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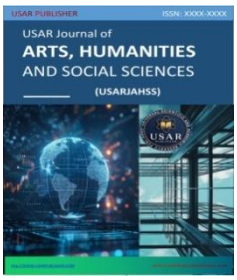

CONSEQUENCES OF COMMITTING SUICIDE AMONGST UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The study examined the consequences of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of all 400 level undergraduates of 2023/2024 academic session in the 10 public universities in South East geopolitical zone. The 400 level students were involved in this study because majority of them were affected with the high rate of suicide. The total population is 93,126. The sample of the study was 600 undergraduates selected through simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two in Sociology of Education; one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability was calculated using Cronbach Alpha for each of the subsections; 0.81, 0.80 and 0.82 were the scores obtained for the subsections. Mean rating was used for data analysis. The findings showed that the psychological effects of suicide have a profound impact on the mental health and well-being of students, leading to increased anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The social effects lead to social isolation, stigma, and a breakdown in social cohesion, while the economic effects result in significant losses in human capital, productivity, and economic growth. It is imperative that the management of public universities in South East, Nigeria, should take proactive steps to address the root causes of suicide among undergraduate students. This includes providing adequate mental health resources, support systems, and counseling services, as well as promoting a culture of care, compassion, and understanding. It was recommended among others that universities should establish and strengthen counseling services and mental health support systems to provide students with access to professional help.

Keywords: ***Suicide, Psychological effects, Social effects, Economic effects***

Introduction

Suicide among undergraduate students in public universities is a growing concern, particularly in South East Nigeria, where the pressures of academic, social, and economic challenges often weigh heavily on young minds. This tragic

act, which represents the ultimate expression of despair, has far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, and society at large. Suicide not only robs individuals of their potential but also leaves a lasting impact on the mental health and well-being of those left behind.

The university environment, while a hub for intellectual and personal growth, can also be a breeding ground for stress, anxiety, and depression (Dweck, 2017). Factors such as academic pressure, financial difficulties, relationship challenges, and inadequate mental health support contribute to the vulnerability of students (Agbo, 2020). Understanding the consequences of suicide is crucial for fostering awareness, implementing preventive measures, and creating a supportive environment that prioritizes the mental health of students (Ajibola & Agunbiade, 2021).

Universities play a vital role in providing accessible and affordable higher education to the masses. Public universities are crucial for promoting social mobility, economic growth, and national development in Nigeria, as they provide opportunities for talented individuals from diverse backgrounds to acquire knowledge and skills. Public universities in Nigeria also foster research, innovation, and community engagement, driving progress and addressing societal challenges. However, some undergraduate students are not able to meet their expectations in school. The thought of not being able to meet expectations, coupled with the fear of failure, can become too much to bear, leading to a tragic and devastating outcome. Unfortunately, some students have become overwhelmed, resulting in a rise in suicidal cases

Suicide is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has been defined in various ways by current authors. Joiner (2014) defines suicide as the intentional act of killing oneself, characterized by a deliberate attempt to end one's own life, emphasizing the intentional and deliberate nature of the act. Similarly, Jamison (2018) describes suicide as a desperate attempt to escape from unbearable emotional pain, hopelessness, and helplessness. In this regard, suicide is defined as a self-destructive behavior that results in death, often driven by a complex interplay of factors including mental health, social, and environmental influences. Suicide among students refers to the intentional act of taking one's own life, often as a result of overwhelming emotional pain, distress, or hopelessness. It is a tragic and devastating outcome that occurs when students feel unable to cope with the pressures and challenges of academic life, social relationships, or personal struggles. For students, suicide may be seen as a desperate attempt to escape from feelings of failure, rejection, or isolation. It could be a cry for help, a plea for relief from the unbearable weight of their emotions.

Nigerian Students abroad often find themselves in a whirlwind of new experiences, navigating unfamiliar cultures, languages, and educational systems. For Nigerian students, the allure of foreign university education has become a siren's call, beckoning them to sell their possessions, take loans, and leave their homeland in pursuit of knowledge. The perception that foreign education is superior to Nigeria's has become a driving force, fueled by the promise of quality education, global recognition, and better career prospects. Nigerian students believe that foreign institutions offer a more comprehensive and advanced learning experience, with curricula that emphasize

critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills. In contrast, Nigeria's curriculum is often seen as theoretical and outdated, failing to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in the global job market. Foreign curricula, on the other hand, are designed to evolve rapidly, incorporating new technologies, research, and industry trends. They prioritize hands-on experience, internships, and project-based learning, giving students a tangible edge in the workforce. Moreover, foreign education places a strong emphasis on soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are essential for success in today's globalized world. Assessment methods are also more diverse, including presentations, group work, and case studies, which help students to develop a more holistic understanding of their subjects. The differences in curriculum are stark, with foreign institutions encouraging interdisciplinary approaches, collaboration, and innovation. Nigerian students abroad are exposed to a more dynamic learning environment, with access to advanced facilities, experienced lecturers, and research opportunities. This, coupled with the prestige and recognition that comes with a foreign degree, makes the allure of studying abroad almost irresistible. The pressure to succeed in a foreign educational system, coupled with the weight of financial sacrifices made to get there, can become a crushing burden for some Nigerian students. The stress of navigating a new culture, language, and academic environment can be overwhelming, leading to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression. As the expectations of family, friends, and society back home mount, the fear of failure can become suffocating. The thought of returning to Nigeria empty-handed, with no degree and no prospects, can be a daunting prospect.

Again, the shame and disappointment of not meeting expectations by students in Nigeria could lead to a sense of hopelessness, causing some of these students to feel like they have no other option but to end their lives. The pressure to excel academically, combined with the struggle to adapt to a new environment, can lead to a downward spiral of mental health issues. The lack of support systems, cultural differences, and language barriers can exacerbate these issues, making it difficult for students to seek help. In this state of despair, some students may see suicide as the only way to escape the pain, shame, and disappointment.. Perhaps this was why Oyekan (2022), posited that the pressures of academic expectations, financial struggles, and social demands have created a perfect storm that is driving some students to take their own lives. The alarming rate of student suicides in Nigerian universities highlights the need for urgent attention to their mental health and well-being.

In Nigeria, undergraduates employ various methods of suicide, often influenced by accessibility and situational pressures. Common modes include hanging, poisoning with chemicals or pesticides, and overdosing on medications (Onu et al., 2021). Drowning in water bodies and self-inflicted injuries, such as cutting, are also reported. The choice of method often reflects underlying distress, cultural context, and availability of means. Addressing these patterns requires accessible mental health support, awareness campaigns, and stronger community interventions The types of suicide among students are broadly categorized into several distinct groups, each with its unique set of

circumstances and motivations (Iweama et al., 2021). Academic-related suicide is one of the most prevalent types, often resulting from the intense pressure to perform well academically. The fear of failure, disappointment, and the stigma associated with not meeting expectations become overwhelming, leading some students to take their own lives. Depression-related suicide is another significant category, frequently linked to untreated or undertreated mental health conditions. The lack of adequate mental health resources and support systems on campus exacerbate this issue, leaving students feeling isolated and without hope. Anxiety-related suicide is also a growing concern, as students struggle to cope with the demands of university life. The constant stress and pressure to succeed create a perfect storm of emotional distress, leading some students to feel like they have no other option but to end their lives. Substance abuse-related suicide is another type, often linked to the use of drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism for emotional pain. This leads to a downward spiral of addiction, further exacerbating mental health issues and increasing the risk of suicide. Interpersonal relationship-related suicide is a type that stems from conflicts or problems with friends, family, or romantic partners. The breakdown of these relationships leads to feelings of loneliness, rejection, and despair, increasing the risk of suicide. Financial stress-related suicide is a harsh reality for many university students in Nigeria, who struggle to make ends meet. The pressure to provide for oneself and one's family become overwhelming, leading some students to feel like they have no other option but to take their own lives.

Cultural or societal pressure-related suicide is a type that is deeply rooted in the societal expectations placed on university students. The pressure to conform to certain norms or expectations leads to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and despair, increasing the risk of suicide. Mental health-related suicide is a broad category that encompasses a range of mental health conditions; including bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The lack of adequate mental health resources and support systems on campus exacerbate these conditions, leading to an increased risk of suicide. Trauma-related suicide is a type that stems from past traumatic experiences, such as physical or sexual abuse, loss of a loved one, or witnessing violence. These experiences lead to long-term emotional distress, increasing the risk of suicide. Impulsive suicide is a type that results from impulsive decisions or actions, often made in the heat of the moment. This can be triggered by a range of factors, including emotional distress, substance abuse, or a sudden crisis.

The rate of students committing suicide globally is a growing concern that has sparked widespread alarm. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2020), suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds worldwide, accounting for approximately 800,000 deaths annually. This trend is particularly disturbing among students, who are vulnerable to various stressors and pressures that lead to suicidal ideation. Approximately 1 in 5 students reported suicidal ideation, with higher rates among females and LGBTQ+ individuals. In the United Kingdom 1 in 10 students had attempted suicide with academic pressure being a significant contributing factor (Samaritans, 2019). In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2019) reported a 56% increase in suicide rates among 10-24-year-olds between 2013 and 2023. The

rate of student suicides in Africa is a growing concern that has sparked widespread alarm (WHO, 2020). Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds globally, and Africa is no exception. In Nigeria, 1 in 10 students had attempted suicide. The rate of student suicides in Nigerian public universities is a growing concern that has sparked widespread alarm. According to Kola (2020), approximately 1 in 10 students in Nigerian public universities have attempted suicide, with higher rates among females and students from low-income backgrounds.

The high rate of suicide among undergraduates in Nigerian universities is a complex issue influenced by various factors. These factors could be broadly categorized into academic, socio-economic, and mental health-related factors. Academic factors, such as academic pressure and stress, play a significant role in the high rate of suicide among undergraduates in Nigeria. As noted by Ogunsemi (2020), the pressure to excel academically lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness, which ultimately result in suicidal behavior. Socio-economic factors, including poverty and financial difficulties, also contribute to the high rate of suicide among undergraduates in Nigeria. This is because financial stress exacerbates mental health issues, making students more vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Mental health-related factors, such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse, are also significant contributors to the high rate of suicide among undergraduates in Nigeria. This is because the stigma associated with mental illness in Nigerian culture prevents students from seeking help, leading to untreated mental health issues that ultimately result in suicidal behavior. Thus, the high rate of suicide among undergraduates in Nigerian universities is influenced by a complex interplay of academic, socio-economic, and mental health-related factors. Furthermore, lack of mental health resources and support services in Nigerian universities exacerbates the problem. Suicide among students is often associated with underlying mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. These conditions can impair judgment and create a sense of hopelessness, leading individuals to perceive suicide as the only viable escape from their struggles. Addressing these mental health issues is crucial in preventing such tragic outcomes (Ezeonwumelu et al., 2024; Ezeonwumelu et al., 2022). The import of suicide among students also could be understood as a symptom of a broader societal issue. It can be a reflection of the intense pressure to succeed, the stigma surrounding mental illness, and the lack of support systems for students struggling with their emotional well-being. In this sense, suicide among students is not just an individual tragedy, but also a collective failure to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students to thrive. Many universities lack qualified counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists, making it difficult for students to access help when they need it. As noted by Oyekan (2020), the ratio of mental health professionals to students in Nigerian universities is alarmingly low, making it challenging to provide adequate support to students struggling with mental health issues. Additionally, the cultural stigma associated with mental illness in Nigeria prevents students from seeking help. Many students fear being labeled as "mad" or "crazy" if they seek help for mental health issues, leading to untreated mental health problems that ultimately result in suicidal behavior.

The effects of students committing suicide in Nigerian universities are far-reaching and devastating, affecting not only the individuals and their families but also the broader university community. Student suicides also have a significant impact on the families of the deceased. The loss of a child could be devastating for parents, leading to feelings of guilt, shame, and regret. The family may also experience financial hardship, as they struggle to cope with the loss of a loved one. The loss of a young life represents a significant loss of human capital, with long-term consequences for economic growth and development. Students who commit suicide are often in their prime, with their most productive years ahead of them. Their untimely death means that their potential contributions to the economy, in terms of innovation, entrepreneurship, and productivity, are lost forever. The economic effects of student suicide have a ripple effect, impacting families and communities. The loss of a child or sibling lead to a decline in family income, as well as increased expenditure on healthcare, counseling, and other support services. This further exacerbates poverty and economic hardship, particularly in low-income households.

Student suicides also have a negative impact on the university's reputation and image. A university's reputation is built on its ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment, and a student suicide damages that reputation. This leads to a decline in enrollment, funding, and academic programs, ultimately affecting the university's ability to provide quality education. Furthermore, student suicide also has a significant impact on the education sector, leading to a decline in enrollment and retention rates. When students die, their peers may become disillusioned and disengaged, leading to a decrease in academic performance and achievement. This has long-term consequences for the quality of education and the competitiveness of the workforce. The effects of student suicides in Nigerian universities could be broadly categorized into emotional, social, academic, and economic effects. Emotionally, the loss of a student to suicide has a profound impact on their peers, leading to feelings of shock, grief, guilt, and trauma (Kola, 2020). The emotional impact of student suicides also affects the mental health and well-being of other students, leading to increased stress, anxiety, and depression. The psychological effects of students committing suicide in Nigerian universities are profound and far-reaching, leaving a trail of devastation and trauma in its wake. The loss of a young life, filled with promise and potential, sends shockwaves through the academic community, leaving students, faculty, and staff reeling in grief and despair. The incident triggers a range of emotions, from denial and anger to sadness and guilt, as those affected struggle to come to terms with the tragedy. Surviving students may experience anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as they grapple with the reality of their own mortality and the fragility of life. The suicide of a peer also lead to a sense of survivor's guilt, as students wonder if they could have done something to prevent the tragedy. This manifests as self-blame, self-doubt, and a deep sense of regret, further exacerbating the psychological distress. Moreover, the incident creates a ripple effect, impacting the mental health and well-being of the entire university community. It leads to a heightened sense of vulnerability, as students and staff alike begin to question the safety and support systems in place. The psychological effects also

extend beyond the university walls, affecting families and loved ones who are left to pick up the pieces and make sense of the tragedy. The loss of a child or sibling is particularly devastating, leading to a prolonged and intense grieving process.

Socially, student suicides lead to social isolation and stigma for the families and friends of the deceased. It appears that the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide in Nigerian culture prevent students from seeking help and also affect the social relationships of those affected by suicide. Academically, student suicides may have a significant impact on the academic performance of other students, leading to decreased productivity, absenteeism, and dropout rates (Ogunsemi, 2020). The academic effects of student suicides also affect the reputation of the university, leading to decreased enrollment and funding. The loss of a young life sends shockwaves through the university, creates a sense of collective grief and trauma. Students, faculty, and staff are left to grapple with the reality of their own mortality, leading to anxiety and fear. This lead to a breakdown in social cohesion, as individuals becomes increasingly withdrawn and isolated. Moreover, the suicide of a student leads to a sense of guilt and responsibility among peers and educators. Questions arise about whether more could have been done to prevent the tragedy, leading to a culture of blame and recrimination. This further exacerbates social tensions, creating divisions and conflicts within the university community. Furthermore, the social effects of student suicides extend beyond the university walls, impacting families and communities. The loss of a child or sibling is particularly devastating, leading to a prolonged and intense grieving process. This also leads to social isolation, as families struggle to come to terms with their loss and find support. In addition, student suicide has a profound impact on the academic environment, leading to a decline in morale and motivation. Students may become disengaged and disconnected from their studies, leading to a decrease in academic performance and achievement. This has long-term consequences for individuals and society, as a whole. The social effects of student suicide also perpetuate a culture of silence and stigma around mental health issues. Fear of being ostracized or judged prevents students from seeking help, leading to further suffering and distress. The social effects of student suicide also highlight systemic failures and inadequacies within Nigerian universities. Inadequate mental health resources, poor support systems, and a lack of awareness and education around mental health issues all contribute to a culture of neglect and indifference.

Economically, student suicides have a significant impact on the economy, leading to loss of productivity, medical expenses, and funeral costs. As argued by Gureje (2019), the economic effects of student suicides also affect the families of the deceased, leading to financial hardship and poverty. Moreover, the effects of student suicides in Nigerian universities also have a ripple effect on the community at large. As noted by Oyekan (2020), the loss of a young life has a profound impact on the community, leading to feelings of sadness, grief, and despair. The community may also experience a sense of helplessness and frustration, wondering how such a tragedy could have occurred. In addition, the economic effects of student suicide also impact the healthcare sector, leading to increased expenditure on mental health services and support. The cost of providing counseling, therapy, and other interventions is significant,

placing a strain on already limited resources. Student suicide also has a negative impact on foreign investment and economic development. When students die, it creates a negative perception of the country's education system and its ability to protect and support its young people. This deters' foreign investor and undermine economic growth and development. The economic effects of student suicide also highlight systemic failures and inadequacies within Nigerian universities. Inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and a lack of resources all contribute to a culture of neglect and indifference.

The rate of committing of suicide among university students in South East is a pressing concern that warrants immediate attention. In the recent past, there has been a disturbing trend of students taking their own lives, leaving families, friends, and the academic community in shock and grief. The rate of suicide among university students in the zone has been on the increase, with several cases recorded in the past few years. The victims often leave behind cryptic messages or notes, hinting at the emotional turmoil they struggled with in silence. It demands that people listen to their stories, acknowledge their struggles, and work together to create a culture of care, empathy, and understanding. Based on the foregoing, it becomes needful to examine the consequences of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceived psychological effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria?
2. What are the perceived social effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria?
3. What are the perceived economic effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Methods

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all 400 level undergraduates of 2023/2024 academic session in the 10 public universities in South East geopolitical zone. The 400 level students were involved in this study because majority of them were affected with the high rate of suicide. The total population is 93,126. The sample of the study was 600 undergraduates. In composing the sample, Simple random sampling technique was used to select two universities which include Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and University of Nigeria Nsukka. Two faculties in each university were sampled in each of the universities using simple random sampling technique, in each of faculties, three departments were also sampled using simple random sampling. In each of the departments 100 students were sampled amounting to 600 undergraduates. A structured questionnaire titled (CCSAUS) was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two in the area of sociology of education and the other in measurement and evaluation, all in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To establish the reliability of the

instrument, trial testing method was used on 50 undergraduates of Lagos State University outside the study area. The reliability was calculated using Cronbach Alpha for each of the subsections. At the end of the analysis, the scores obtained were 0.81, 0.80 and 0.82 respectively for the items in the three clusters of the instrument. The results showed high reliability of the instrument. The instrument has three parts, A, B and C. Part A sought information on the respondents. Part B sought information required to answer the research questions. It has 1, 2 & 3 and these were concerned with information regarding research questions one two and three. Part A contains 10 items, part B contains four items while part B also contains 8 items, making a total of 28 items. The four point response mode of strongly Agreed (SA = 4 points), Agree (A = 3 points), Disagree (D = 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1 point) was adopted in the study. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of 10 research assistants, who were paired for each of the 2 faculties. All copies of the questionnaire distributed were collected back because of on the spot delivery method and collection technique applied. Mean was used to analyze the data. The four point response mode used, informed the use of mean 2.50 as the cut-off point for decision. The decision rule was that mean scores of items of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreed while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as disagreed.

Results

Research question one:

What are the perceived psychological effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on the psychological effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	_X	SD	DECISION
1.	Students' suicide leads to feelings of guilt among survivors.	3.09	0.65	Agreed
2.	Students' suicide leads to increased PTSD among peers	3.11	0.71	Agreed
3.	Students' suicide leads to complicated grief among family members.	3.15	1.70	Agreed
4.	Students' suicide leads to low academic performance.	3.15	1.40	Agreed
5.	Students' suicide leads to increased substance abuse.	3.17	1.22	Agreed
6.	Students' suicide leads to emotional distress	3.05	1.03	Agreed
7.	Students suicide leads to shock among students,	3.19	0.75	Agreed
8.	Students' suicide leads to anger among students.	2.89	1.01	Agreed

9.	Students suicide leads to risky behavior among students	3.01	0.63	Agreed
10.	Students' suicide leads to self-blame among survivors.	3.12	0.98	Agreed
	Cluster mean	**3.03**		**Agreed**

In Table 1, all the items including the mean of means obtained mean rating (3.03) above the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating that all the respondents agreed that the items in Table 1 are the psychological effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria

Research Question two:

What are the perceived social effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean rating of respondents on social effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	_X	SD	DECISION
1.	Students' suicide leads to ostracism of families and friends.	3.12	1.56	Agreed
2.	Students' suicide leads to social stigma among friends.	3.16	1.45	Agreed
3.	Students' suicide leads to breakdown in social cohesion and community relationships.	3.32	1.89	Agreed
4.	Students' suicide leads to loss of social support among student survivors.	3.02	1.76	Agreed
5.	Students' suicide leads to decreased sense of belonging among students.	3.16	0.89	Agreed
6.	Students' suicide leads to increased social withdrawal among peers.	3.14	0.97	Agreed
7.	It leads to loss of safety among students	3.02	1.01	Agreed
8.	Students' suicide leads to difficulty in maintaining relationships among survivors.	3.16	1.08	Agreed
9.	Students' suicide leads to high intake of substance to calm the situation amongst students	3.12	1.06	Agreed
10.	Students' suicide leads to loss of hope	3.09	0.99	Agreed
	Cluster mean	**3.14**		**Agreed**

In Table 2, all the items including the mean of means obtained mean rating (3.14) above the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating that all the respondents agreed that the items in Table 2 are the opinions of the respondents on the social effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria

Research Question 3:

What are the perceived economic effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean rating of respondents on the economic effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	_X	SD	DECISION
1.	Students suicide result in a significant loss of productivity	3.07	1.54	Agreed
2.	Students suicide increases the cost healthcare costs	3.36	1.23	Agreed
3.	Student suicide result in the loss of human capital	3.44	1.31	Agreed
4.	Students suicide result in a hard economic burden on families	3.28	1.58	Agreed
5.	Students suicide result in decreased economic growth	2.64	0.99	Agreed
6.	Students suicide increases financial costs for mental health services	3.30	1.01	Agreed
7.	Students suicide result in the loss of innovation and entrepreneurship	3.14	1.54	Agreed
8.	Students suicide result in decreased economic competitiveness because of loss of skilled workforce	2.99	1.02	Agreed
	Cluster Mean	**3.15**		**Agreed**

The content of table 3 indicated that all items are rated above the acceptable mean of 2.50. In addition, the cluster mean (3.15) also indicated agreed. This result therefore shows that all the items are the economic effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Discussion

The findings on the perspective psychological effects of suicide, in the study, showed that students' suicide leads to feelings of guilt among survivors', it leads to complicated grief and bereavement among family members. This is supported by the work of Ola (2020), who agreed that exposure to suicide lead to increased symptoms of grief and bereavement among family of the deceased. Findings showed that students' suicide leads to low academic performance, increased dropout rates, increased substance abuse and risky behaviors among peers. In that vein, Igbo (2019) supported that suicide also lead to low academic performance. The findings also showed that emotional distress, including shock, denial, anger, increased dropout rates, low academic performance, substance abuse and emotional distress. To support these findings, Nwachukwu (2018) found that suicide lead to complicated grief anger, low academic performance and high rate of school dropout.

The findings of the study also showed that students' suicide leads to ostracism of families and friends, social stigma among friends, social cohesion and community relationships. . This is supported by the work of Chukwu (2017), who supported that suicide lead to social cohesion and stigma. It was also deduced that students' suicide leads to loss of social support among student survivors, decreased sense of belonging among students, increased social withdrawal among peers, loss of safety and security among students. This is in line with the findings by Okoro (2020) who supported that suicide also lead to a breakdown in social cohesion and community relationships. Furthermore, Nwosu (2019) noted that suicide leads to loss of social support, increased social withdrawal among peers, loss of safety and security among students.

Finally, the findings on the perceived economic effects of the suicide showed that students' suicide result in a significant loss of productivity and healthcare costs. This is supported by Okoro (2020), who estimated that suicide results in significant loss of productivity in Nigeria. Findings showed that students suicide result in the loss of human capital, hard economic burden on families, decreased economic growth and increased economic costs for mental health services because of increased hospitalization costs. This result is in consonance with the findings by World Health Organization (2019) that suicide results in significant economic losses globally because it leads to decreased economic growth. Furthermore, Nwachukwu (2018) found that suicide leads to loss of innovation and economic growth. Thus, economic effects of committing suicide amongst undergraduate students in public universities in South East Nigeria are alarming and calls for urgent action.

Conclusion

The consequences of committing suicide among undergraduate students in public universities in South East, Nigeria, require a clarion call for urgent attention and action. The devastating consequences of suicide on individuals, families, and communities are far-reaching and long-lasting, leaving behind a trail of grief, trauma, and devastation. The psychological effects of suicide have a profound impact on the mental health and well-being of students, leading to increased anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The social effects' results to social isolation, stigma, and a breakdown in social cohesion, while the economic effects result in significant losses in human capital, productivity, and economic growth. It is imperative that the management of public universities in South East, Nigeria, should take proactive steps to address the root causes of suicide among undergraduate students. This includes providing adequate mental health resources, support systems, and counseling services, as well as promoting a culture of care, compassion, and understanding. The prevention of suicide among undergraduate students in public universities in South East Nigeria, calls for a collective effort and a commitment to prioritizing the well-being and safety of our young people. By working together, the society will reduce the incidence of suicide and create a brighter and, more hopeful future for generations to come.

Implications of the Study

In the educational sector, the loss of young and promising minds to suicide leads to a decline in academic performance, reduced enrollment, and a shortage of skilled

professionals in various fields. This has a ripple effect, impacting the quality of education and the competitiveness of the workforce. Moreover, the emotional toll of suicide on peers and educators leads to a decline in morale, motivation, and overall well-being, creating a toxic learning environment. This further exacerbates the mental health crisis, perpetuating a cycle of suffering and despair. In the society, the consequences of suicide are equally dire. The loss of a young life has a profound impact on families, communities, and the broader social fabric. It leads to social isolation, stigma, and a breakdown in social cohesion, undermining the very foundations of society. The economic costs of suicide cannot be overstated. The loss of human capital, productivity, and innovation has long-term consequences for economic growth and development, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. The effects of suicide on educational and societal development serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need for collective action. The government and all stakeholders must work together to create a supportive, inclusive, and compassionate environment that values the well-being and safety of all individuals, particularly vulnerable populations like undergraduate students. By doing so, the society will help prevent the tragic loss of young lives and promote a brighter, more hopeful future for generations to come.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Universities should establish and strengthen counseling services and mental health support systems to provide students with access to professional help.
2. Universities should develop and implement suicide prevention strategies, including crisis intervention and prevention support.
3. Universities should foster a culture of care, compassion, and understanding, promoting open conversations about mental health and reducing stigma.
4. Educators and staff should receive training on mental health awareness, identification, and response to support students in distress.
5. Students should be encouraged to prioritize self-care, engage in stress-reducing activities, and seek help when needed.
6. Families and communities should be involved in supporting students' mental health through education and awareness programs.
7. Students should pay more attention to their studies and stop going to lecturers for sorting.

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