journals.unizik.edu.ng/jgcs ISSN: 1596-1141

JOURNAL OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING STUDIES

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND SUICIDAL IDEATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELLING

[1]FADIPE, Rasaq Abimbola, [2]ADEFILA, Olufunke Joan (Ph.D.), [3]OLADOSU, Temitayo Deborah (Ph.D.), & [4]ADETOYESE, Esther Olajumoke (Ph.D.)

[1,2,3&4]Department of Educational Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Email: [1]fadiperasaqabimbola@gmail.com; [2]funkeadefila6@gmail.com; [3]temitayosamuel02@gmail.com; & [4]adetoyeseesther@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey of correlational type was adopted for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents from three tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria. The research instrument, titled: "Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (SASIQ)" was used to collect data from the respondents. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State. The findings revealed that substance abuse had no significant relationship with respondent's age, gender, class level, place of residence, and course of study. Findings also showed that suicidal ideation had no significant relationship with respondent's gender, class level, place of residence, age and course of study. It was therefore, recommended that undergraduates struggling with substance abuse should seek counselling and support services from professionals in school as this will help to prevent the incidents that could lead to suicidal ideation in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. Education stakeholders, including school administrators, level advisors, counsellors, parents, and health practitioners, should collaborate to develop comprehensive programmes that focus on prevention, early intervention, and support for undergraduates struggling with substance abuse and suicidal ideation, regardless of age, gender, class level, place of residence and course of study.

Keywords: Substance abuse, Suicidal ideation, Undergraduates, Kwara State

Introduction

Suicidal ideation is a serious psychological, social, and cultural public health challenge, creating an issue among undergraduates across the world. It is a psychological issue that increases the risk of mortality among undergraduates in Nigerian universities, prompting public health concerns in Nigerian educational institutions, organisations, and both public and private sectors. Suicidal ideation is a psychological killer and common among undergraduates diagnosed with anxiety, stress, depression, and personality disorders. These have detrimental effects on their academic performance, personal relationships, and overall wellbeing of undergraduates in school.

Suicidal ideation, a component of suicidal behaviour, refers to thoughts that life lacks meaning and includes plans and desires to end one's life (Oyekola, 2024). This mental process involves considering suicide without intending or planning to follow through. It can be defined as the thoughts, intentions, plans, and imaginations about suicide. Suicidal ideation is a common issue that affects undergraduates regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, race, educational background, or socio-economic status. There are two types of suicidal ideation: passive and active. Passive suicidal ideation occurs when a person desires death but has no concrete plan to commit suicide, while active suicidal ideation involves contemplating suicide with the intent to carry it out, including devising a specific plan (Onoja, Unekwu, Onoja, Onoja, Bebenimibo & Akor, 2023).

Oyekola (2024) noted an upward trend in suicidal ideation among young adults, highlighting it as a leading cause of death among undergraduates less than 30 years. This problem of suicidal ideation is frequently linked to academic failures and mental health challenges. This is concerning, as suicidal ideation is often the initial warning sign leading to more severe suicidal behaviours like attempts or completed suicides. Numerous cases of suicide among undergraduates in Kwara State and the entire nation were reported by the media. For instance, The Punch Newspaper on July 10, 2018, reported that a 30-year-old law student in Abuja committed suicide due to poor grades (Obinna, 2022). In October, 2023, a 20 year old student of the University of Ilorin reportedly committed suicide over a ₦500,000 unpaid loan from an online loan platform. In December, 2023, a 400-level student of the University of Ilorin reportedly committed suicide by hanging himself in his room in the Dagbenu area of Ilorin (Hammed, 2023). In February 2024, another 400-level student of Kwara State University, Malete, in the Moro Local Government, reportedly committed suicide by ingesting insecticide due to poor academic performance. According to This Day Newspaper on December 11, 2024, Nigeria lost about 80 individuals,

mostly undergraduates, to suicide in a year. These incidents have caused significant concern among Nigerians, and the rising suicide rates present a substantial challenge to both the Nigerian government and international organisations.

Numerous factors contribute to suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Nigeria. These include depression, loneliness, forced sexual intercourse (rape), illicit drug use, poor parental relationships, exposure to intimate partner violence, childhood sexual abuse, unemployment, low household income, childlessness, severe stress, and low educational attainment (Burlaka, Hong, Serdiuk & Paschenko, 2020). Additionally, a poor family environment, insufficient parental monitoring, low economic status, and a lack of social competence have been identified as risk factors for suicidal ideation among undergraduates (Ugwuoke, 2016). Dogra, Esan, and Adedokun (2018) found that substance abuse is a significant risk factor, closely linked to suicidal ideation and acting as a strong predictor of suicidal ideation among undergraduates.

Studies by Shekwolo, Agnes, John, and David (2020) and Fayombo and Aremu (2021) have showed a significant relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Nigeria. Substance abuse is characterised by the self-administration of psychoactive substances, such as alcohol or drugs, in a way that deviates from accepted social or medical norms. The World Health Organisation (2022) defined a psychoactive substance as any chemical that alters an individual's physical or mental functions. Ugwuoke (2016) research on the causes of suicide among Nigerian students revealed that substance use is a significant factor contributing to suicidal ideation among undergraduates.

Mugambi, Munene, and Mogute (2020) observed that substance abuse, specifically cannabis, marijuana, hashish, ganja, and charas, contributes to an increased risk of suicidal ideation. According to the World Health Organisation (2022), Nigeria is one of the countries most severely affected by alcohol use globally. Among undergraduates, current smokers have the highest risk of suicidal ideation, followed by past smokers, with non-smokers having the lowest risk. Dogra, Esan, and Adedokun (2018) reported that there were about 3.5 million substance dependents of various kinds, growing at an annual rate of seven percent (7%). It was also found that 71.5% of substance abusers were under the age of 35. Studies have indicated that the most commonly abused substances reported by undergraduates in Nigeria were alcohol, cocaine, and cigarettes. However, in most instances, undergraduates reported using more than one substance (Fayombo & Aremu, 2021). Ugwuoke (2016) observed that the majority of substance users are

multiple users, consuming more than one substance in a day. Most alcohol users (77%) were also using heroin, while others were using cigarettes and cannabis. The study also revealed that about 60 percent of undergraduates reported having HIV infection, 30 percent had tuberculosis and 10 percent had hepatitis C infection. Aluko, Onasoga, Peretomode, Udo and Salau (2020) concluded that heavier drinkers among undergraduates faced significantly more negative consequences than those who consumed lesser amounts.

Undergraduates often abuse various substances for different reasons, disregarding the negative consequences. Those who persistently misuse substances frequently face a range of challenges, including academic difficulties, health-related issues (including mental health concerns), poor peer relationships, and involvement in deviant behaviours (Obinna, 2022). Obinna (2022) warned that individuals showing symptoms such as stress, anxiety, depression, behavioural changes, fatigue, and alterations in appetite due to substance use should seek treatment from medical professionals and mental health counsellors to prevent the development of severe illnesses. Moreover, the misuse of different substances among undergraduates is associated with factors like gender, age, peer pressure, family history of substance abuse, personal gratification, and poor academic performance. Research conducted by Murthy, Manjunatha, Subodh, Chand, and Benegal (2010) on substance abuse and addiction revealed a significant connection between substance abuse and academic achievement. Issues such as declining grades, absenteeism from school/college and other activities, and an increased likelihood of dropping out of school/college are commonly associated with substance abuse among undergraduates.

Research indicates that males in Nigeria often have higher rates of substance abuse compared to females. This higher prevalence of substance abuse among males can lead to increased impulsivity and risky behaviours, potentially raising the risk of suicidal ideation. Darren and Rima (2022) and Obinna (2022) showed that higher rates of substance abuse among males are correlated with increased suicidal ideation. Regarding age, undergraduates are particularly vulnerable to both substance abuse and suicidal ideation. Factors such as peer influence, academic pressure, and emotional instability can heighten these risks. Onomivwori (2024) found that younger adults, particularly undergraduates, are more prone to substance abuse and subsequent suicidal ideation due to developmental challenges and peer influences.

Regarding place of residence, students living on-campus versus off-campus may experience varying levels of social support, access to resources, and peer influences, which can

impact substance use patterns and mental health outcomes, including suicidal ideation. Isogon, Anthony, and Bekomson (2023) showed differences in substance abuse prevalence and suicidal ideation between on-campus and off-campus students, with on-campus students potentially facing higher exposure to social pressures and substance availability. In terms of course of study, certain academic fields may carry higher stress levels or academic pressures, affecting substance abuse behaviours and mental health. For example, students in medical or engineering programmes often encounter greater stress compared to those in humanities or social sciences. Adebayo and Abiona (2019) indicated that courses with high academic demands, such as medicine and engineering, are linked to increased substance abuse and mental health challenges among undergraduates in Nigeria.

Several researches have been conducted related to substance abuse and suicidal ideation in and outside Nigeria. For instance, Mugambi, Munene, and Mogute (2020) worked on psychosocial risk factors for suicidal behaviour among adolescents in Informal Settlements of Nairobi County, Kenya. The study revealed that adolescents who engaged in various forms of substance abuse experienced poor academic performance. Isogon, Anthony, and Bekomson (2023) investigated the relationship between environmental factors and suicide among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study found that undergraduates struggling with drug abuse exhibit poor academic performance and signs of suicidal ideation. Pompili and Serafini (2012) examined the relationship between substance abuse and the risk of suicide among students at Texas University. The study indicated that there was no significant relationship between substance abuse behaviours and suicide among students at Texas University.

However to the best of the researcher's knowledge, some of the previous studies were foreign-based, different in sample size, participants and locale of the study. The need for revalidation of previous findings as well as updating of previous studies serves as part of the reasons for this study. Also, none of the previous researches has explored the relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. This is the gap that this study sought to fill.

Aim and Objectives

The primary aim of this study was to examine the relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to:

a. determine to what extent do gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study significantly predict substance abuse among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.

c. determine to what extent do gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study significantly predict suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.
2. Gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study will not significantly predict substance abuse among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.
3. Gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study will not significantly predict suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The research design selected for this study was a descriptive survey of correlational type. The choice of the correlational survey type was considered suitable for this study as it aimed to establish the relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study's population comprised all undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. According to the National Universities Commission (2024), there were 104,632 undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. The target population for the study comprised 78,877 undergraduates from three tertiary institutions: University of Ilorin (49,153), Kwara State University (25,635), and Al-Hikmah University (4,089). Following the guidelines provided by Research Advisor (2006), a sample size of 381 respondents was recommended, and 5% (5*381/100 =19) was added to account for attrition, resulting in a final sample size of 400 respondents.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select a representative sample. In the first stage, three tertiary institutions were purposively selected based on their population indices (University of Ilorin, Kwara State University and Al-Hikmah University). In the second stage, a proportional sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample of 400 undergraduates from the three universities, considering their varying population sizes. The breakdown of the sample distribution is shown in table 1: University of Ilorin (249 respondents); Kwara State University (130 respondents), and Al-Hikmah University (21 respondents).

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

S/N	Institution	Type	Population	Proportion percentage	Sample
1	University of Ilorin	Federal	49,153	62.30	249
2	Kwara State University	State	25,635	32.50	130
3	Al-Hikmah University	Private	4,089	5.20	21
	Total		**78,877**	**100.00**	**400**

Source: National Universities Commission, 2024

In the third stage, the sample selection was carried out using a simple random sampling technique. This method ensures that each sample has an equal probability of being selected. Simple random sampling is a technique in which every individual or sampling unit in the population has an equal chance of being included in the desired sample. In total, 400 undergraduates were selected for the study.

The data collection tool used to gather information from the participants was a questionnaire type. The instrument was titled the "Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (SASIQ)". The questionnaire consisted of two main sections: the Substance Abuse Scale and the Suicidal Ideation Scale. Section A of the questionnaire focused on demographic data of the respondents. Section B contained items related to substance abuse, while Section C contained items related to suicidal ideation.

The Substance Abuse Scale, consisting of 20 items, was developed by Harvey in 1982 to assess the degree of substance abuse among undergraduates. All items in the instrument were negatively constructed. The instrument was structured with response options including "Very True of Me", "True of Me", "Not True of Me", and "Not Very True of Me". Responses were rated on a 4-point Likert scale: 1 (Very True of Me), 2 (True of Me), 3 (Not True of Me), and 4 (Not True of Me). The original version of the instrument reported a coefficient alpha of 0.66. Therefore, the substance abuse scale was used for the study because it aligned with the intended measurement. The researcher then revised the item contents and assessed the instrument's psychometric properties. To validate the instrument, it was assessed by five lecturers from the Department of Educational Guidance and Counselling and two lecturers from the Department of Behavioural

Sciences at the University of Ilorin. Based on their feedback, the items were adjusted before the final copies were produced. Moreover, the reliability of the instrument was established through a test-retest method conducted over a two-week period. Twenty (20) undergraduates from the Psychology Department at the University of Ibadan, who shared similar characteristics with the target respondents but were not part of the study, participated in the test-retest. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, resulting in a coefficient value of 0.88.

Suicidal ideation Scale (SIS) items were constructed in a negative form. Responses on the scale were assessed using a 4-point Likert-type scale: Strongly Agree = 1, Agree = 2, Disagree = 3, and Strongly Disagree = 4. The instrument's 20 items used an adapted four-point Likert-type response format, ranging from 4 to 1. In its original form, the instrument exhibited a high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.90. The researcher opted to adapt the Suicidal Ideation Scale for the study, as it was aligned with the intended measure. Hence, the instrument's validity was assessed by five lecturers from the Department of Educational Guidance and Counselling and two experts from the Sociology Department at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Following the experts assessment, adjustments were made to the items based on the suggestions provided. Furthermore, the reliability of the instrument was assessed using a test-retest method over a two-week interval, involving twenty (20) undergraduates from the Psychology Department at the University of Ibadan. These twenty undergraduates, who did not participate in the study, shared similar characteristics with the target respondents. The instrument's reliability was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, resulting in a coefficient value of 0.89.

The data collected were analysed using inferential statistics, including the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Correlation matrix. Hypothesis 1 was analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC), while hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested using the Correlation matrix. All hypotheses in the study were tested at a significance level of 0.05.

Results

This part of the study presents the findings along with their respective interpretations. Among the 400 distributed questionnaires, 396 were completed accurately and included in the analysis.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria*

Table 2: Pearson 'r' Showing Relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation among Undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. r - value	p. value
Substance Abuse	396	60.83	3.84			
				394	1.70	.025
Suicidal Ideation	396	60.96	3.72			

*Significant, p<0.05

Table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value was 1.70, corresponding to a p-value of 0.025, which was less than the significance level of 0.05. Since the calculated p-value was below the 0.05 alpha level, it indicated a significant relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. This implied that substance abuse was a significant factor that increases or contributes to the high level of suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: *Gender, age, class level, place of residence and course of study will not significantly predict substance abuse among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria*

Table 3: Summary of Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship Between the Independent and Moderating Variables of the Respondents

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Substance Abuse	1.000					
Gender	.030	1.000				
Age	.001	.093	1.000			
Class level	.003	-.017	.153	1.000		
Place of residence	.040	-.004	.026	-.188	1.000	
Course of study	.037	.070	.244	.220	.025	1.000

Table 3 revealed that substance abuse did not show a significant relationship with the respondent's gender (r=0.030, p>0.05), age (r=0.001, p>0.05p), class level (r=0.003, p>0.05), place of residence (r=0.040, p>0.05), and course of study (r=0.037, p>0.05). This indicated that the gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study of the respondents did not show a significant relationship with substance abuse among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted; substance abuse was not a function of gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study.

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

Table 4: 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	.037	1.000				
Age	.009	.093	1.000			
Class level	.021	-.017	.153	1.000		
Place of residence	.030	-.004	.026	-.188	1.000	
Course of study	.025	.070	.244	.220	.025	1.000

Table 4 revealed that suicidal ideation did not show a significant relationship with the respondent's gender ($r=0.037$, $p>0.05$), age ($r=0.009$, $p>0.05$), class level ($r=0.021$, $p>0.05$), place of residence ($r=0.030$, $p>0.05$), and course of study ($r=0.025$, $p>0.05$). This indicated that the gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study of the respondents did not have a significant relationship with suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted; suicidal ideation was not a function of gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study.

Discussion

The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. This implies that substance abuse escalates the likelihood of suicidal ideation among these students and impacts various dimensions of their well-being, including physical, psychological, emotional, mental, academic, and interpersonal aspects. Shekwolo, Agnes, John, and David (2020) observed that a high level of substance abuse is linked not only to completed suicides and suicide attempts but also to suicidal ideation among youths in Kaduna State. This finding contradicts the study of Pompili and Serafini (2012), which showed that there was no significant relationship between substance abuse and suicide among adolescents. One plausible explanation for these findings is that academic stress

and life transitions can be overwhelming for undergraduates. Some undergraduates may resort to substance abuse as a coping mechanism for stress or anxiety, exacerbating mental health issues, including suicidal ideation.

The findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study of the respondents regarding substance abuse among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings showed that substance abuse has detrimental effects on the health and well-being of undergraduates and is a prevalent issue in tertiary institutions of learning, regardless of age, class level, course of study, place of residence, and gender. Also, the pressure to gain recognition and acceptance from peers increases the vulnerability of undergraduates to substance abuse. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Bob, Kairi, Jie, and Wang (2021) and Darren and Rima (2022), which revealed that age and class level did not have a significant relationship with substance abuse among undergraduates. Similarly, Nwafor, Omaka-Amari, Ochiaka, Afoke, Aleke, and Osman (2021) found no relationship between the gender of students and substance abuse among university students in Ebonyi state, while Burlaka, Hong, Serdiuk, and Paschenko (2020) revealed no significant relationship between the place of residence and substance abuse among undergraduates in Ukraine.

Another finding indicated that gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study of the respondents had no significant relationship with suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. Undergraduates face common stressors related to academic pressures, social interactions, and personal challenges, which could contribute to feelings of distress and potentially lead to suicidal ideation. It was revealed that information on suicide and suicidal ideation is often concealed, and there is a stigma associated with suicide among undergraduates in Nigeria. This finding align with the research of Borges, Walter, and Kessler (2022), who reported no significant relationship between age, place of residence, and suicidal ideation. However, the findings contradicts the study of Mugambi, Munene and Mogute (2020), which showed a significant relationship among age, class level, gender, and suicidal ideation. This reason for this finding could be attributed to the lack of developed coping strategies among undergraduates to deal with suicidal ideation, regardless of age, gender, place of residence, class level, and course of study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, a significant relationship was found between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the gender, age, class level, place of residence, and course of study of the respondents did not indicate a significant relationship concerning substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Nigeria. Hence, early intervention and support services are crucial in preventing substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. Schools need to create mental health awareness campaigns and integrate counselling services into the academic environment to promote early intervention.

Implications of Findings for School Counselling

The findings highlight the importance of addressing substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. Enhancing guidance and counselling services are crucial, drawing on insights from existing literature and discussions. These services should adopt a comprehensive approach, covering developmental, preventive, curative, remedial, and therapeutic strategies. Schools need to ensure that their guidance services are comprehensive enough to address the diverse range of behaviours exhibited by undergraduates. It is essential for school administrators to acknowledge the crucial role of counselling services within the educational environment. Efforts should be directed toward making counselling services easily accessible to assist undergraduates in need of help. Guidance counsellors need to play a vital role in supporting undergraduates vulnerable to substance abuse and suicidal ideation by using various counselling skills and techniques, such as assertiveness training, cognitive restructuring, systematic desensitisation, and contingency contracting. These approaches can significantly impact students' mental health by equipping them with effective coping mechanisms and altering maladaptive thought patterns.

The rising prevalence of substance abuse among undergraduates has contributed to an increase in suicidal ideation. Therefore, it is imperative to implement counselling programmes focused on bolstering protective factors to address substance abuse and suicidal ideation among undergraduates. Counselling initiatives should start with counsellors identifying the signs and symptoms of substance abuse, forming therapeutic alliances, and collaborating with families, schools, and communities to support undergraduates dealing with substance abuse issues and to prevent suicidal ideation. Universities and educational institutions should consider establishing

fully operational counselling departments where students can openly engage with counsellors to discuss various challenges they may be facing. Moreover, raising awareness about the risks associated with substance abuse and offering guidance on overcoming it are crucial measures in reducing the prevalence of suicidal ideation and the increasing number of suicides reported in universities.

The findings would contribute to the professional development of school counsellors and staff in school health facilities by integrating interventions for suicidal ideation into existing programmes such as mental health and substance abuse services, benefiting all undergraduates regardless of age, gender, class level, place of residence, or course of study. It is essential for undergraduates to be well-informed about rehabilitation centers offering free treatment for substance abuse, as well as self-help groups and other supportive services. Providing undergraduates with accurate information about suicidal ideation and taking verbal expressions of such ideation seriously can help identify those in need of support, as these statements may indicate a cry for help rather than attention-seeking behaviour. Addressing suicidal ideation seriously, along with promoting mental health awareness and intervention strategies, can significantly reduce morbidity and mortality associated with suicide attempts across Kwara State and Nigeria as a whole.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that;

1. Undergraduates struggling with substance abuse should seek guidance and counselling services from professionals in school as this will help to prevent the incidents that could lead to suicidal ideation.
2. Undergraduates should be supported with school programmes that include guidance and counselling to prevent substance abuse, regardless of their age, gender, class level, place of residence and course of study.
3. Undergraduates should be educated about their mental health to overcome suicidal ideation in school regardless of their age, gender, class level, place of residence and course of study.
4. Education stakeholders, including school administrators, counsellors, parents, and health practitioners, should collaborate to develop comprehensive programmes that focus on prevention, early intervention, and support for undergraduates struggling with substance

abuse and suicidal ideation, regardless of age, gender, class level, place of residence and course of study.

References

Borges G., Walter, E. E. & Kessler, R. C (2022). Associations of substance use, abuse and dependence with subsequent suicidal behaviour. *American Journal of Epidemiology, 151*(8) 781-789.

Burlaka, V., Hong, J. S., Serdiuk, O, K. & Paschenko, S. (2020). Suicidal behaviours among Ukrainian college students: The role of substance use, religion, and depression. *International Journal Mental Health Addiction, 1*(5), 25-35.

Darren, E. & Rima, T. (2022). The relationship between substance abuse and suicide among adolescents. *Florida Public Health Review, 13*, 55-63.

Fayombo, G.A. & Aremu, S. (2021). Drug education and its effects on the educational performance of some adolescents drug abusers in Ibadan. *The Counsellor, 18*(5), 378-387.

Harvey, S. (1982). *Drug abuse screening test*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.

Hammed, S. (2023). 22-year-old- student commits suicide in Ilorin. Published on December, 11, 2023. Retrieved on January 20, 2025, from https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/11/22/22-year-old-student-commits-suicide-in-ilorin/

Isogon, M. P. Anthony, N. N. & Bekomson, A. N. (2023). Societal and environmental factors impacting on mental health and suicide among learners in Nigeria. *Journal of Environmental and Tourism Education, 6*(2), 62-72.

Mugambi, P., Munene, A. & Mogute, M. (2020). Psychosocial risk factors for suicidal behaviour among adolescents in Informal Settlements of Nairobi County, Kenya. African Research *Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 7*(1), 138-152.

Nwafor, J. N., Omaka-Amari, L. N., Ochiaka, R. E., Afoke, E. N., Aleke, C. O. & Osman, E. M. (2021). Socio-demographic factors influencing the level of drug abuse among undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 12*(01), 378–386

Obinna, O. M. (2022). *Predictors and suicide ideation among university students in Nairobi County, Kenya*. An unpublished M.Sc. dissertation submitted to the Department of Counselling Psychology, Catholic University of Eastern of Africa.

Ohai, C. (2018). *Worries as more Nigerian undergraduates commit suicide*. Published on July, 10, 2018. Retrieved on 24thJuly, 2018from https://punchng.com/worries-as-more-nigerian-undergaduates-commit-suicide

Onoja, B. O., Unekwu, S. E. O., Onoja, P. O., Onoja, N. M., Bebenimibo, P. & Akor, S. E. (2023). Nigerian newspaper coverage of suicide: Assessment of adherence to WHO suicide reporting guidelines. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 65*(5), 579-856.

Oyekola, T. (2024). Kwara State University commits suicide. Published on February 11, 2024. Retrieved on 24 Febuary, 2025 from https://www.google.com/amp/s/punchng.com/kwara-varsity-student-commits-suicide/%3famp

Pompili, M., G. & Serafini, J. (2012). Substance abuse and suicide risk among adolescents at Texas University. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*, *262*(6), 469-485.

Rudd, M. D. (1989). The prevalence of suicidal ideation among college students. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviour*, *19*(2), 173-183.

Shekwolo, D. M., Agnes, O., John, H. D. & David, H. (2020). Relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among youths in Kaduna North, Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Kampala International University Journal of Humanities*, *5*(4), 119-127.

World Health Organisation (2022). *Preventing suicide: a resource for teachers and other school staff*. Geneva: WHO