

The Relationship Between Academic Stress and Suicidal Ideation Among Undergraduates in Oyo State, Nigeria

R.A. Fadipe¹, F. N. Bolu-Steve², & F.A. Okesina³

^{1,2, &3}Department of Counsellor Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

¹*fadiperasagabimbola@gmail.com*

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey of correlational type was adopted for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 420 respondents from three universities in Oyo State. The research instrument, "Academic Stress and Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (ASSIQ)" was used to collect data from the respondents. The findings revealed that there were high levels of academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State. A significant relationship was found between academic stress and suicidal ideation ($r = 0.199$, $p < .05$). Another finding showed that academic stress had a significant relationship with respondent's gender ($r = 0.328$, $p < 0.05$); age ($r = 0.298$, $p < 0.05$); class level ($r = 0.228$, $p < 0.05$); place of residence ($r = 0.210$, $p < 0.05$); and course of study ($r = 0.301$, $P < 0.05$). Findings also revealed that suicidal ideation had a significant relationship with respondent's gender ($r = 0.177$, $p < 0.05$); class level ($r = 0.163$, $P < 0.05$); and place of residence ($r = 0.176$, $p < 0.05$), while no relationship was found based on age ($r = 0.017$, $p > 0.05$) and course of study ($r = 0.047$, $p > 0.05$). It was therefore, recommended that undergraduates experiencing academic stress in tertiary institutions in Oyo State should seek guidance and counselling services to prevent situations that can lead to suicidal ideation.

Keywords: *Academic stress, Suicidal ideation, Undergraduates, Oyo State, Nigeria*

1. Introduction

Suicidal ideation is a primary public health concern currently creating significant psychological challenges among undergraduates in Nigeria. This aspect of suicidal behaviour involves students developing feelings that life lacks meaning, leading them to contemplate or wish to end their own lives (Pienaar, Rothman & Vijver, 2022). This issue is widespread among undergraduates, regardless of age, residence, religion, gender, ethnicity, academic achievements, or socioeconomic background. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (2024), a considerable number of suicide attempts or completions among undergraduates in Nigeria involve individuals younger than 30 years, mainly due to the academic frustration stemming from factors such as poor academic performance, inability to meet expectations, and perceived lack of support.

The prevalence of suicidal ideation is closely associated with the intense academic pressure, financial stress, and societal expectations faced by undergraduates in school. This issue not only impedes academic performance but also leads to tragic fatalities. Between 2018 and 2022, there was a significant rise in reported suicide cases in national newspapers, with 7,821 university students from Oyo State being hospitalized and 2,373 attempting suicide due to overwhelming stress and suicidal thoughts (Adesola, 2023). Undergraduate students who struggle to attain good grades or perform well academically often suffer from intense anxiety, low self-esteem, and feelings of hopelessness, leading

them to adopt unhealthy coping mechanisms like substance abuse. They may display aggressive or impulsive behaviors, suffer physical or sexual abuse, face stressful life events, have difficulty with coping strategies, be exposed to suicide, experience family conflicts, deal with financial problems, or face personality issues. These factors contribute to depression and strained peer relationships, further intensifying their academic stress.

According to Brown, Anderson-Johnson, and McPherson (2016), undergraduate students often perceive education as a highly stressful process requiring substantial physical and mental preparedness and engagement. Pienaar, Rothman and Vijver (2022) identified the primary sources of stress as inadequate academic performance, reduced cognitive functioning, and a lack of focus and mindfulness. Lau-wee (2018) noted that excessive stress can lead to suicidal thoughts due to emotional burnout and the overwhelming pressure to meet academic expectations. Yan, Lin, and Su (2018) emphasized that students experience high stress levels when confronted with demanding academic expectations and insufficient resources. These students suffer from adverse effects such as poor sleep quality, loss of appetite, emotional distress, acute stress, and depression.

Adegoke (2023) also asserted that the academic stress experienced by students negatively affects their interpersonal relationships, physical health, and psychological well-being. Exposure to academic stress can result in both physical health issues, such as heart disease, and mental health problems, including anxiety disorders. Individual responses to stress can vary, making effective stress management crucial to prevent severe problems. Idowu, Esere, Okunlola, and Irulor (2017) noted that while academic stress itself isn't inherently negative, effectively managed stress (eustress) can be beneficial, whereas poorly managed stress (distress) can be harmful. Radcliff and Lester (2021) investigated anticipated stress among final-year students, identifying factors such as challenging assignments, heavy work and project deadlines, financial stress, insufficient guidance, social pressures, and pressure to graduate with good grades as contributors to the accumulation of academic stress. Prabhu (2015) studied academic stress levels among university students in Namakkal district, Tamil Nadu, India, involving 250 students. The research revealed significant levels of stress among university students, with male students reporting higher stress levels than females, and urban students experiencing more stress compared to their rural counterparts.

Research indicates a clear relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among college students. Stephenson, Pena-Shaff, and Quirk (2006) established a notable relationship, suggesting that higher levels of academic stress were associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing suicidal ideation. Similarly, Singh and Joshi (2018) identified academic stress as a strong predictor of suicidal ideation among university students. Rosiek, Rosiek-Kryssewska, Leksowski, and Leksowski (2015) observed that severe academic stress had substantial adverse effects on mental health, heightening the risk of suicidal thoughts among undergraduate students. Additionally, chronic stressful life events and anxiety were recognised as contributing factors to poor mental health and suicidal ideation among college students, as affirmed by Anastasiades, Kapoor, and Wooten (2016). The studies also found no significant relationship between age, class level, religion, and academic stress among Nigerian and Ukrainian undergraduates, as reported by Banerjee and Chatterjee (2016) and Anastasiades, Kapoor, and Wooten (2016), respectively.

Toero, Nagya, Sawaguchi, Sawaguchi, and Sotonyip (2011) emphasised a strong relationship between the pressure to excel academically and suicidal ideation among

undergraduate students. Akhtar and Alam (2015) illustrated that instances of suicide tended to increase during examination periods, when students faced heightened academic stress. Juon, Nam, and Ensminger (2014) investigated factors influencing suicidal ideation among undergraduates, concluding that those experiencing significant academic stress related to academic performance and higher education were more likely to seriously consider suicidal thoughts compared to peers with lower levels of academic stress.

Akhtar and Alam (2015) examined stress and suicidal thoughts among secondary school students in India, involving 120 students from various secondary examination boards, aged 14 to 18. Their research found no notable gender differences in suicidal ideation but established a significant and positive link between stress levels and the presence of suicidal thoughts. Johnson (2009) explored perceptions of stress among community university students, surveying 88 undergraduates aged 18 to 25, with an average age of 21.50 years. The results indicated that students who reported lower levels of academic stress and had healthier self-assessments tended to experience lower rates of suicidal ideation and encountered fewer stressful life events. Similarly, Gill (2017) explored academic stress levels among 200 students from Ferozepur district, Punjab, finding that students faced high academic stress when striving for perfection and high standards in school, regardless of their gender, place of residence, age, or class levels.

Studies indicate that academic stress among undergraduates is influenced by various factors such as age, gender, class level, and place of residence. Younger students, particularly new ones on campus, often report higher stress levels due to adjustment issues and adapting to new academic demands. In comparison, older students face stress related to graduation and career planning (Adesola, 2022). Female students often report higher levels of academic stress compared to their male counterparts, mainly due to societal expectations and additional responsibilities. Male students also face significant academic pressures, primarily related to performance expectations and career aspirations (Rebecca, 2006). Academic stress increases as students advance in their studies, with senior students experiencing heightened stress due to impending graduation and job market entry (Singh & Singh, 2008). Research suggests that academic stress remains consistently high across all class levels, reflecting the pervasive nature of academic demands in university settings. Students living off-campus often experience higher stress due to additional responsibilities such as commuting and managing household tasks. In contrast, on-campus students benefit from a more structured environment and better access to academic resources and social support, which can alleviate stress. Hence, academic stress is a multifaceted issue affecting undergraduates differently based on individual and contextual factors, highlighting the need for comprehensive support systems (Marin, 2011).

Empirical studies reveal that suicidal ideation among undergraduates is influenced by gender, class level, and place of residence. Male students often show higher rates of suicidal ideation than female students, although some studies find no significant gender differences in causes, suggesting similar stressors for both genders (Adegoke, 2023). Final year students face higher suicidal risks due to graduation and career uncertainties, while new students struggle with adjustment issues. The relationship between class level and suicidal ideation varies, with some research indicating pervasive risks across all years (Bayram and Bilgel, 2008). Place of residence also plays a crucial role, with off-campus students being more prone to suicidal attempts due to isolation and reduced access to resources. On-campus students benefit from closer social networks and easier access to

mental health services, which reduces their risk (Ifeagwasi, 2021).

Several researches have been conducted on issues relating to academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates both within and outside Nigeria. For instance, Rosiek, Rosiek-Kryssewska, Leksowski, and Leksowski (2015) studied chronic stress and suicidal thoughts among medical students; Idowu, Esere, Okunlola and Irulor (2017) investigated cognitive behaviour therapy as a counselling strategy for managing academic stress among adult learners in Nigeria; Olaseni (2018) investigated rumination and academic hardness as predictors of suicidal ideation among Nigerian adolescents; and Adesola (2022) examined the prevalence and prevention of suicidal behaviour among undergraduate students in Oyo State. Previous research has also examined relationships between personality traits, emotional intelligence, drug abuse, and suicidal ideation. However, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there has been no specific study on the relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State, Nigeria. This study aims to contribute to existing knowledge by investigating the relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State.

Aim and Objectives

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to:

- a. Determine the levels of academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State.
- b. Determine to what extent gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study significantly predict academic stress among undergraduates in Oyo State.
- c. Determine to what extent gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study significantly predict suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State.

Research Questions

- (1) What is the level of academic stress among undergraduates in Oyo State?
- (2) What is the level of suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State?

Research Hypotheses

- (1) There is no significant relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State.
- (2) Gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study will not significantly predict academic stress among undergraduates in Oyo State.
- (3) Gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study will not significantly predict suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State.

2. Materials and Methods

Research Design

According to Adeyemi (2023), a research design is a detailed plan or strategy that researchers develop to address their research questions or objectives, guiding every step from data collection to analysis and interpretation. In this study, a correlational research

design was employed because it aimed to investigate the relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study population comprised 102,660 undergraduate students from the Oyo State, Nigeria tertiary institutions. To obtain a representative sample, the researcher employed a multi-stage sampling technique. The total student population in the selected institutions was 60,044. Following the recommendation by Research Advisor (2006), a sample size of 383 respondents was suggested for a population of this size. To account for attrition rate, 10% of the sample size was added, resulting in 420 respondents.

In the first stage, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select one university from each senatorial district in Oyo State, considering their respective populations. The universities chosen for this study were Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, representing Oyo Central Senatorial District; Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, selected from Oyo North Senatorial District; and University of Ibadan, chosen from Oyo South Senatorial District. In the second stage, a proportional sampling technique was used to select respondents from each institution included in the study.

Table 1: Proportional Sample of Undergraduates in the Selected Institutions in Oyo State

S/N	Institution	Type	Targeted Population	Sample
1	University of Ibadan	Federal	24, 576	172
2	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology	State	30, 206	211
3	Ajayi Crowther University	Private	5, 262	37
	Total	Total		60, 044

In the third stage, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select 420 undergraduates using the dip-hat method during the research process. This technique ensured that all respondents had an equal opportunity to be included in the study, without bias. Simple random sampling is a method where every individual or sampling unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected for the desired sample.

Instrumentation

The instruments employed in this study were adapted, with modifications made to all items by the researchers. The Students' Academic Stress Scale, initially developed by Sun, Dunne, Hou, X, and Xu in 2011, and the Suicidal Ideation Scale, developed by Rudd in 1989, were the basis for the questionnaire. Hence, the instrument was titled the "Academic Stress and Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (ASSIQ)". It was divided into three sections: Section A focused on demographic data of the respondents. At the same time, Section B consisted of twenty items designed to assess students' academic stress level. Section C comprised twenty items aimed at measuring the level of suicidal ideation among undergraduates. Sections B and C were structured using a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Psychometric Properties of the Instrument

Validity: To evaluate the instrument's validity, the researchers gave it to two experts from the Department of Psychology, one lecturer from the Department of Sociology, and two

lecturers from the Department of Counsellor Education at the University of Ilorin for content validity analysis. The feedback and suggestions provided by these experts were used to modify certain items in the instrument.

Reliability: The researchers used the test-retest method with 20 students from the Department of Psychology at Lead City University to assess the instrument's reliability. This involved administering the questionnaire twice, with a two-week interval between administrations. The scores obtained from the two administrations were then correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The obtained correlation coefficient for the Academic Stress Scale was 0.79, while for the Suicidal Ideation Scale, it was 0.86, both significant at the 0.05 alpha level.

Procedure for Scoring

The scale used in this study consisted of 80 items, with each section on academic stress and suicidal ideation comprising 20 items (20 items x 4 points = 80 items). The minimum possible score for sections B and C was 20 (20 items x 1 point = 20). The range of scores ranged from the highest possible score of 80 to the lowest possible score of 20, resulting in a range of 60 points. The midpoint of this range was calculated as 30 (60 divided by 2). This midpoint was subtracted from the highest score to establish the cutoff point, resulting in a 50 (80 minus 30) cutoff score. Therefore, percentages were used to measure the levels of academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates. Scores above 50% showed high levels of academic stress and suicidal ideation, while scores below 50% indicated low levels among undergraduates in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis, where percentages were used to assess the levels of academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State. Hypothesis one was tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, while hypotheses two and three were tested using a Correlation Matrix. All statistical tests were conducted at a significance level of 0.05.

3. Result and Discussion

Out of the 420 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 414 were completed accurately and accounted for, constituting the dataset used for this study. The following section presents the results of the data obtained from the respondents in terms of frequency and percentages.

Research Question 1: What is the level of academic stress among undergraduates in Oyo State?

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Level of Academic Stress

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	30	7.2
High	384	92.8
Total	414	100

Table 2 indicated a high level of academic stress among respondents. The result revealed that 30 respondents (7.2%) had low academic stress, while 384 respondents (92.8%)

had high academic stress. This implied that the majority of respondents had a high level of academic stress.

Research Question 2: What is the level of suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State?

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Level of Suicidal Ideation

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	199	48.1
High	215	51.9
Total	414	100
Level	Frequency	Percentage

Table 3 showed a high level of suicidal ideation among respondents. Specifically, 199 respondents (48.1%) had a low level of suicidal ideation, while 215 respondents (51.9%) had a high level of suicidal ideation. This implied that the majority of respondents had a high level of suicidal ideation.

Hypotheses Testing

This study formulated and examined three null hypotheses. These hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Correlation Matrix statistical tools at a significance level 0.05.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State

Table 4: Pearson's "r" Showing the Relationship between the Academic Stress and Suicidal Ideation of the Respondents

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. r-value	p. value
Academic stress	414	63.55	10.86	412	.199*	.000
Suicidal Ideation	414	49.72	12.94			

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 4 revealed that the calculated p-value of 0.00 was less than the 0.05 significance level. The hypothesis was rejected since the calculated p-value was less than the alpha level of significance. This implied that academic stress had a significant relationship with suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State.

Hypothesis Two: Gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study will not significantly predict academic stress among undergraduates in Oyo State.

Table 5: Summary of Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship Between the Independent and Moderating Variables of the Respondents

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Academic Stress	1.000					
Gender	.328*	1.000				

Age	.298*	-.207*	1.000			
Class Level	.228*	-.004	.004	1.000		
Place of residence	.210*	.122*	-.069*	-.303*	1.000	
Course of study	.301*	.202*	-.078*	-.424*	.208*	1.000

Table 5 revealed significant relationship between academic stress and respondents' gender ($r = 0.328$, $P < 0.05$), age ($r = 0.298$, $P < 0.05$), class level ($r = 0.228$, $P < 0.05$), place of residence ($r = 0.210$, $P < 0.05$), and course of study ($r = 0.301$, $P < 0.05$). Invariably, the hypothesis positing that gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study would not significantly predict academic stress among undergraduates in Oyo State was rejected. This implies that gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study have significant predictive power concerning academic stress among undergraduates at Oyo State. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Three: Gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study will not significantly predict suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State

Table 6: Summary of Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship Between the Independent and Moderating Variables of the Respondents

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Suicidal Ideation	1.000					
Gender	.177*	1.000				
Age	.017	-.207*	1.000			
Class Level	.163*	-.004	.004	1.000		
Place of residence	.176*	.122*	-.069*	-.303*	1.000	
Course of study	.047	.202*	-.078*	-.424*	.208*	1.000

Table 6 indicated a significant relationship between suicidal ideation and respondents' gender ($r = 0.177$, $P < 0.05$), class level ($r = 0.163$, $P < 0.05$), and place of residence ($r = 0.176$, $P < 0.05$). However, no significant relationships were observed based on age ($r = 0.017$, $P > 0.05$) and course of study ($r = 0.047$, $P > 0.05$). This implied that the gender, class level, and place of residence of the respondents have significant relationships with suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The findings indicated that a majority of respondents faced a high level of academic stress within their educational institutions. This implied that undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Oyo State had high academic stress. The reason for this finding could be the intense competitive academic environment, where undergraduates feel compelled to outperform their peers, thereby experiencing heightened stress and anxiety. Also, there may be increased expectations from parents, teachers, and peers regarding academic excellence, leading to stress related to grades and performance. These findings align with those of Singh and Joshi (2018), who found that undergraduates commonly experience significant academic stress when they struggle to meet teacher expectations, compete

with peers, manage numerous assignments, feel unable to cover course material, lack sufficient support from parents, and encounter academic setbacks, among other factors.

The findings also showed that a majority of respondents experienced a high level of suicidal ideation within their educational institutions. This implied that undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Oyo State had a high level of suicidal ideation. This finding could be attributed to the intense academic pressure and the expectation to excel in examinations, which may lead to feelings of failure and hopelessness among undergraduates in Oyo State. Also, persistent academic challenges or failures could contribute to feelings of inadequacy and despair, heightening the risk of suicidal ideation. These findings align with those of Chioqueta and Stiles (2011), who noted that undergraduates often experience high levels of suicidal ideation during periods of severe stress and depression in school. High levels of suicidal ideation among undergraduates are considered a significant psychological concern, with detrimental effects on both emotional and physical well-being. Borges and Werlang (2006) similarly found a high prevalence of suicidal ideation among students experiencing stress and depression in school.

Another finding revealed a significant relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State. The reason for this finding might be attributed to the highly competitive educational environment, which could foster constant comparison and a fear of failure, thereby increasing stress levels and the risk of suicidal ideation among undergraduates. Additionally, unrealistic academic expectations set by parents, teachers, or society could create overwhelming pressure and contribute to feelings of worthlessness. This finding is consistent with the research of Singh and Singh (2008), who found a strong correlation between the pressure to excel in university and suicidal ideation among undergraduates. Similarly, Abdollahi, Abu, Yaacob, and Ismail (2014) demonstrated a significant relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among university students, suggesting that students experiencing high levels of academic stress may be more prone to suicidal ideation.

The findings showed that gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study significantly predicted academic stress among undergraduates in Oyo State. It was observed that these variables (gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study) were predictive of academic stress level among undergraduates in Oyo State. This finding might be attributed to societal expectations, varying academic demands, increased responsibilities, and environmental factors, which could lead students to experience higher pressure to excel academically, thereby contributing to increased stress levels. This finding is supported by the research of Singh and Singh (2008), and Olaseni (2018), which highlighted significant predictors of academic stress such as gender, class level, and place of residence. Additionally, Banerjee and Chatterjee (2016) found positive correlations between age and course of study with suicidal ideation among undergraduates, suggesting that each of these moderating variables may indeed relate with academic stress.

The findings also showed that gender, class level, and place of residence significantly predicted suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State. In contrast, age and course of study showed no significant relationship. These variables (gender, class level, and place of residence) could show significant relationships with suicidal ideation due to increased stressors such as societal expectations, academic pressure, and personal challenges. However, age and course of study might negatively relate with suicidal ideation due to factors such as increased resilience and coping skills with age, as well as

potentially less academic pressure or more excellent social support in specific fields of study. This finding aligns with the research of Adegoke (2018), who found significant predictions of suicidal ideation among undergraduates based on age, class level, and gender. Bayram and Bilgel (2008) noted that undergraduates who were dissatisfied with their course of study and place of residence were more likely to experience suicidal ideation compared to those who were satisfied. Undergraduates who feel frustrated with their course of study and place of residence tend to experience higher levels of suicidal ideation.

Implications for School Counselling

These findings have significant implications for preventing and identifying suicidal ideation among undergraduates and addressing academic stress in educational institutions across Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings highlight the importance of establishing effective university counselling services, ensuring students have accessible support and guidance for various challenges. Tertiary institutions in Oyo State should implement early identification and intervention programs aimed at detecting and addressing academic stress and suicidal ideation among students. Additionally, raising awareness about academic stress and equipping students with coping strategies can help mitigate the risk of suicidal ideation and decrease suicide rates among university students. This study provides valuable insights for designing intervention programmes that aim to alleviate the detrimental effects of academic stress leading to suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State universities. The findings guide school administrations in implementing screening measures during admissions and recruitment to identify at-risk students and provide early counselling interventions when needed.

Integrating mental health services within the academic environment ensures students have easy access to counselling and psychological support, facilitated by collaboration between academic advisors and mental health professionals. Implementing psycho-education programmes can inform students about the impact of academic stress on mental health and the signs of suicidal ideation, empowering them to seek help. Establishing crisis intervention protocols allows counsellors to handle acute cases of suicidal ideation and provide immediate support. Creating a supportive, non-judgmental environment within the school, including peer support groups and mentorship programs, encourages students to seek help. Preventive programs to reduce academic stress and promote mental health, such as workshops on time management and resilience building, are essential. Involving parents and other stakeholders, such as teachers and school administrators, in the student's support system enhances the effectiveness of counselling interventions.

Furthermore, the findings indicated significant relationships between gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study with academic stress among undergraduates in Oyo State. Gender, class level, and whether students resided on or off-campus were found to be significantly associated with suicidal ideation among undergraduates. In contrast, age and course of study did not show a significant relationship with suicidal ideation. Based on these findings, counselling implications for schools include the need for gender-specific counselling services to address the unique stressors experienced by male and female students. Targeted interventions should also be developed for students at different class levels to address their academic stressors and mental health needs. Providing support tailored to students' residential status is crucial for recognising and addressing the stressors that on-campus and off-campus

students face. Adapting counselling approaches to students' age groups and adopting a comprehensive counselling approach that considers the interplay between academic stress and the variables is essential.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study concluded that undergraduates in Oyo State experienced high levels of academic stress and suicidal ideation. It was found that there existed a significant relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Oyo State. Moreover, gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study had a significant relationship with academic stress among undergraduates in Oyo State. Specifically, gender, class level, and place of residence had a considerable relationship with suicidal ideation among undergraduates, whereas age and course of study had no significant relationship with suicidal ideation.

Sequel to the findings and discussions from the study; the following recommendations were made:

- Oyo State undergraduates who are overwhelmed by academic stress should be exposed to stress reduction programs such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness, relaxation techniques, time management skills, and group counselling. These programs will help address underlying factors, enabling students to manage their stress effectively and achieve academic success.
- Undergraduates struggling with suicidal ideation should be provided with psychological assessments and school support services, including mental health services, in tertiary institutions in Oyo State.
- Undergraduates experiencing academic stress should seek guidance and counselling services to prevent situations that can lead to suicidal ideation in Oyo State.
- Undergraduates should benefit from guidance and counselling programs designed to help them cope with academic stress, with consideration given to their age, class level, religion, course of study and place of residence. Counsellors can assist in organizing these programs, which can empower students to succeed in their academic pursuits.
- Undergraduates should be supported with comprehensive suicide prevention programs that build resilience, coping skills, and help-seeking behaviors, regardless of age and course of study, and tailored to address the specific needs of different class levels, gender, and place of residence.

References

- Abdollahi, A., Abu T. M, Yaacob S. N. & Ismail S. (2014). Hardiness as a mediator between perceived stress and happiness in Nurses. *Journal of Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing*, 21, 789-796. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jpm.12142>
- Adegoke, A. A. (2023). Prevalence and correlates of suicidal ideation among university students in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Mental Health*, 32(4), 489-498.
- Adeyemi, T.O. (2023). Inferential for social and behavioral research. Ado-Ekiti: Green line publishers.

- Akhtar S, & Alam, M. (2015). Stress and suicidal ideation among school students in India. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, 41(2), 236-241. Retrieved from http://www.researchgate.net/publications/318093163_stres_and_suicidal_ideation_among_school_students
- Anastasiades, M. H., Kapoor, V., & Wooten, H. R. (2016). The relationship between chronic stress, anxiety, and suicidal ideation among undergraduate students. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 23(2), 167-175. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4772232/>
- Adesola, K. J. (2022). Prevalence and prevention of suicidal behaviour among undergraduate students in Oyo State. Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- Borges, V. R., & Werlang, B. S. G. (2006). Estudo de ideação suicida em adolescentes de 15 a 19 anos [Study of suicide ideation in adolescents from 15 to 19 years old]. *Estudos de Psicologia (Natal)*, 11(3), 345-351. Retrieved from <http://www.scrip.org/referencepapers?referenced=2039006>
- Chioqueta, A. P. & Stiles, T. C. (2011). The relationship between psychological buffers, hopelessness and suicidal ideation. *Crisis*, 28(2), 67-73. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2007-12098-003>
- Gill N. K (2017). Impact of academic stress on students of class 11. *Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(36), 7064-7069. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321099752_Impact_of_academic_stress_on_students_class_11
- Idowu, A., Esere, M. O., Okunlola, J. O. & Irulor, B. R. (2017). Cognitive behaviour therapy as a counselling strategy for managing academic stress among adult learners in Nigeria. *Kampala International University Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(2), 83- 90. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/85464562/Cognitive_Behaviour_Therapy_as_a_counselling_strategy_for_managing_academic_stress_among_adult_learners_in_Nigeria
- Ifeagwasi, C. M. (2021). Stress-Illness relationship: Critical factors moderating the link. 109th Inaugural lecture of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Johnson, M. (2009). Community college students' perception of stress. *Journal of Biology of Exercise*, 5(1), 15-28. Retrieved from https://semanticscholar.org/paper/community-college-students%E2%80%99-perception_of_stress_johnson/24ca42948a71369cbfc800b112de838469350043d
- Juon H, Nam J. J, & Ensminger, M. E. (2014). Epidemiology of suicidal behavior among Korean students. *Journal of Child Psychiatry Allied Discipline*, 35, 663 –677.
- Mac George, E.L., Saner, W. & Gillihan, S. J. (2005). Academic stress, supportive communication and health. *Communication Education*, 54, 365-372. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/036334520500442236>
- National Crime Records Bureau (2024). Accidental Deaths and Suicides in Nigeria. Abuja:

Ministry of Women Affairs, Government of Nigeria.

- Pienaar, J., Rothman, S., & Vijver, F. (2022). Exploring the relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation among undergraduates: A qualitative study. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18(3), 321-335.
- Prabhu P, S (2015). A study on academic stress among higher secondary students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 4(10), 63-68. Retrieved from www.ijcrt.org
- Olaseni, J. T. (2018). Rumination and academic hardiness as predictors of suicidal ideation among Nigerian adolescents. *Abnormal and Behavioural Psychology*, 4(1), 1-7. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/33024778_Rumination_and_academic_Hardiness_as_predictors_of_suicidal_ideation_among_Nigerian_Adolescents
- Radcliff, D. D., & Lester, R. B. (2021). Academic stress and suicidal ideation among final year students: The role of perfectionism and social support. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 35(1), 45-57.
- Rudd, M. D. (1989). The prevalence of suicidal ideation among college students. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviour*, 19(2), 173-183.
- Banerjee, N & Chatterjee, I (2016). Academic stress, suicidal ideation & mental well-being among 1st semester & 3rd semester medical, engineering & general stream students. *Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce*, 7(3), 73-80. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/academics-stress%2c-suicidal-ideation%26-mental-among%26-banerjee-chatterjee/c05e046c6f24155f59c38559b9ae1f4963340cf7>
- Rosiek, A., Rosiek-Kryssewska, A., Leksowski, L. & Leksowski, K. (2015). Chronic stress and suicidal thinking among medical students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 13(212), 2-6. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26891311>
- Singh, R. & Joshi, H. L. (2018). Suicidal ideation about depression, life stress and personality among college students. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, 34, 259-265. Retrieved from <https://www.psycnet.apa.org/record/2008-10783-008>
- Singh, A. & Singh, S. (2008). Stress and adjustment among Professional and Non-professional Students. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 17(1), 26-27. Retrieved from https://journals.lww.com/inpj/fulltext/2008/17010/stress_and_adjustment_among_professional_and_non.4.aspx
- Stephenson, H., Pena-Shaff, J. & Quirk, P. (2006). Predictors of college student suicidal ideation: Gender differences. *College Student Journal*, 40, 109-117.
- Sun, J, Dunne, M. P, Hou, X, & Xu, A. (2011). Educational stress among adolescents: Development, validity, and reliability with Chinese students. *Journal of Psycho-educational Assessment*, 29(6), 534-549.
- Toero, K. Nagya, Sawaguchi T, Sawaguchi A, & Sotonyip (2011). Characteristics of suicide among children and adolescents in Budapest. *Pediatrics International*, 43, 368-371.