 3*, 459- 474.

Korb, I, Plattner, I. E. (2014). Suicide ideation and depression in university students in Botswana. *Journal of Psychology Africa 24*(5), 420–6.

Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti G. W., Schroeder A. N., & Lattanner M. R. (2014). Bullying in the digital age: a critical review and meta-analysis of cyberbullying research among youth. *Psychol Bull 140*(4), 1073-1137.

Krug, E. G., Dahlberg, L. L., Mercy, J. A., Zwi, A. B., & Lozano, R. (2002). *World report on health and violence.* Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.

Kusi, H. (2012). *Doing qualitative research: A guide for researchers*. *Accra; Emmpong* Press. PMid, *2299616.*

Kwok, S., & Shek, D. (2008-2010). Socio-demographic correlates of suicidal ideation among Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health, 20*(4), 463-472.

Lamis, D. A. (2006). *Reasons for living and suicidal ideation among college students with varying levels of risk for alcohol related problems.* Unity Press. Switzerland.

Lamis, D. A., Ballard, E. D., & Patel, A. B. (2014). Loneliness and suicidal ideation in drug using college students. *Suicide Life Threat Behaviour, 44*(6), 629-640.

Leder, M. (1987). *Dead Serious*: *A book for teenagers about teenage suicide*. New York: Atheneum.

Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical research planning and design.* Prentice Hall, Upper   Saddle River, NJ.

Lewis-Beck, M., Bryman, A. E., & Liao, T. F. (2003). *The Sage encyclopedia of social science research methods*. Sage Publications

Linehan, M. M., Goodstein, J. L., Nielsen, S. L., & Chiles, J. A. (1983). Reasons for staying alive when you are thinking of killing yourself: the reasons for living inventory. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *51*(2), 276.

Looney, J., Oldham, D., Claman, L., Cumley, F. & Waller, D. (1985). Suicide by adolescents. *Texas Medicine,* 81, 45-49.

Luxton, D. D., June, J. D., & Fairall, J. M. (2012). Social media and suicide: a public health perspective. *American Journal of Public Health*, *102*(S2), S195-S200.

Mackenzie, S., Wiegel, J. R., Mundt, M., Brown, D., Saewyc, E., Heiligenstein, E., Harahan, B., Fleming, M. (2011). Depression and suicide ideation among students accessing campus health care. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry Association 81*(1), 101-107. doi: 10.1111/j.1939 0025.2010.01077. x. PMID:

MacLeod, A. K., Pankhania, B., Lee, M., & Mitchell, D. (1997). Parasuicide, depression and the anticipation of positive and negative future experiences. *Psychol. Med. 27*, 973– 977. doi:10.1017/ S003329179 600459X.

Maleka, P., & Nafiza, F. (2016). Suicidal ideation in relation to depression, loneliness and hopelessness among university students. *Dhaka University Journal of Biological Sciences, 25*(1) 57-64.

Malkan, S. N. A., & Amat, S. (2018). Pengetahuan dan kefahaman pelajar kolej terhadap niat bunuh diri. *Jurnal Hadhari 10*(1), 29-48 ejournals.ukm.my/jhadhari. ISSN 1985-6830.eISSN 2550-2271.

María, C. M., Beatriz, D., Ángela, D., & José, M. G. (2020). Relationship between suicidal thinking, anxiety, depression and stress in university students who are victims of cyberbullying. *Journal of Affective Disorders 286*, 111-2856.

Maris, R. W. (1997). Suicide. *Dulbecco R Encyclopedia of human biology, 2nd eds*. Academic Press, New York, 255-268.

Maxwell, J. A. (2006). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. Second Edition*. Sage Publications, Thousand Islands.

May, A. M, & Klonsky E. D. (2013). Assessing motivations for suicide attempts: development and psychometric properties of the inventory of motivations for suicide attempts. *Suicide Life Threat Behaviour. 43*(5):532-46. doi: 10.1111/sltb.12037. Epub 2013 Jun 1. PMID: 23725576.

McLaughlin, J., O'Carroll, R. E., & O'Connor, R. C. (2012). Intimate partner abuse and suicidality: A systematic review. *Clinical Psychology Review 32*, 677-689

Menezes, R. G., Subba, S. H., Sathian, B., Kharoshah, M. A., Senthilkumaran, S., Pant, S., Arun, M., Kundapur, R., Jain, A., Lobo, S. W. & Shankar, P. R. (2012). Suicidal ideation among students of a medical college in

Western Nepal: a cross-sectional study. *Legal Medicine*, *14*(4), 183-187.

Merriam, S.B., & Tis dell, E.J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* John Lalilry & Son,

Modi, P., Kumar, K., & Dogra, R. (2017). Depression and suicidal risk among female hostellers. *International Journal of Community Health & Medical Research, 3*(3), 14–25.

Mootin, T. (2017). *A socio-ecological approach to adolescent suicide ideation: the role of family, peers, and teachers* [Unpublished master's dissertation). RMIT University, Melbourne] Australia.

Moutier, C. (2022). *Nonsuicidal Self-Injury (NSSI).* American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (1999). *Research methods*. Nairobi: Acts Press.

Muijs, D. (2004). Validity, reliability, and generalizability. *Doing qualitative research in education with SPSS,* 64-68

Nadorff, M. R., Nazem, S., & Fiske, A. (2011). Insomnia symptoms, nightmares, and suicidal ideation in a college student sample. *Sleep, 34*(1), 93-98.

Nagendra, K., Sanjay, D., Goulin, C., Kalappanavar, N. K., & Vinodkumar, C. S. (2012). Prevalence and association of depression and suicidal tendency among adolescent students. *International Journal of Advances in Scientific Research (IJASR), 3*(9), 714-719.

141

National Crime Records Bureau (2008). *Accidental deaths and suicides in India*. New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Retrieved from http://ncrb.gov.in/adsi.

National Institute of Mental Health (2021). Statistics. *United States Public Health Service.*

National Research Council. Institute of Medicine (2002). *Community programming to promote youth development, 2007*: 605-28.

National Suicide Registry Malaysia (NSRM) (2007-09). Forensic Medicine Services Psychiatry and Mental Health Services Ministry of Health Malaysia.   Retrieved   23.04.12,   from   website http://www.crc.gov.my/documents/report/nsrm.pdf.

National Suicide Registry Malaysia (NSRM) (2007-2009). *Forensics Psychiatry and Mental Health service*. Ministry of Health, Malaysia.

Nock, M. K., Borges, G., Bromet, E. J., Cha, C. B., Kessler, R. C., & Lee, S. (2008). Suicide and suicidal behavior. *Epidemiologic Reviews 30*, 133–154.

O'Caroll, P. W., Benman, A. L., Maris, R. W., Moscizk, E. K., Tanney, B. L., Silvenman, M. M. (1996). Beyond the Tower of Babel: A nomenclature for suicidology. *Suicide and Life- Threatening Behaviour, 26*(3), 237-52.

O'Connor, R. C. (2011). The integrated motivational–volitional model of suicidal behaviour. *Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention, 32*(6), 295-8.

O'Connor, R. C., & Nock, M. K. (2014). The psychology of suicidal behaviour. *Lancet Psychiatry 1*, 73– 85. (doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(14)70222-6).

O'Connor, R. C., Smyth, R. Ferguson, E., Ryan & Williams, J. M. G. (2013). Psychological processes and repeat suicidal behaviour: a four-year prospective study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. 81*, 1137-1143.

Obasola, K. E., & Austin, O. O. (2014). Philosophical perceptions of suicide and implications for the sanctity of life. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, *2*(10), 47-62.

O'Connor, R. C., & Kirtley, O. J. (2018). The integrated motivational–volitional model of suicidal behaviour. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 373*, 1754.

O'Connor, R. C., Fraser, L., Whyte, M. C., MacHale, S., & Masterton, G. (2009). Self-regulation of unattainable goals in suicide attempters: The relationship between goal disengagement, goal reengagement and suicidal ideation. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *47*(2), 164-169.

Olie, E., Jollant, F., Deverdun, J., de Champfleur, N. M., Cyprien, F., Le Bars, E., ... & Courtet, P. (2017). The experience of social exclusion in women with a history of suicidal acts: A neuroimaging study. *Scientific Reports*, *7*(1), 1-8.

Oliver, P., 2008. *Writing your thesis. 2nd ed*. London: SAGE

Orden, K., Witte, T., Gordon, K., Bender, T., & Joiner, T. E. (2008). Suicidal desire and the capability for suicide: Tests of the interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidal behavior   among adults. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 76*(1), 72-83.

Osafo, J., Akotia, C. S., & Boakye, E. (2016). *Between legal ethics and empathy: The views   of lawyers and judges on criminalizing attempted suicide in Ghana*. Paper presented at the 6th International Conference for Community Psychology (ICCP 2016), Durban, South Africa.

Osafo, J., Hjelmeland, H., Akotia, C. S., & Knizek, B. L. (2011). The meanings of suicidal behaviour to psychology students in Ghana: A qualitative approach. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 48* (5), 643-659.

Osama, M., Islam, M. Y., Hussain, S. A., Masroor, S. M. Z., Burney, M. U., Masood, M. A., Menezes & Rehman, R. (2014). Suicidal ideation among medical students of Pakistan: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, *27*, 65-68.

Osman, A., Bagge C. L., Gutierrez, P. M., Konick, L. C., Kopper, B. A., & Barrios F. X. (2001). The suicidal behaviors questionnaire-revised (SBQ-R): validation with clinical and nonclinical samples. *Assessment 8*(4), 443-54.

Owusu, A. (2008). *Ghana Country report on the global school-based health survey (GSHS)*. Atlanta, CA: Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Owusu-Ansah, F. E., Addae, A. A., Peasah, B. O., Oppong A., K., & Osafo, J., (2020). Suicide among university students: prevalence, risks and protective factors. *Health Psychology Behavioral Medicine 8*(1), 220–233.

Palmier, B. J. (2011). *Prevalence and correlates of suicidal ideation among students in sub-Saharan Africa*. Thesis, Georgia State University, Public Health Theses or School of Public Health. Retrieved on 6th July 2016 from http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/iph_theses/183.

Pamela, A. C., & Frank, P. D. (2000). Impact of attitudes and suicidal ideation on adolescents intention to seek professional psychological help. *Journal of Adolescence 23*(1), 35-45.

Pandey, R. A., Bista, B., Dhungana, R. R., Aryal, K. K. Chalise, B. & Dhimal, M. (2019). Factors associated with suicidal ideation and suicidal attempts among adolescent students in Nepal: Findings from global school-based students health survey. *Journal PLoS One.org, 14*(4), e0210383. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0210383*JournalPlos. org*. Pearson

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage publications.

Pekeberg, I. M. B. (2012). *Inclusive education in Ghana: An analysis of policies and the practices in one mainstream school and one inclusive school in the Greater Accra Region*. [Unpublished thesis submitted to the Institute of Educational Research, University of Oslo].

Peplau, L. A., & Perlman, D. (1982). Perspective on loneliness. In Peplau, L. A., & Perlman, D. (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy (pp.01*-18). New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Pereira, A., & Cardoso, F. (2012). *Adaptação portuguesa do Inventário de Sintomatologia Depressiva – Auto-resposta* (Research Report). University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro.

Pereira, A., & Cardoso, F. (2015). Suicidal ideation in university students: Prevalence and association with school and gender. *Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto), 25*(62), 299-306. doi:10.1590/1982-43272562201503.

Perley, S. (2015). Suicide prevention strategies in Tennessee community colleges: A case study. *Dissertation, East Tennessee State University.* https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED575870. Retrieved 2/07/2023.

Perlman, D., & Goldenberg, S. (1981). *Friendship among adolescents*. In Clark, M. S. (Chair), Investigations of friendship. symposium Presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles.

Perlman, D., & Peplau, L. A. (1981). Toward a social psychology of loneliness. In Gilmour, R., & Duck, S. (Eds.), Personal relationships: 3. *Relationships in Disorder*, 31-56. London: Academic Press.

Pervin, M., & Ferdowshi, N. (2016). Suicidal ideation in relation to depression, loneliness and hopelessness among university students. *Dhaka University Journal of Biological Science, 25*(1), 57-64.

Pollock, L. R., & Williams, J. M. G. (2001). Effective problem solving in suicide attempters depends on specific autobiographical recall. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, *31*(4), 386-396.

Pompili, M., Serafini, G.., Innamorati, M, Dominici, G., Ferracuti, S., Kotzalidis, G. D., Serra, G., Girardi, P., Janiri, L., Tatarelli, R., Sher L., & Lester, D. (2015) *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 7(4), 1392-1431. https://doi.org/10.3 390/ijerph7041392. 24/10/2022.

Prusty A. (2018). *Psycho-social correlates of suicidal ideation among college students.* Sikkim University.

Range, L. M., & Penton, S. R. (1994). Hope, hopelessness, and suicidality in college students. *Psychological Reports, 75*(1), 456-458.

Ratcliffe, G. E., Enns, M. W., Belik, S.-L., & Sareen, J. (2008). Chronic pain conditions and suicidal ideation and suicide attempts: An epidemiologic perspective. *The Clinical Journal of Pain, 24*(3), 204–210.

Rehman, A. A., & Alharthi, K. (2016). An introduction to research paradigms.

Reynolds, E. (2015). *Perceived stress and suicidal behaviors in college students: Conditional indirect effects of depressive symptoms and mental health stigma*. Undergraduate Honors Theses (pp.284), Retrieved from http://dc.etsu.edu/honors/284.

Rezapur-Shahkolai, F., Khezeli, M., Hazavehei, S. M., Ariapooran, S., Soltanian, A. R., & Ahmadi, A. (2020). The effects of suicidal ideation and constructs of theory of planned behavior on suicidal intention in women: A structural equation modeling approach. *BMC Psychiatry 217,* (20), 8. doi: 10.1186/s12888-020-02625-w. PMID: 32393299; PMCID: PMC7216686.

Richardo, C. & Carlos G. (2018). Suicidal Ideation in medical students: recent insights. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice 9,* 873-*880.*

Richman, J. (1986). *Family and therapy for suicidal people*. New York: Springer.

Rockefeller, J. D. (2017). *Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for depression, anxiety, phobias and panic attacks* (p.21). Create Space Independent

147

Publishing Platform. https://books.google.co.in/boo

ks?id=DD1CDwAAQBAJ&pg.

Rodríguez-Cintas L, Daigre C, Braquehais, M. D., Palma-Alvarez, R. F., Grau-López L, Ros-Cucurull, E., Rodríguez-Martos, L., Abad, A. C., & Roncero, C. (2017). Factors associated with lifetime suicidal ideation and suicide attempts in outpatients with substance use disorders. *Psychiatry Res. 262*, 440-445. doi: 10.1016/j.psychres.201 7.09.021.

Saha, D. (2017).   Every hour one student commits suicide in India. *Hindustan Times*

Salifu, L. D. (2021). *Prevalence of suicide ideation and its associated risk factors among undergraduate students of the University for Development Studies- Tamale Campus*. Retrieved from: uds.edu.gh/ uds-library/libraryonline-database. Retrieved on 26/11/2022.

Sarantakos, S. (2006). *Social research* (3rd ed.). Melbourne; Macmillan Education.

Sarokhani, D., Delpisheh, A., Veisani, Y., Sarokhani, M., & Manesh, R. E., & Sayehmiri, K. (2013). Prevalence of Depression among University Students: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Study. *Depress Res Treat, 3*7-38. doi: 10.1155/2013.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2007). *Research Methods for Business Students. 4th Edition*. Financial Times Prentice Hall, Edinburgh Gate, Harlow.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students. Fifth Edition*. Pearson Education Limited, Harlow.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students* (5ᵗʰ ed.). London: Pitman Publication.

Schimelpfening, N. (2020). Causes and Risk Factors of Depression. *Verywellmind, 18*, 1-9.

Schwartz, A. (2006). College student suicide in the United States: 1990-1991 through 2003- 2004. *Journal of American College Health, 54*(6), 341-352. doi:10.3200/JACH.54.6.341-352.

Serras, A., S. K. (2010). Self-injury, substance use and associated risk factors in a multi-campus probability sample of college students. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, 24*:119.

Shah, M. M. A., Ahmed, S., & Arafat, S. M. Y., (2017). Demography and risk factors of suicide in Bangladesh: A six-month paper content analysis. *Psychiatry Journal*, *2017*, Article ID 3047025.

Sharma, B., Nam, E. W., Kim, H. Y., & Kim, J. K. (2015). Factors associated with suicidal ideation and suicide attempt among school-going urban adolescents in Peru. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *12*(11), 14842-14856.

Shneidman, E. (1985). *Definition of suicide*. Lanham: Jason Aronson.

Shneidman, E. S. (1993). Suicide as psychache. *Journal* of *Nervous* and Mental *Disease 181*(3):145-7. doi: 10.1097/00005053-199303000-00001. PMID: 8445372.

Shu-yue, Z., & Yan, L. (2014). Relationships among self-consistency loneliness and suicide ideation among college students. School of Education, Guangxi University, Chinese. *Chinese Journal of School Health*, *35*(5), 682-684.

Silverman, M. M., Berman, A. L., Sanddal, N. D., O'carroll, P. W., Joiner, T. E. (2007). Suicide-related ideations, communications, and behaviors. *Suicide Life Threat Behaviour 37*(3):264-77. doi: 10.1521/suli.2007. 37.3.264. PMID: 17579539.

Skinner, B. F. (1953). *Science and Human Behavior*. Macmillan.

Smith, M. M., Sherry, S. B., Chen, S. Saklofske, H. D., Mushquash, C., Flett, G. L., & Hewitt, P. L. (2017). The perniciousness of perfectionism: a meta-analytic review of the perfectionism-suicide relationship. *Journal of Personality 86,* 522-542.

Smith, P. N., Stanley, I. H., Joiner, T. E. Jr, Sachs-Ericsson, N. J., & Van Orden, K. A. (2016). An Aspect of the capability for suicide-fearlessness of the pain involved in dying-amplifies the association between suicide ideation and attempts. *Arch Suicide Research 20*(4), 650-62.

Solomon, R. L. (1980). The opponent-process theory of acquired motivation: The costs of pleasure and the benefits of pain. *American Psychologist, 35*(8), 691–712. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.35.8.691.

Stanley, B., & Brown, G. K. (2012). Safety planning intervention: a brief intervention to mitigate suicide risk. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, *19*(2), 256-264.

Stotland, E. (1969). *The psychology of hope*. San Francisco, USA, Jossey-Bass Inc.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2020). *"Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health"*. Archived

from the original on 2021-10-09. Retrieved 2022-01-09. Retrieved on 05/04/2023.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2017). *National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) Releases*. https://www.samhsa.gov/data/data-we-collect/nsduh-national-survey-drug-use-and-health. Retrieved 17/08/2023.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2020). *Treatment for Suicidal Ideation, Self-Harm, and Suicide Attempts Among Youth*. SAMHSA Publication. PEP 20-06-01002 Rockville, MD: National health substance use policy laboratory.

Swahn, M. H., Bossarte, R. M., Eliman, D. M., Gaylor E. & Jayaraman, S. (2010) Prevalence and correlates of suicidal ideation and physical fighting: a comparison of students in Botswana, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and the Unites States. *International of Public Health Journal 2*(2).

Taliaferro, L. A., & Muehlenkamp, J. J. (2015). Risk factors associated with self-injuries behaviour among a national sample of undergraduate college students. *Journal of American College Health, 63*(3), 40-48.

Tucker, C. J., & Wiesen-Martin, D. (2015). Adolescent siblings' suicide ideation. *Journal of Family Issues, 36*(5), 609–625.

Tuli, F. (2010). The basis of distinction between qualitative and quantitative research in social science: Reflection on Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Perspectives. *Ethiopia. Journal of Education and Science., 6* (1): 97 – 108.

Turecki, G., & Brent, D. A. (2016). Suicide and suicide behaviour. *Lancet 387,* 1227-1239.

151

Uddin, R., Burton, N. W., Maple, M., Khan, S. R., & Khan, A. (2019). Suicidal ideation, suicide planning, and suicide attempts among adolescents in 59- low- income and middle income countries: A population based study. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, 3*(4), 223-233.

Urme, S. A., Islam, M. S., Begum H, Awal C. N. M. R. (2022). Risk factors of suicide among public university students of Bangladesh: A qualitative exploration. *Heliyon 88*(6), e09659. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.e0 9659. PMID:35711983; PMCID: PMC9194591.

Van Orden K. A., Witte T. K., Cukrowicz K. C., et al. (2010). The interpersonal theory of suicide. *Psychological Review 117* (2), 575.

Van Orden, K. A., Lynam, M. E., Hollar, D., & Joiner, T. E. (2006). Perceived burdensomeness as an indicator of suicidal symptoms. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 30*(4), 457-467.

Van Orden, K. A., White, T. K., Gordon, K. H, Bender, T. W., & Joiner, T. E. (2008). Suicide desire and the capability for suicide: Tests of the inter personal-psychological theory of suicidal behaviour among adults. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 76,* 72-83.

Van Orden, K. A., Witte, T. K., Cukrowicz, K. C., Braithwaite, S. R., Selby, E. A., & Joiner Jr, T. E. (2010). The interpersonal theory of suicide. *Psychological Review, 117*(2), 575.

Van-Teijlingen, E., & Hundley, V. (2002). The importance of pilot studies. *Nursing Standard, 16*(40), 33-38.

Veloso, L. U. P., Lima, C. L. S., Sales, J. C., Monteiro, C. F. D. S., Gonçalves, A. M. D. S., & Silva Júnior, F. J. G. D. (2019). Suicidal ideation among

health field undergraduates: prevalence and associated factors. *Revista gaúcha de enfermagem*, *40*, e20180144*40*. doi.org/1 0.1590/1983.

Wang, M., Kou C., Bai, W., Song, Y., Liu, X., Yu, W., Li, Y., Hua, W., & Li, W. (2019). Prevalence and correlates of suicidal ideation among college students: A mental health survey in Jilin Province, China. *Journal of Affective Disorders 246,* 166-299.

Wanyoike, B. W. (2014). Depression as a cause of suicide. *Journal of Language, Technology & Entrepreneurship in Africa - Vol 5, No 2 (2014).*

Wanyoike, B. W. (2015). Suicide among university students in Kenya: causes, implications and interventions. *Journal of Language, Technology & Entrepreneurship in Africa*, *6*(1), 35- 53.

Weitzman, E. R. (2004). Poor mental health, depression, and associations with alcohol consumption, harm, and abuse in a national sample of young adults in college. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease 192*(4), 269-77. doi: 10.1097/01.nmd.0000120885.17362.94. PMID: 150604 00.

Western Michigan University Kalamazoo (2020). Suicide Prevention Programme. USA. *Kalamazoo MI 49008-5378, (269)* 387-3238.

Whitlock, J., Muehlenkamp, J., Eckenrode, J., Purington, A., & Baral, A G., et al. (2013). Nonsuicidal self-injury as a gateway to suicide in young adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 52*(4), 486-492.

Wilcox, H. C., Aria, A. M., Caldeira, K. M., Vincent, K. B., Pinchevsky, G. M. & Ogrady, K. M. (2010). Prevalence and predictions of persistent suicide ideation plans and attempts during college. *Journal of Affective Disorder, 127*(3), 287-*294.*

Wilks, S. E. (2008). Resilience amid academic stress: The moderating impact of social support among social work students. *Advances in Social Work, 9,*106-125.

Williams, C. A., Doorley, J. D., & Esposito-Smythers, C. (2017). Interpersonal rejection sensitivity mediates the associations between peer victimization and two high-risk outcomes. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *22* (4), 649-663.

World Health Organization (2023). *Suicide*. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide. Retrieved 17th September, 2023.

World Health Organization. (2003). *The world health report 2003: shaping the future*. World Health Organization. Retrieved on 26/11/2023.

World Health Organization. (2014). *Health for the world's adolescents: A second chance in the second decade.* Geneva: Retrieved from *http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/adolescence/second-decade/en.* Retrieved 18/12/2022.

World Health Organization. (2019). *Suicide in the world: Global Health Estimates*. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo). Retrieved 18/09/2023.

Zainal, Z. (2001). Case Study as a research method. *Jurnal Kernanusiaan, 5* (1)

Zhai, H., Bai, B., Chen, L., Han, D., Wang, L, Qiao, Z., Qiu, X., Yang, X. & Yang, Y. (2015). Correlation between family environment and suicidal ideation in university students in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 12*(2), 1412-24.

Zhang, X., & Wu, L. T. (2014). Suicidal ideation and substance use among adolescents and young adults: A bidirectional relation? *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *142*, 63-73.

Zur, O. (2016). *Major issues facing teenagers: Teen suicide, teen violence, cyberbullying (online bullying), internet & online addiction, video games, teen's watching porn, teen's watching TV violence, teenagers exposed to violence at home, and violent culture*. Zur Institute. https://drzur.com/issues-facing-teenagers/#resources. Retrieved on 15/12/2022.

155

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

156

Dear Participant,

The study is designed to help in a research being conducted to explore suicidal ideation among university students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Your honest responses will be of great help in obtaining data to assist students. Your candid responds to all the items in the interview guide would be appreciated greatly. You are assured of utmost confidentiality and anonymity of all information provided including your name, age and programme with your responses to the interview guide. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. This interview guide on this survey instrument has been thoroughly reviewed by professionals at the University of Cape Coast, and has been declared ethical for educational research. You hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this study by providing responses to items of the various sections of this instrument.

Thank you.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Face-To-Face)

Topic: **Suicidal Ideation among University Students of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana**.

Causes of Suicidal Ideation

1. What are the causes or reasons that make you feel or think like killing yourself or think about death?

Impact of Suicidal Ideation

2. What ways do you think your suicidal ideation has an impact on you?

Management Strategies students use to overcome Suicidal Ideation

3. What strategies do you use to overcome or manage Suicidal Ideation?

- Allow some minutes for comments and inquiries to reaffirm the issues about confidentiality

- Inform the interviewee about how the data will be used.

- Finally, thank the interviewee for agreeing to be interviewed.

Thank you.
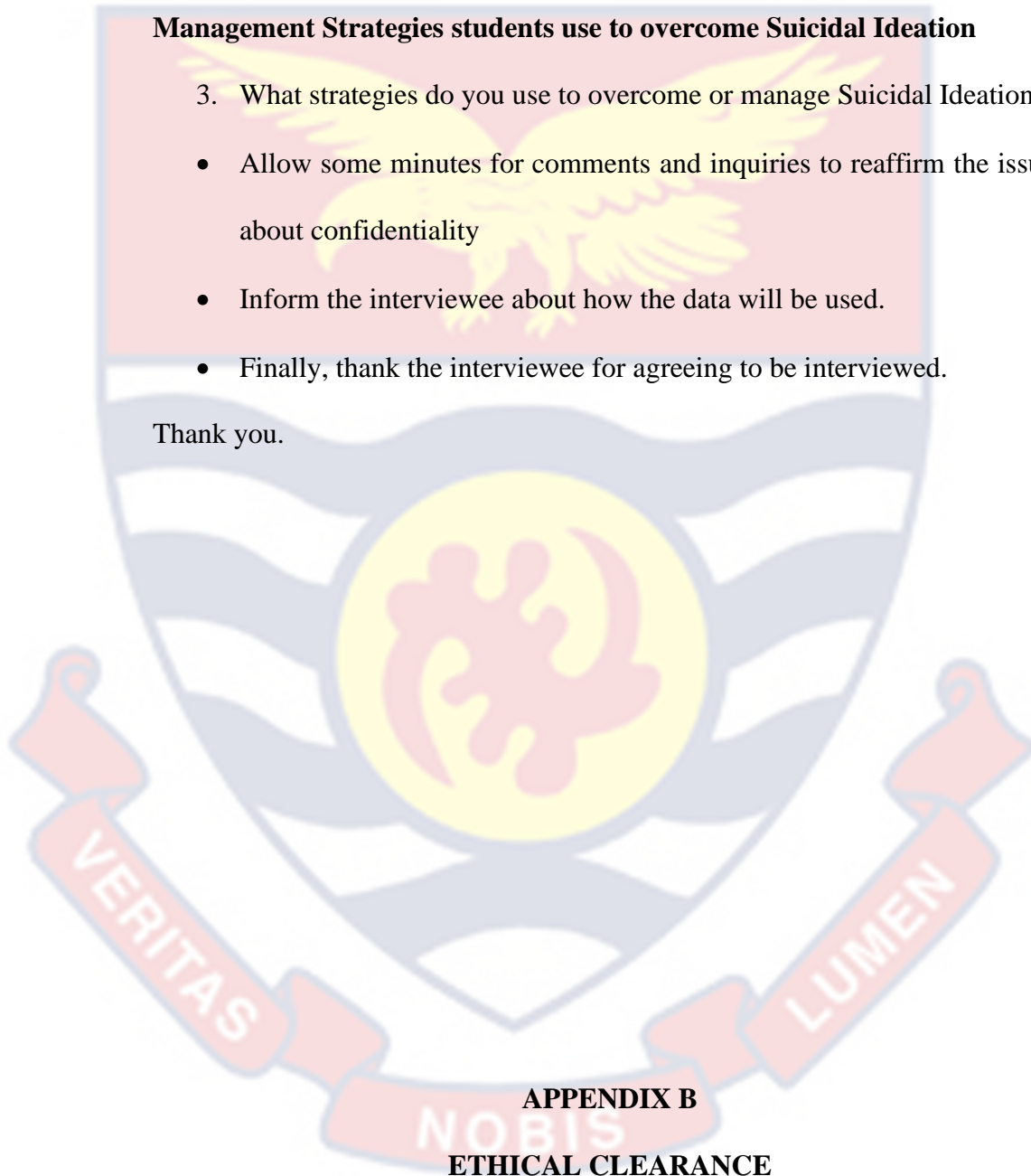
APPENDIX B

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: EES/ERB/ucc/edu/v8-23/18

Date: 30ᵗʰ May, 2023

Your Ref: ....

Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. J. A Omotosho
jomotosho@ucc.edu.gh
0243784759

Vice Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. K. Edjah
kedjah@ucc.edu.gh
0244742357

Secretary, CES-ERB
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
lforde@ucc.edu.gh
0244786680

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

The bearer Gilbert Konwie Langu, Reg. No. Ef/GCT/22/0007 is M.Phil. / Ph.D. student in the Department of Guidance and Counselling .... in the College of Education Studies University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He / She wishes to undertake a research study on the topic:

Perceived suicidal ideation among University students in KNUST, Ghana.

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies (CES) has assessed his/her proposal and confirm that the proposal satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval to commence his/her study. The ERB would be grateful if you would give him/her the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said research.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
(Secretary, CES-ERB)

APPENDIX C

159

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Telephone: 0332091854

E-mail: dguc@ucc.edu.gh

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref:

Your Ref: DGC/L.2/VOL.1/220   31ᵗʰ May, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We introduce to you, Gilbert Konwie Langu a student pursuing an M.Phil programme in Guidance and Counselling at the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the University of Cape Coast. As a requirement, he is to submit a thesis on the topic: *"Perceived Suicidal Ideation Among University Students in KNUST, Ghana"*. We are by this letter affirming that, the information he will obtain from your Institution will be solely used for academic purposes.

We would be most grateful if you could provide him with the necessary assistance.

Thank you.

Dr. Stephen Doh Fia
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT