

Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Suicidal Tendencies, Among Undergraduates Students of University of Benin

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the interplay between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among undergraduates of University of Benin. A non-experimental research design was employed, namely a correlational survey research design. Data were collected from a sample size of 396, utilizing the proportional sampling technique. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire, which comprised of two sections, section A was used for collecting demographic characteristics of the respondents and sections B and C was used for testing variables of interest which were tested. Reliability test was conducted by employing Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient alpha value of 0.85. Findings showed that there was no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among undergraduates @ $r=0.014$, $p=0.785$. The study also revealed no relationship between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies @ $r= 0.003$ but however revealed a weak direct relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies @ $r= 0.072$, $p= 0.154$. The study therefore recommended, among others, that major stakeholders such as school administrators, lecturers and parents should keep in mind that the students are vulnerable to suicidal tendencies and as such should show more understanding towards students' plight and be less judgmental.*

KEYWORDS: emotional intelligence, negative emotions, suicidal tendencies, self-awareness, self-regulation, university undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is a psychological construct that was first conceptualized in the early 1964 by Michael Beldoch. It was seen as being similar to intelligence quotient. Over the years, two distinct forms of emotional intelligence have emerged, namely: termed trait emotional intelligence and mixed model emotional intelligence. Trait emotional intelligence handles how individuals see themselves emotionally and how they integrate the affective aspects of their personality. The mixed model handles both trait and ability theories. Emotional intelligence refers to parts of individual's personalities and their abilities to motivate themselves in social

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and emotional situations. A number of psychometric instruments used in measuring Emotional intelligence have also emerged, such as Mayor- Salovey- Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), Bar-On emotional intelligence test, Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and Daniel Goleman's tool, just to mention a few.

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence is the capability to check one's own and other peoples' feelings and emotions, to differentiate amongst these feelings and to use the information generated to guide one's thinking and actions. Emotional intelligence shows peoples' ability to put together intelligence, emotion and empathy to improve their thoughts and understanding of changes occurring within them. Emotional intelligence also relates to how people reason emotionally, how they understand and respond to people and the environment. However, Goleman (1995), theorized how emotional intelligence should be expanded to include five major components, each containing a set of emotional competencies namely self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social skill and empathy. In defining these terms, he described self-awareness as that capability to understand one's own feelings and moods and to know the effect such mood has on others. It also refers to behaviours of building capacities. This means that an individual's understanding of his own feelings and recognizing the effect of his actions and feelings on others by taking cues from them. By doing this, he/she is able to relate more cordially with others by avoiding conflicts thereby achieving good intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. This helps in reducing emotional conflicts that could result in emotional turmoil that could result in suicidal tendencies.

The second construct he considered was self-regulation which he considered to be ability of knowing one's own negative and positive impulses, and controlling them to achieve a positive and productive feeling. Ability to control one's own negative feelings counts as self-regulation, which in turn helps to regulate individual's intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts. It also helps in resolutions of frustrating situations that could lead to suicidal behaviours.

Emotional Intelligence has been viewed by different scholars as the capacity to know accurately, assess and reveal emotions, to assess and generate feelings when thought is facilitated. From all of the above, it is clear that the term emotional competence has indeed stimulated a lot of scholarly interest, so also has the impact emotions have on mental health. Particularly in the era of wanton defiance to the powerful human ability to self-preserve as made obvious in the mass media, which gave growing incidence of suicide and suicidal behaviours the world over.

Suicide has been classified as the second leading cause of death youths particularly undergraduates in Nigeria, Africa and the world over (Ayinde, Aliabi and Abdulmalik, 2014). The major cause of suicide being depression. Students who are prone to suicidal tendencies are usually overwhelmed by very painful emotions and as such perceive death as the only option to end the pain, (University of California, 2019). Suicide and suicidal tendencies start as thoughts which may eventually be acted upon. Often times an individual preparing for death may start giving his or her possessions away, acquire chemicals or any object he or she wants

to use to end his or her life. Sometimes, there is a sudden lift of spirit which may be a warning sign that he or she is about to take his life (Osadolor, 2008).

Suicide has been defined as “an act with a fatal outcome which the deceased, knowing or expecting a fatal consequence had initiated and carried out with the purpose of provoking the changes that he or she desired” (WHO, 1986). World Health Organization (2004), considered suicidal behaviour “as a range of behaviours that include thinking about suicide or ideation, planning for suicide, suicidal attempting and suicide itself”. The latter will be adopted as suicidal tendencies for the purpose of the study.

In looking at the relationship between the variables among undergraduate students of University of Benin, it is pertinent to keep in mind that the current admission pattern into various universities has given in to death, leaving terrible notes in their biographies. These notes mostly stating reasons for their actions and expressing their love to their loved ones. Such is the account of some Nigerian youths in various universities, who have taken their own lives in recent times. In the last two years or more, there have been reported cases of suicidal attempts and successfully executed suicidal cases in University of Benin, (Awodipe, Diamond, Fagbemi, Ogugduaja, and Alabi, 2019). Worthy of note is the fact that most of these deaths are usually common among the adolescents and young adults in one institutions of higher learning. This phenomenon has also made it possible for these adolescents who are battling with stress brought about by physiological and psycho-social problems to be faced with academic problems. These academic problems could be as a result of poor performance, effect of parental pressure or peer pressure. There could also be underlying psychological and mental problems as well as failed intimate partner relationship. All of these could accumulate into emotional stress which creates emotional tension in these young minds. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence has shown that these adolescents are sometimes offered courses which they originally did not apply for this creates emotional stress in them.

The magnitude of this problem is enormous and made worse by the fact that incidence of attempted suicide is twenty-five times more than that of complete suicide. The most frequent method being hanging and pesticide poisoning, (Mars, Burrow, Hjelmeland, and Gunnell, 2014). Furthermore, there is a rising trend of suicide and suicidal attempts among students in institutions of higher learning. Though many studies have been done on suicide and suicidal behaviours among students in Nigeria, very few has bothered to look at the relationship between emotional competence and suicidal tendencies among students of institutions of higher learning. This identified gap in knowledge is what this study hopes to bridge with a view to curbing the huge problem that is threatening the existence of our younger generation. The goal of this study is to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin. To do this, the following research question were raised:

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the degree of relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin?
2. What is the degree of relationship between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate of University of Benin?
3. What is the degree of relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students of University of Benin?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students.
2. There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin.
3. There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among the students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a non-experimental research design by employing a correlational survey research design. This design was successfully applied by Ganaprakasam, (2018), to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal ideation and mental health of Indian students. The designs were therefore considered appropriate for use in this study as it seeks to measure the relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies of students. The accessible population of this study comprised all full-time matriculated undergraduates of University of Benin. There were 39,243 full-time undergraduates in both campuses, spread across fourteen faculties at the time of the study. This study employed the use of proportional stratified sampling. This stems from fact that the students are in heterogeneous layer and as such were divided on the basis of their faculties. The proportion of each faculty to the total population was determined by using Taro Yamane's formula for finite population to determine the sample size. This was used to determine the proportional distribution of each faculty. With this, a total of 396 students were sampled.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of sections A, B, C and D. Section A will comprise of socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section B will consists of questions (tools for measuring emotional intelligence), while section C will test suicide behavior and tendencies. However, section D will comprise of questions that will test respondent level of sadness, hopelessness Section B, Goleman's self-assessment questionnaire will be adapted to test the emotional intelligence of the students. Students will be tested base on self-awareness, self-regulation. Their responses in this section will be rated 1 to 5 along the line of not at all for 1, just a little 2, somewhat 3, quite a lot 4, very much 5. High score will indicate high level of emotional intelligence.

Section C will be a suicide behaviour questionnaire (SBQ-R) it will be testing suicidal behavior and tendencies among the students. It will be scored 1-3, 4 or 5 depending on the options a low score indicates low suicidal risk while a high score indicates high suicidal risk.

Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the questionnaire was tested for face, content and constructs by two experts. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine construct validity of the tools. Result of construct validity test was a high positive coefficient of 0.77.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to test internal consistency of the tool, Cronbach's alpha test was used to establish the reliability of the tools using SPSS (version 21.0). The internal consistency of the instrument was good based on Cronbach alpha result of 0.85

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected by self-administered structured and unstructured questionnaire comprising a total of forty items based on variables to be tested.

Method of Data Analysis

Copies of the questionnaires returned was checked for completeness. Summary statistics was done by using frequencies and proportional tables. All research questions was answered by using Pearson's Moment Correlation Coefficient (2 tailed). The hypotheses was tested with regression analysis to determine the direction of relationship between the variables and show linear relationships.

Conceptual framework of the Study

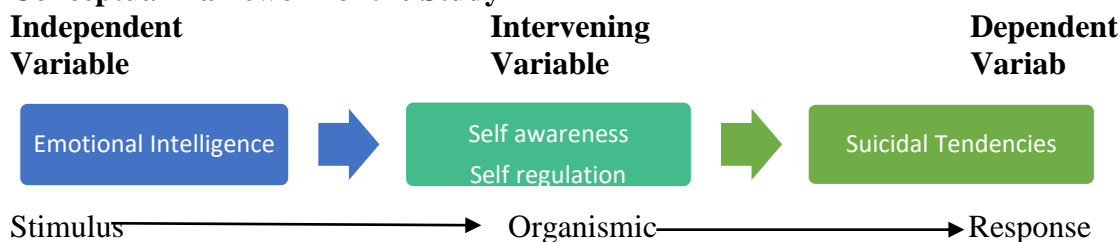


Figure 1: Adopted from Agboola (2015),

Conceptual framework of the study.

This figure 1 represents the conceptual framework of the study. It gives an insight in the interrelationship between emotional intelligence, its components and suicidal tendencies. This is based on behavioural paradigm of stimulus-organismic-response (S-O-R) as adopted from unpublished study done by Agboola (2015), titled influence of modelling and solution focused therapies on the enhancement of the self-concept of Nigerian adolescents. Emotional intelligence can be defined as an individual's ability to check his or her own feelings as well as other peoples' feelings, this is will constitute the independent variable of this study. There are five organismic factors that are presumed to mediate between emotional intelligence and

suicidal tendencies which have been termed intervening variables. These variables have the capacity of affecting suicidal behaviour outcome. This is why they are studied alongside the independent and dependent variables. This is to enable the knowledge of level of relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies come to light. From the conceptual framework, it is clear that independent variable which is emotional intelligence make up the stimulus(S), while suicidal tendencies form the dependent variable, which is also the response(R). The mediating or the intervening variables are self-awareness, self-regulation, are thought to mediate between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies form organismic (O). Since emotional intelligence helps an individual moderate himself or herself and situations around him or her, adequate acquisition of this trait is presumed to help an individual in coping with life situations, which in turn holds suicidal tendencies in abeyance.

Emotional Intelligence

According to the Oxford English Dictionary emotion is “an individual’s initial state of being and involuntary physiological response to an object or a situation based on or tied to physical state or sensory data. It is synonymous with feeling or affect”. It has also been described by Lazarus, (1991), “as information about a person’s relationship with the environment, that can be triggered when the persons’ environmental relationship changes”. The emotional capability to feel, use and manage emotions contribute optimally to social functioning (Eisenberg, Fabes, Guthrie and Reiser, 2000). Therefore, ability to manage these emotions effectively is very important to our social functioning as this skill enables the individual to show socially appropriate emotions and enables him or her behave in acceptable ways, (Brackett and Rivers, 2006). In order for an individual to navigate the social world, him or her needs to effectively manage emotional information as well as intelligently process information (Keltner and Kring 1998).

This said, one can therefore state that emotional intelligence is the capability to accurately feel, check and show emotions: the ability to assess and or generate feelings, to understand emotion and utilize already assessed emotional knowledge to regulate emotions which helps in promoting emotional and intellectual growth, (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

However, it was Goleman who argued that existing definition of emotional intelligence needed to be improved, adding that processing emotional information and utilizing it effectively facilitates good personal decisions, resolution of conflicts and to motivate oneself and others (Concordia University, 2013). He broadened Mayer and Saloveys' four branches to incorporate his five components or element of emotional intelligence namely: emotional self-awareness, Self-regulation, Self-motivation, Empathy and Social skills. However, in this study attention will be on two components which are self-awareness and self-regulation

- a. Emotional self-awareness: which means knowing what one is feeling at a particular time and understanding the impact those feelings have on others.
- b. Self-regulation: this mean controlling or redirecting one’s emotion, that is, anticipating consequences of emotions generated before acting on impulse.

Suicide

Suicide is defined as “an act with a fatal outcome which the deceased, knowing or expecting a fatal consequence, had initiated and carried out with the purpose of providing the changes that he desired” (WHO, 1986). Same body considered suicidal behavior as “a range of behaviors that include thinking about suicide, planning for suicide, attempting suicide and suicide itself” (WHO, 2004). For the purpose of this study, above definition shall be adopted as suicidal tendencies.

Studies have revealed that University students represent a major part of those at high risk of suicidal tendencies. This is largely due to the fact that it is a transitional period in their lives, this period is often associated with stressful conditions that predisposes them to suicidal behaviours if not properly handled, (Arria, O’Grady, Caldeira, Vincent, Wilcox and Wish, 2009). Chiqueta and Stiles (2007) also revealed in their study that lack of psychological buffers is major predictor of high level of suicidal behaviours among undergraduates. Some of the factors which affect suicidal tendencies include

Psychological distress and previous mental disorders

Suicidal tendencies, psychological distress and previous mental disorder are identifiable vulnerabilities that are likely to make a predisposed individual actually commit suicide (Cavanagh, Carson and Sharpe, 2011). This is very evident by the previous studies conducted on the predictive validity on psychological risk factors on suicide among college students by (Arria *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, it is on record that psychological symptomology has noxious impact on suicide, (Zhang, Law and Yip, 2011).

Furthermore, studies have shown that emotional intelligence can be a useful tool in psychological distress processing (Hertel, Schutz and Lammer, 2008). It has been emphasized that emotionally intelligent people handle their emotions better and tend to use better adaptive regulatory strategies in managing psychological distress, (Sarrionandia, Mikolajczak and Gross, 2015). According to research conducted by Ibrahim, Amit and Suen, (2014), individuals with previous mental disorders such as anxiety neurosis, stress and depression are more prone to suicidal tendencies and suicidal acts.

Academic Stress: Academic stress could mean all pressures felt by students during university period. This pressure can come from their parents, peers, academic studies and or performance. The magnitude of pressure can be so huge that it lowers self-esteem, emotional adaptation and even ability to learn. Without proper social support systems, they may succumb to risk of suicidal tendencies. There are evidences that show that stressful life events such as stressful academic life, failed intimate partner relationship, undue pressure from peers and unnecessary parental pressures occasioned by unrealistic expectations are contributory factors that could facilitate carrying out of deliberate self-harm among students, (Oginyi, Mbam, Sampson, Chukwudi and Nwoba, 2018).

Academic stress and failed intimate partner relationship are some of the impediment facing undergraduate students. According to Ifeagwazi, (2016), the above cause pervasive-clinical

phenomenon that has been linked to health and illness of students. A study by Smith, Alloy and Abraham, (2006) revealed that academic stress gives risk factor for suicide. A relationship was established between stress and suicidal tendencies among university student, (Chang 2003, Joiner 2005). Oginyi *et al.*, (2018), in a study titled personal factors, academic stress and socio-economic factors in suicide ideation among undergraduate student of Ebonyi State University, revealed that academic stress was predictor of suicidal tendencies among the studied population. Kazan, Calear and Batterham, (2015), systematically reviewed the impact of failed intimate partner relationship on suicide. The study showed that relationship separation and poor- quality relationships were likely important risk factors that could lead to suicidal tendencies.

Theoretical Framework

Theories and models of emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies essentially explain the reason behind the occurrence suicide among undergraduate students of most Nigeria universities. The theoretical framework relevant to this study include: Goleman's five components of emotional intelligence model and Joiner's interpersonal-psychological theory.

Emotional Intelligence Theory

The theoretical framework that fits into this study is Daniel Goleman's five components of emotional intelligence theory.

Goleman broadened Mayer and Salovey four branch system to incorporate five essential components of emotional intelligence but two will be discussed. They are as follows:

- a. Emotion self-awareness
- b. Self-regulation

Emotional Self Awareness: this is the capability of an individual to know and comprehend personal moods, emotions and drives and their effect on others. Hallmark of self-awareness include self-confidence, realistic self-awareness and sense of humour. Self-awareness depends on one's ability to monitor one's own emotional state and to correctly identify the emotions.

Self-Regulation: The ability to redirect damaging impulses and moods and the propensity to delay judgment, it is simply to think before acting. Hallmark includes trustworthiness and integrity comfort with ambiguity and openness to change.

Application of the Theory in the Study

According to Goleman, in schools where there is high emotional intelligence, students do not involve in activities that will deescalate conflicts, disobedience, violence and drug abuse. He posited that solid emotional intelligence improves academic excellence as well as behavior. This goes to show that improved academic performance, depression, sadness and frustration is kept in abeyance thereby reducing suicidality.

Suicidal Tendency Theory

Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicidal Behaviour

According to this theory, suicide starts as a thought, which is evident when the individual is stroke by an overwhelming psychological element. These elements are burdensome and social alienation. These two psychological states prepare an individual to gain the ability to work very hard towards committing suicide. According to this theory, individuals who attempted suicide in the past have higher chance of committing suicide in future if the element of burdensome and social alienation are not clinically resolved.

According to this theory, people only succeed in committing suicide when their desire to die matches their ability to bring it about. This means that the desire will be such that it will overcome the human self-preservation instincts. This is usually achieved by developing no fear to pain or body harm or even death itself. They repeatedly expose themselves to substances that could cause self-harm, self-inflict pain on themselves by slitting their wrists, drinking poisonous substances, setting themselves ablaze or drowning.

This theory described suicidal process by explaining the three components of suicide namely perceived burdensomeness, low belonging (social alienation) and acquisition of ability to enact lethal self-injury. The individual first sees himself or herself as a burden to his or her family and or the society. This is usually followed by suicidal ideation.

Secondly, the individual begins to develop a low sense of belonging alienating himself or herself from others.

Thirdly, the notion that the individual is a nuisance to his or her family starts mounting, this eventually leads to social alienation. While this individual is isolated, he may try several methods of causing body harm to himself, he may choose to make remarks on leaving this world, he may decide to push everybody away. He struggles to fight the instinct to self-preserve repeatedly by exposing himself to items to could over-ride fear of pain and death. With each failure prompting the individual's resolve to self-disrupt, thereby conferring more capacity for suicide.

Empirical Reviews

Association between Emotional Intelligence and Suicidal tendencies

The role emotional intelligence plays in suicidal ideation among Chinese University students was studied by (Kwok, 2013). It was a cross section strong that utilized convenience sampling and questionnaire on 302 students. The means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alphas of the variables were computed. The study was analyzed with Pearson's correlation analyses and hierarchical regression analysis. The study provided evidence that emotional intelligence is a factor that buffers low family functioning on suicidal behavior. The study gave ways of decreasing suicidal behaviours to include reduced parental pressure, improving students' emotional awareness and proper management of students' emotions.

Francis, (2019) in a study titled “Relation between emotional competence and suicidal ideation among college student” on 180 University students aged 18-25 years. Emotional competence was measured using Bharadwaj and Sharma emotional competence scale while suicidal ideation was measured with suicidal ideation scale. It was analyzed using person’s coefficient of correlation. Suicidal ideation and emotional competence among the students were compared on the basis of gender using independent samples of t-test. Results revealed that a significant relationship existed between suicidal ideation and emotional competence, implicating a need for special care on university students’ problem and remedial measure.

Furthermore, a study by Nawaz, (2015) titled “An empirical study on employee competence in relation to emotional intelligence in Bahrain” studied over 50 employees, the effect of emotional intelligence components identified as (1) self-awareness (2) self- regulation (3) self-motivation (4) social awareness (5) social skills and (6) emotional receptivity. The result shows a positive significance between emotional intelligence and the employees’ competence.

Dormiguez-Garcia and Fernandez-Berrocal, (2018), in a study titled the association between emotional intelligence and suicidal behaviour: a systematic review. They utilized meta-analysis to systematically review all available literatures in English and Spanish on relationships of emotional competence and to suicidal behaviours through databases to reveal that high level of emotional intelligence plays protective role against suicidal behaviours, while suggesting that emotional intelligence be integrated into suicidal prevention programmes.

Suicidal Tendencies and Emotional Self Awareness:

Evidence has shown that reduced emotional intelligence leads to suicidal behaviours by limiting the ability of individuals to understand and manage emotions, which are cognitive skills linked to prefrontal cortex. According to research done by Sawaya, Johnson, Schmidt, Arana, Chahine, Atoui, and Nahas (2015) discovered that, compared to healthy controls, individuals with major depressive disorder had lower functional connections between antero-medial regions of the prefrontal cortex and regions involved in emotional regulation. The study discovered that Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) scores correlated significantly to the functional connectivity in the ventromedial prefrontal cortex. The study revealed that people with low emotional awareness are less likely to be involved in fulfilling social interactions, which may eventually lead to suicidal states.

Self-Regulation and Suicidal Tendencies

The capability to feel, to say, to comprehend and control emotions is considered to a key factor in promoting emotional wellbeing. Controlling one’s emotions and inert ability to anticipate consequences before acting on impulse are signals to the fact that one is emotional intelligence. In contrast, inability to control one’s emotions can have consequences that may lead to repetitive negative thinking which affects risk for suicidal behaviours. A study on Multimedia Emotion Management Assessment, in press by MacCann, Lievens, Libbrecht & Roberts, (2015), found that a positive relationship between life satisfaction and emotion management based on emotion regulation ability assessed using the MSCEIT and based on a new video-based version of Situational Test of Emotion Management (STEM). In contrast to perception of one's inability to use emotional regulation strategies and change strategies in a given

situation. A study by Law and Tucker (2017), titled "repetitive negative thinking and suicide: a burgeoning literature with need for further exploration". They studied how repetitive negative thoughts can influence risk to suicidal tendencies. According to them, rumination which is a symptom of affective disorder occurs due to perception differences between the current state of an individual and goals to be achieved by the same individual. They found that lack of optimism strengthened the relationship between remination and suicidal tendencies. This association may be heightened by impulsive use of provocative and painful behaviour when coping with negative emotions caused by remination. Brackett, Palomra, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes and Salovey (2010), used the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) to examine emotional intelligence and trait affects among British secondary school teachers and discovered that emotional regulatory abilities are strongly associated with positive affect than negative affect

Analysis of Data and Presentation of Results

Table 1: Showing Summary of Self Awareness Emotional Intelligence Testing Tool

Variables	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Outstanding	Mean±SD
Understanding one's feeling	25(6.3)	32(8.1)	141(35.8)	137(34.8)	59(15.0)	3.44±1.05
Knowing the root cause of one's feelings	29(7.4)	76(19.3)	144(36.5)	101(25.6)	44(11.2)	3.14±1.08
Recognizing how one's feeling affect one's performance	23(5.8)	46(11.7)	130(33.0)	122(31.0)	73(18.5)	3.45±1.10
Awareness of one's strengths	18(4.6)	57(14.5)	128(32.5)	119(30.2)	72(18.3)	3.43±1.09
Awareness of one's weaknesses	23(5.8)	63(16.0)	111(28.2)	127(32.2)	70(17.8)	3.40±1.13
Being open to candid opinion of me by others	23(5.8)	62(15.7)	122(31.0)	138(35.0)	49(12.4)	3.32±1.07
Ability to show a sense of humour, even when being criticized	37(9.4)	61(15.5)	106(26.9)	112(28.4)	78(19.8)	3.34±1.22

One hundred and forty-one (35.8%) of the respondents expressed to be good in their understanding one's feeling (3.44±1.05) and 144(36.5) were also good at knowing the root cause of their feelings and almost one-third 130(33.0%) of the respondents were also good at recognizing how one's feeling affect one's performance (3.45±1.10).

Most of the respondents 128(32.5%) showed good attempt in assessing their awareness of strengths while 127(32.2%) respondents showed a very good attempt in assessing their awareness of weaknesses. Almost one-third of the study population 138(35.0%) were very good at being open to candid opinion by others (3.32±1.07). Moreso, 112(28.4%) respondents were very good ability to show a sense of humour, even when being criticized (3.34±1.22).

Table 2: Showing summary of Self-regulation: Emotional Intelligence Testing Tool

Variables	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Outstanding	Mean±SD
Ability to always manage my impulsive feelings well	25(6.3)	70(17.8)	143(36.3)	98(24.9)	58(14.7)	3.24±1.10
Ability to stay composed, positive and unflappable even in trying moments	27(6.9)	54(13.7)	141(35.8)	121(30.7)	51(12.9)	3.29±1.07
Ability to think clearly and stay focused under pressure	33(8.4)	84(21.3)	131(33.2)	104(26.4)	42(10.7)	3.10±1.11
Ability to handle multiple demands smoothly	32(8.1)	74(18.8)	132(33.5)	111(28.2)	45(11.4)	3.16±1.11
Ability to adapt my responses to fit flexible circumstances	23(5.8)	62(15.7)	153(38.8)	117(29.7)	39(9.9)	3.22±1.02
Ability to be flexible in how I see events	24(6.1)	68(17.3)	124(31.5)	123(31.2)	55(14.0)	3.30±1.10

Self-regulation of the respondents showed an expression of good management of their emotions. A greater proportion 143(36.3%) however feel good in their ability to always manage impulsive feelings well with mean ±SD 3.24±1.10.

A good ability to stay composed, positive and unflappable even in trying moments was justified by 141(35.8%) respondents. One hundred and thirty-one (33.2%) respondents also claimed a good Ability to think clearly and stay focused under pressure (3.10±1.11).

Table 3: Showing summary of Suicidal behaviours/tendencies

Variables	Frequency (n = 394)	Percent
Have you ever thought about killing yourself?		
I have attempted to kill myself and really hoped to die	25	6.3
I have attempted to kill myself but did not hope to die	23	5.8
I have had a plan at least once to kill myself and really wanted to die	19	4.8
I have had a plan at least once to kill myself but did not try to do it	52	13.2
It was just a brief passing thought	77	19.5
Never	198	50.3
Mean±SD	4.85±1.53	
How often have you thought about killing yourself in the past year?		
Very often (5 or more times)	35	8.9
Often (3-4 times)	28	7.1
Sometimes (2 times)	34	8.6
Rarely (1 time)	83	21.1

Never	214	54.3
Mean±SD	4.05±1.31	
Have you ever told someone that you were going to commit suicide or that you might do it?		
Yes, more than once and really wanted to die	34	8.6
Yes, more than once, but did not want to die	20	5.1
Yes, at one time and really wanted to die	26	6.6
Yes, at one time, but did not really want to die	54	13.7
No	260	66.0
Mean±SD	4.23±1.29	
How likely is it that you will attempt suicide someday?		
Very likely	3	0.8
Rather likely	35	8.9
Likely	30	7.6
Unlikely	33	8.4
Rather unlikely	25	6.3
No chance at all	51	12.9
Never	217	55.1
Mean±SD	4.70±1.78	

Table 3 shows suicidal tendencies among the respondents. Majority of the respondents 198(50.3%) however have never thought about killing themselves while 25(6.3%) have not only thought of killing themselves but have also attempted to kill themselves and hoped to die (4.85±1.53). More than half of the study population 214(54.3%) have never thought of killing themselves especially in the past year while 35(8.9%) respondents have thought of killing themselves more than 5 times at (4.05±1.31). The study also revealed that a greater proportion of the respondents 260(66.0%) have ever told someone that they want to commit suicide or that they might do it while 34(8.6%) respondents have told someone more than once and really wanted to die (4.23±1.29).

Lastly, 217(55.1%) respondents are not likely to attempt suicide someday but 3(0.8%) respondents admitted that they are very likely to attempt suicide someday (4.70±1.78).

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Answering Research Questions and Testing of Hypotheses

Research Question 1: What is the extent of relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin?

Hypothesis I: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin?

Table 4: Correlation matrix showing relationship between Suicidal Behaviour and Emotional intelligence

		Suicidal-Behaviour	Emotional-Intelligence
Suicidal_Behaviour	Spearman's rho	1.000	.014
	Correlation Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.785
	N	394	394
Emotional_Intelligence	Spearman's rho	0.014	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.785	.
	N	394	394

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table above answer research question one that wants to know the strength of relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students. The correlational coefficient between Suicidal behaviour and Emotional Intelligence showed a very negligible positive and it was not statistically significant ($r = 0.014$, $p = 0.785$). Therefore, implying a weak direct relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the students, an increase in emotional intelligence means a slight increase in suicidal tendencies among the students.

Answering Research question 2: What is the extent of relationship between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of university of Benin

Hypothesis II: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin?

Table 5: Correlation matrix showing relationship between Suicidal Behaviour and self-awareness,

		Suicidal_Behaviour	Self-Awareness
Suicidal Behaviour	Spearman's rho	1.000	-.003
	Correlation Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.946
	N	394	394
Self-Awareness	Spearman's rho	-.003	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.946	.
	N	394	394

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table above answered research question two which sought to know the strength of relation between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students and

hypothesis 11 which state a no significant relationship between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students.

From the result there was a weak negative association between self-awareness of the student and their suicidal behavior. Thus, implying that there was a weak inverse indirect relation between self-awareness among the students results in slight decrease in their suicidal behavior at ($r = -0.003$). This answered research question two.

The table above also tested hypothesis 11 which states that there is no significant relationship self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students of University of Benin. Result revealed $r = -0.003$, $p = 0.946$, which was statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that there is significant relationship between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin. Meanwhile, a weak negative correlation was also revealed between Suicidal behaviour and a Self-awareness and was statistically significant ($r = -0.003$, $p = 0.946$).

Research Question 3: What is the extent of relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin?

Hypothesis 111: There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students of University of Benin.

Table 6: Correlation matrix showing relationship between Suicidal Behaviour and self-regulation
Correlations

		Suicidal-Behaviour	Self-Regulation
Suicidal-Behaviour	Correlation	1.000	0.072
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.154
	N	394	394
Spearman's rho	Correlation	0.072	1.000
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.154	.
	N	394	394

The table 6 answers the research question three which sought to know the strength of association between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin. The table shows a very weak positive relationship. Thus, implying there is weak direct association between self-regulation of the students and their suicidal behaviours. This means that a slight increase in self-regulation may result in slight increase in suicidal tendencies among the students, in the same way, a slight decrease in self-regulation may also lead to slight decrease in suicidal behaviours.

The suicidal behaviour showed a very weak positive correlation with self-regulation and it was not statistically significant ($r = 0.072$, $p = 0.154$). The table also tests hypothesis 111 which

states that there is no significant relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin. The table revealed $r = 0.072$ at $p = 0.154$. The null hypothesis is accepted, therefore there is no significant relationship between self-regulation and suicidal behavior among the undergraduate students of University of Benin.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section presents the discussion of the results of this study in the context of previous studies in line with research questions and hypotheses.

Research question one: What is the extent of relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students of University of Benin?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students of University of Benin.

Research question one and Hypothesis 1: The findings of this study revealed that a slight increase in emotional intelligence in the students will result in slight increase in suicidal tendencies among the students. The result also demonstrated that there is no relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin. This weak direct strength of association between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies is in contrast to the findings of Francis, (2019) and Dormiguez-Garcia and Fernandez-Berrocal, (2018), Kwok, (2013) and Faghirpour *et al.*, (2011) which revealed with evidences that a higher emotional intelligence has a tendency to lower suicidal tendencies. The contrast in the findings of this study may be attributable to different cultural backgrounds where these studies were conducted. While it is very easy for Asians and Europeans to confess to suicidal tendencies, such confessions are taboos in some African cultures particularly in Nigeria.

Research question two: What is the extent of relationship between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin?

Hypothesis 11: There is no statistical significance between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students of University of Benin.

From the findings of this study, self-awareness was slightly negatively correlated to suicidal tendencies among the students, with every slight increase in emotional intelligence resulting in slight decrease in suicidal tendencies. Result also revealed a weak negative correlation which is statistically significant at $r = -0.003$ and $p = 0.946$, rejecting the null hypothesis while accepting the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant relation between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among the students studied. This finding is in line with a similar study by Sawaya, *et al.*, (2015), which revealed that a low emotional awareness impacted negatively on mental health which results in increased suicidal tendencies of the studied group. Another study by Al-Balaji, (2019), also revealed a negative association between emotional self-awareness

and personal growth initiative on goal attainment among studied sample. This finding is in line with that of this study.

Research question three: What is the extent of self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin?

Hypothesis 111: There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students of University of Benin.

The findings from this study showed a small positive relationship with the implication of a small increase or decrease in self-regulation resulting in same strength of increase or decrease in suicidal behaviours among the students. Though this result revealed a weak positive relationship, the finding is in line with a similar study by MacCann, *et al.*, (2015), which found a positive relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among multimedia practitioners. However, null hypothesis 111 was accepted at $p=0.154$ showing that there is no significant relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students. This finding is contrary to studies done by Law and Tucker, (2017) and Brackett *et al.*, (2010), which showed very strong positive relationship between self-regulation and suicidal behaviours. The difference in findings may be attributed to difference in cultural backgrounds where these studies were carried out. While it may be easy for students in Asian and European cultural background to admit on paper to suicidal behaviours, it may not be so easy for a student from an African country due to their close ties to their culture as suicide is a taboo in most cultures.

The summary of the research findings are as follows:

- 1) There is negligible positive relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin.
- 2) There is no statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin.
- 3) There is a very negligible negative relationship between self-awareness and suicidal tendencies among the students.
- 4) There is a significant relationship between self-awareness and suicidal behaviours of undergraduate students of University of Benin.
- 5) The degree of relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among the students is a small positive correlation.
- 6) There is no statistically significant relationship between self-regulation and suicidal tendencies among the undergraduate students of University of Benin.

Educational Implication

From above findings, it can be summarized that there is no statistically significant relationship BETWEEN components of emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students of University of Benin. What this means is that it does not take an emotionally unintelligent individual to commit suicide. Obviously, there could be some extraneous factors beyond the scope of this study that could be responsible for various suicidal

behaviours found in many students of institutions of higher learning in this country. There is therefore need to explore some of these factors in other studies, if the menace of suicide among students is to be curbed. It is therefore expedient that findings from this study serve as wake-up call all stakeholders in the educational sector, including the students to ensure that the fight against suicide and suicidal tendencies is fought with victory in mind.

CONCLUSION

Suicide and suicidal tendencies are issues that are considered as taboos in most African cultures. Suicidal acts are so forbidden that those who dare to take their lives are buried in “evil forests”. The act negates our religious and cultural beliefs. Little wonder those who have the tendencies usually suffer in silence and most times end up taking their lives anyway. This study has proved beyond reasonable doubts that it does not take an emotionally incompetent individual to commit suicide. The view is clearly different from that held from most literatures reviewed. The finding of this study stand on its own and boldly states that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal behaviours among undergraduate students of University of Benin. From this study’s view point, there are clearly more factors that are responsible for various suicidal behaviours noticed among students, certainly being emotionally incompetent is not one of them as seen in this study. Further studies on this issue are highly recommended. This study also recommends that stake holders in the educational sector should increase their activities to help reduce suicidal acts. The study also recommends that parents, lecturers and health workers should join in the fight to end suicide and suicidal tendencies among our youth in institutions of higher learning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study which are that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and suicidal tendencies among undergraduate students of University of Benin. It is therefore recommended that the following measures be taken in order to curb suicidal tendencies.

- 1) Students of tertiary institutions should be given awareness program on what emotional intelligence is and what constitutes emotional well-being during orientation period. Proper orientation of when to consult Guidance-counsellors should be done. Various vices such as cyber-bullying, physical bullying, undue parental and peer pressures should be discouraged. Students should be encouraged not to give in to undue academic pressure occasioned by unrealistic goal-setting either by themselves or their parents. They should be cautioned to avoid unnecessary emotional turmoil occasioned by failed intimate partner relationship.
- 2) Lecturers should show more understanding and less judgmental of students’ problems by being more compassionate about their plight. They should endeavor to make education free from unnecessary pressures by adopting a non-threat approach to their relationships with the students and their studies. Lecturers should adopt better teaching methods to make learning easier even at the higher learning level. They should adopt better evaluative measures to curb frustration among the students.

- 3) School administrators: There should be improved assessment and evaluation process, in order to give all students more opportunities at attaining their goals. There should be close monitoring and counselling of all attempted suicidal individuals.
- 4) Parents: parents must stop the act of creating undue pressure by giving their children unattainable goals, forcing them to enroll for programmes they are not interested in.

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