

Knowledge, Attitude, and Perception of Depression as a Predictor of Suicidal Ideation Among Undergraduate Students In Private University

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Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between knowledge, attitude, and perception of depression and its potential role as a predictor of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students at Babcock University. Suicide rates among young adults have been a growing concern, and understanding the factors contributing to suicidal ideation is crucial for developing effective prevention strategies. The study employs a quantitative research design and collects data through a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of undergraduate students. The questionnaire assesses participants' knowledge of depression, attitudes toward mental health, perception of depression, and the presence of suicidal ideation. The findings revealed that; Undergraduate students have positive knowledge of depression as a predictor of suicidal ideation with an average of 60.7% which is below expectation. There is a negative level of attitude towards depression as a predictor of suicidal ideation among the students with an average of 48%. There is a positive perception of undergraduate students about depression as a predictor of suicidal ideation with an average of 75.1%. There is a significant and positive relationship between depression and suicidal ideation with an average of 68.5%.

Moreover, individuals with lower levels of knowledge, negative attitudes, and misconceptions about depression are more likely to experience suicidal ideation. The study highlights the importance of targeted educational programs that enhance mental health literacy, promote positive attitudes toward mental health, and challenge misconceptions surrounding depression. Implementation of such interventions can potentially reduce the prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students and foster a more supportive campus environment. Further research is warranted to explore additional factors that contribute to suicidal ideation and to validate the effectiveness of targeted interventions in reducing the risk of suicide among young adults.

Keywords: knowledge, attitude, perception, depression, predictor, suicidal ideation, undergraduate students, Babcock University, mental health, stigma, education, intervention, campus environment.

Introduction

Depression and suicidal ideation pose significant challenges to the well-being and academic performance of undergraduate students. It is crucial to understand the factors that contribute to suicidal ideation in this population in order to develop effective prevention strategies. This section provides a background on depression, suicidal ideation, and the role of knowledge, attitude, and perception in predicting suicidal ideation among undergraduate students.

Depression is a common mental health disorder characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest in activities. It affects a substantial number of individuals worldwide, including young adults (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The prevalence of depression among undergraduate students is a growing concern, as studies have reported higher rates of depression in this population compared to the general population (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010; Ibrahim et al., 2013).

Suicidal ideation, which refers to thoughts or contemplation of suicide, is a critical concern associated with depression. The presence of suicidal ideation signifies an increased risk of suicide attempts and completion (Wilcox et al., 2010). Studies have indicated a higher prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students compared to other age groups (Drum et al., 2009; Hunt et al., 2017). Understanding the factors that contribute to suicidal ideation is crucial for effective prevention and intervention efforts.

Knowledge, attitude, and perception play significant roles in shaping individuals' understanding and response to mental health issues, including depression. Limited knowledge about depression can contribute to misunderstandings, stigmatization, and delays in seeking help (Ssebunnya et al., 2009). Negative attitudes and misconceptions about mental health can further perpetuate stigma and prevent individuals from seeking appropriate support (Clement et al., 2015). Additionally, individuals' perception of depression and its severity can influence their likelihood of experiencing suicidal ideation (Liu et al., 2020).

Depression among undergraduate students may be a collection of different things. It is not easy to determine the specific causes of their depression although it is highly prevalent across the world. Undergraduate students are a special group of individuals that are enduring a critical transitory period from adolescence to adulthood, one of the most stressful times in a person's life. Such students are prey to a number of concerns including adjusting in school i.e., maintaining good academic grades, homesickness, and financial challenge (Wanyoike, 2014). While a review of theoretical and empirical works shows that researches on depression and its effects on Nigerian students are common, investigations on depression and its effect on suicidality in Nigerian students are, however, not that common (Oladele, & Oladele, 2016).

As such, depression and suicidal ideation in Nigerian students need to be diagnosed to help prevent and also treat students who are already diagnosed. According to WHO's report, "Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death in 15–29-year-olds", looking at the age range, it's easy to identify that it is in the ideal age range of undergraduate students. This further emphasizes Depression and Suicidal Ideation as major problems among undergraduate students.

Given the paucity of research specifically focusing on the knowledge, attitude, and perception of depression as predictors of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students at Babcock University, this study aims to bridge this gap in the literature. By examining the relationships between these variables, valuable insights can be gained to inform targeted interventions and support systems to mitigate the risk of suicidal ideation and promote mental well-being among undergraduate students.

Depression and suicidal ideation are prevalent mental health concerns among undergraduate students, impacting their overall well-being and academic performance. Understanding the relationship between knowledge, attitude, perception of depression, and their potential role as predictors of suicidal ideation is vital for developing effective interventions. This literature review provides an overview of relevant studies examining these factors among undergraduate students.

Knowledge of depression among undergraduate students has been found to be limited. Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) found that college students had low mental health literacy, including limited knowledge about depression symptoms and available treatment options. Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2013) reported a lack of awareness among university students regarding the signs and symptoms of depression. These findings suggest the need for educational programs that enhance knowledge about depression and its associated risks.

Attitudes toward mental health and depression among undergraduate students can significantly influence help-seeking behaviors and support systems. Stigma and negative attitudes toward mental health have been identified as barriers to seeking help among college students (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). A study by Clement et al. (2015) highlighted the impact of mental health-related stigma on help-seeking, emphasizing the need to address negative attitudes and promote a supportive environment for individuals experiencing depression.

Perception of depression, including its severity and impact, can affect the identification and management of the condition. Liu et al. (2020) found that individuals with a more pessimistic perception of depression were more likely to experience suicidal ideation. Perception can be influenced by cultural factors, personal experiences, and societal norms, emphasizing the importance of understanding individual perspectives when addressing mental health concerns.

Suicidal ideation is a significant risk associated with depression among undergraduate students. Drum et al. (2009) reported a high prevalence of suicidal crises among college students, emphasizing the need for early identification and prevention strategies. Hunt et al. (2017) found that undergraduate students had higher rates of suicidal ideation compared to other age groups. The presence of suicidal ideation indicates an increased risk for suicide attempts and completion, highlighting the urgency to identify contributing factors.

The present study explores the theoretical frameworks that underpin the relationship between knowledge, attitude, perception of depression, and their potential role as predictors of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students. Understanding the theoretical foundations provides a comprehensive framework for interpreting the findings and identifying potential avenues for intervention and support.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) posits that individuals' behaviors are influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of this study, attitudes towards depression and mental health, subjective norms (perceived social pressures), and perceived control over help-seeking behaviors can influence students' willingness to seek support and play a crucial role in predicting suicidal ideation.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT): The Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between personal factors, environmental factors, and behaviors. In relation to this study, SCT suggests that students' knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of depression can be shaped by their past experiences, social influences, and cognitive processes. These factors, in turn, can influence their risk of developing suicidal ideation.

Cognitive Appraisal Theory: Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991) posits that individuals' emotional and behavioral responses are determined by their appraisal of a situation or event. In the context of depression and suicidal ideation, students' perception and appraisal of depression as a distressing condition, their evaluation of available coping resources, and their belief in the controllability of the situation can impact their risk of developing suicidal ideation.

Theory of Suicidal Behavior: The Theory of Suicidal Behavior (Joiner, 2005) proposes that an individual's acquired capability for suicide, perceived burdensomeness, and thwarted belongingness contribute to the development of suicidal ideation and subsequent engagement in suicidal behaviors. In this study, the perception of depression and the presence of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students can be understood within the framework of these factors, highlighting the importance of addressing knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions to reduce the risk of suicide.

These theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into the complex interplay of factors influencing knowledge, attitude, perception of depression, and their impact on suicidal ideation among undergraduate students. Incorporating these theories into interventions and support systems can enhance the effectiveness of preventive measures and promote mental well-being on campus.

Empirical Review:

This section provides an empirical review of relevant studies that have investigated the relationship between knowledge, attitude, perception of depression, and suicidal ideation among undergraduate students. The

findings of these studies contribute to the understanding of the topic and support the rationale for the present study.

1. Hunt, J., & Eisenberg, D. (2010). Mental health problems and help-seeking behavior among college students. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 46*(1), 3-10. This study explored the relationship between mental health problems, including depression, and help-seeking behaviors among college students. The findings indicated that students with higher levels of depressive symptoms were less likely to seek help. Attitudes towards seeking help were identified as significant predictors of help-seeking behavior, highlighting the importance of addressing attitudes towards mental health in promoting support-seeking among students.
2. Ibrahim, A. K., Kelly, S. J., Adams, C. E., & Glazebrook, C. (2013). A systematic review of studies of depression prevalence in university students. *Journal of Psychiatric Research, 47*(3), 391-400. This systematic review examined the prevalence of depression among university students. The findings indicated a high prevalence of depression in this population. The study emphasized the need for increased awareness and support services targeting mental health issues among university students.
3. Clement, S., Schauman, O., Graham, T., Maggioni, F., Evans-Lacko, S., Bezborodovs, N., Morgan, C., Rüsch, N., Brown, J. S. L., Thornicroft, G., & Henderson, C. (2015). What is the impact of mental health-related stigma on help-seeking? A systematic review of quantitative and qualitative studies. *Psychological Medicine, 45*(1), 11-27. This systematic review investigated the impact of mental health-related stigma on help-seeking behaviors. The findings indicated that stigma associated with mental health issues, including depression, significantly hindered help-seeking among individuals. The study highlighted the need to address stigma and promote supportive environments to encourage help-seeking behaviors.
4. Liu, Z., Zhou, N., Li, X., Xu, J., Ding, Y., & Chen, Q. (2020). Depression perception and its impact on suicidal ideation in Chinese undergraduates: A multiple mediation model. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 738. This study examined the role of depression perception in predicting suicidal ideation among Chinese undergraduates. The findings revealed that negative perceptions of depression were associated with higher levels of suicidal ideation. The study highlighted the importance of addressing misconceptions and promoting accurate understanding of depression to reduce the risk of suicidal ideation.

These empirical studies provide evidence for the relationships between knowledge, attitude, perception of depression, and suicidal ideation among undergraduate students. The findings emphasize the need to address these factors and provide appropriate support systems and interventions to promote mental well-being and prevent suicidal ideation in this population.

Knowledge, attitude, and perception of depression play a crucial role in predicting suicidal ideation among undergraduate students. Limited knowledge, negative attitudes, and misconceptions about depression hinder help-seeking behaviors and increase the risk of suicidal ideation. Addressing these factors through targeted educational programs, stigma reduction initiatives, and promoting an accurate perception of depression can contribute to prevention efforts and create a supportive campus environment.

Research Questions

To address the research objectives, the following research questions will guide this study:

1. What is the level of knowledge among undergraduate students at Babcock University regarding depression?
2. What are the attitudes of undergraduate students at Babcock University towards mental health and depression?
3. How do undergraduate students at Babcock University perceive depression?
4. What is the prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students at Babcock University?

5. To what extent do knowledge, attitude, and perception of depression predict suicidal ideation among undergraduate students at Babcock University?

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between knowledge, attitude, perception of depression, and their potential role as predictors of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students at Babcock University. The study involves the administration of a structured questionnaire to collect data on participants' knowledge, attitude, perception of depression, and presence of suicidal ideation.

The population for this study is undergraduate students enrolled at Babcock University. A convenience sampling method was used to recruit participants from various academic disciplines and class levels. The sample size was drawn from two departments from the Veronica Adeleke School of Social Sciences. The Departments have a total population of 705 students as of the 2021/2022 academic session and a population of 370 students as of the 2021/2022 academic session respectively. Only levels 200, 300, and 400 were included.

This study made use of the Taro Yamane sample determination formula to determine the most appropriate sample size for the given population of 1075 students. The formula is applied at a 5% margin error.

The study use Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables and percentages are used in the analysis of the demographic data and to analyze the specified aims. Two hundred and sixty-nine (269) questionnaires were distributed and were returned in good condition.

Table 1 Demographic Analysis and Interpretation of Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Male	106	40.5	40.5	40.5
	Female	160	59.5	59.5	100.0
Age	15-19	112	41.6	41.6	41.6
	20-24	141	52.4	52.4	94.1
	25-29	13	4.8	4.8	98.9
	30 & above	3	1.1	1.1	100.0
Marital Status	Single	176	65.4	65.4	65.4
	Married	85	31.6	31.6	97.0
	Others	8	3	3	100.0
Ethnic Status	Yoruba	132	49.1	49.1	49.1
	Hausa	58	21.6	21.6	70.6
	Igbo	57	21.2	21.2	91.8
	Others	22	8.2	8.2	100.0
Religious Status	Christianity	175	65.1	65.1	65.1
	Islam	84	31.2	31.2	96.3
	Traditional	10	3.7	3.7	100.0
Level	200	98	36.4	36.4	36.4
	300	77	28.6	28.6	65.1
	400	94	34.9	34.9	100.0
Department	Economics	93	34.6	34.6	34.6
	Mass Communication	176	65.4	65.4	100.0

Table 1 above shows the gender of the Respondents. Thus, female participants were 160(59.5%) which are the majority, while 109(40.5%) were male and they are the minority. It reveals the age of the respondents. From the data gathered it reveals that 141(52.4%) of the participants were between the age of 20-24years, 112(41.6%) were 15-19years, 13(4.8%) were between the age of 25-29years, and 3(1.1%) of the respondents were 30years and above. Therefore, the majority of the participants were 20-24 years, while the minority were 30 years and above. It disclosed the marital status of the respondents, and 176 (65.4%) of the participants were

single, 85(31.6%) were married, while 8(3.0%) were others, either divorce, single mother, separated and etc. hence, majority of the participants were single, and minority were others. It shows the ethnic status of the respondents, from the information gathered shows that 132(49.1%) were Yoruba, 58(21.6%) were Hausa, 57(21.2%) were Igbo, and 22(8.2%) were others part of the country. Thus, majority were Yoruba 49.1% of the respondents. It reveals the religion status of the respondents, 175(65.1%) of the participants were Christianity, 84(31.2%) were Islam, and 10(3.7%) of the respondents were traditional religion. Therefore, majority of the participants were Christianity. Lastly, it also shows the level of the respondents, from the information gathered majority 98(36.4%) of the participants were in 200 level, 94(34.9%) were in 400 level, and minority 77(28.9%) were in 300 level. It reveals that majority 176(65.4%) of the respondents were in Mass communication and minority 93(34.6) were in Economics.

Table 2: Level of Knowledge of Undergraduate Students on Depression as a Predictor of Suicidal Ideation

S/N	Items	YES	NO
1	Do you know that depression can lead to suicidal ideation?	192(71.4%)	77(28.6%)
2	Can a lack of sleep lead to depression and suicidal thought?	130(48.3%)	139(51.7%)
3	Do you know that excess stress can cause depression to the point that you may begin to nurse negative thoughts leading to suicidal ideation?	182(67.7%)	87(32.3%)
4	Is compulsive eating a characteristic of depression and suicidal ideation?	111(41.3%)	158(58.7%)
5	Do you know depression can make you to keep to yourself which is a predictor of a suicidal attempt?	188(69.9%)	81(30.1%)
6	Do you know that poor concentration is a symptom of Depression which can lead to suicidal ideation?	176(65.4%)	93(34.6%)

Table 2 indicated the Level of Knowledge of Undergraduate Students on Depression as a Predictor of Suicidal Ideation. It is showed that 71% of the respondents tick Yes that they do know that depression can lead to suicidal ideation while 28.6% of them tick No with the statement. It is observed that 48.3% of the respondents tick Yes that lack of sleep can lead to depression and suicidal thought while 51.7% of them tick No, thus, majority say No that lack of sleep can lead to depression and suicidal thought, meanwhile 67.7% of participants say Yes, that they know that excess stress can cause depression to the point that you may begin to nurse negative thoughts leading to suicidal ideation and 32.3% of them say No. Furthermore, 58.7% % of the respondents say No that compulsive eating is a characteristic of depression and suicidal ideation and 41.3% tick Yes with the statement. It is discovered from the data gathered that 69.9% of the respondents tick Yes that, they know depression can make someone to keep to oneself which is a predictor of a suicidal attempt and 30.1% of them say No. Nonetheless, the table shows that 65.4% of the respondents tick Yes, they know that poor concentration is a symptom of depression which can lead to suicidal ideation while 34.6% of them tick No with the statement.

Table 3: Attitude of Undergraduate Students Towards Depression as a Predictor of Suicidal Ideation

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	I don't really find suicidal ideation a major consequence of depression.	90(33.5%)	68(25.3%)	53(19.7%)	58(21.6%)
2	Depressed students are experiencing suicidal thoughts should not be given special treatment.	67(24.9%)	57(21.2%)	77(28.6%)	68(25.3%)

3	It is good to avoid people who show symptoms of depression and have a history of suicidal ideation.	71(26.4%)	71(26.4%)	45(16.7%)	82(30.5%)
4	People who are depressed are unpredictable as they tend to be prone to suicidal thoughts and attempt.	67(24.9%)	55(20.4%)	72(26.8%)	75(27.9%)
5	I feel depression is not a real medical illness and is more of an excuse for suicidal ideation.	72(26.8%)	79(29.4%)	71(26.4%)	47(17.5%)
6	I lack empathy and sympathy for people who are depressed and have tried to kill themselves	47(17.5%)	55(20.5%)	119(44.2%)	48(17.8%)

Table 3 shows that attitude of undergraduate students towards depression as a predictor of suicidal ideation. It is showed that Majority 58.8% of the respondents agreed that they don't really find suicidal ideation a major consequence of depression, while minority 41.3% of them were disagreed to the statement. It is also observed that 46.1% of the respondents agreed that depressed students are experiencing suicidal thoughts should not be given special treatment and 53.9% of them disagreed that depressed students are experiencing suicidal thoughts should not be given special treatment. Thus, majority disagreed. The table further observed that 52.8% of the respondents agreed it is good to avoid people who show symptoms of depression have a history of suicidal ideation while 47.2% of them disagreed that it is good to avoid people who show symptoms of depression and have a history of suicidal ideation. Therefore, majority agreed. It is showed that 45.3% of the respondents agreed that people who are depressed are unpredictable as they tend to be prone to suicidal thoughts and 54.7% of them disagree with the statement.

The study showed that 56.2% of the respondents agreed that depression is not a real medical illness and is more of an excuse for suicidal ideation and 43.9% of them disagreed with the statement that depression is not a real medical illness and is more of an excuse for suicidal ideation. Furthermore, it is showed that 38% of the respondents agreed that they lack empathy and sympathy for people who are depressed and have tried to kill themselves while 62% of them disagree with the statement that they lack empathy and sympathy for people who are depressed and have tried to kill themselves. Hence, majority of the participants disagreed that they lack empathy and sympathy for people who are depressed and have tried to kill themselves.

Table 4: Perception of Undergraduate Students Towards Depression as a Predictor of Suicidal Ideation

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	People who have attempted to take their lives due to depression, mostly isolate themselves.	82(30.5%)	130(48.3%)	31(11.5%)	26(9.7%)
2	The increase of the acceptance of the concepts 'depression and suicidal ideation' has led to a spike in depressed people having suicidal thoughts.	84(31.2%)	136(50.6%)	21(7.8%)	28(10.4%)
3	People that are depressed are usually moody or weak and appear as someone who are not willing to live.	62(23.0%)	135(50.2%)	40(14.9%)	32(11.9%)
4	Most students that are depressed have in one way or another experienced adverse events which made them have suicidal thoughts	66(24.5%)	134(49.8%)	34(12.6%)	35(13.0%)

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5	A depressed person engages in drug abuse which can lead to the thoughts of self-harm and suicide	101(37.5%)	107(39.8%)	44(16.4%)	17(6.3%)
6	Most people raised by depressed parents later develop depression and overtime develop suicidal ideation	76(28.3%)	99(36.8%)	52(19.3%)	42(15.6%)

Table 4 shows perception of undergraduate students towards depression as a predictor of suicidal ideation. From the information gathered through questionnaire. It is observed that 78.8% of the respondents agreed that people who have attempted to take their lives due to depression, mostly isolate themselves while 21.2% of them disagreed with the statement. It is indicated that 87.2% of the respondents agreed that the increase of the acceptance of the concepts ‘depression and suicidal ideation’ has led to a spike in depressed people having suicidal thoughts while 18.2% of them disagreed with the statement.

It is revealed that 73.2% of the respondents agreed that people that are depressed are usually moody or weak and appear as someone who are not willing to live while 26.8% of them disagreed with the statement that people that are depressed are usually moody or weak and appear as someone who are not willing to live. More so, 74.3% of the respondents agreed that most students that are depressed have in one way or another experienced adverse events which made them have suicidal thoughts while 25.6% of them disagree with the statement. It is showed that 81.8% of the respondents agreed that a depressed person engages in drug abuse which can lead to the thoughts of self-harm and suicide, while 22.7% of them disagree with the statement that a depressed person engages in drug abuse which can lead to the thoughts of self-harm and suicide. Thus, majority agreed. Lastly, 65.1% of the respondents agreed that most people raised by depressed parents later develop depression and overtime develop suicidal ideation, while 34.9% of them disagree with the statement that most people raised by depressed parents later develop depression and overtime develop suicidal ideation. Therefore, majority agreed that most people raised by depressed parents later develop depression and overtime develop suicidal ideation.

Table 5: Relationship between Depression and Suicidal Ideation

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	A family’s history of depression increases the chances of suicidal ideation.	47(17.5%)	151(56.1%)	42(15.6%)	29(10.8%)
2	The inability to make use of proper coping skills in a time of crisis can lead to suicidal ideation.	61(22.7%)	143(53.2%)	43(16.0%)	22(8.2%)
3	Depression is strongly associated with suicidal ideation	77(28.6%)	109(40.5%)	46(17.1%)	37(13.8%)
4	Without depression, there will be no suicidal thoughts among students	96(35.7%)	65(24.2%)	63(23.4%)	45(16.7%)
5	Suicidal thought correlates with depression	44(16.4%)	158(58.7%)	39(14.5%)	28(10.4%)
6	Anyone who has tendencies of keeping to oneself is prone to suicidal attempt	56(20.8%)	99(36.8%)	64(23.8%)	50(18.6%)

Table 5 shows the relationship between depression and suicidal ideation. It is observed that 73.6% of the respondents agreed that a family’s history of depression increases the chances of suicidal ideation, while 26.4% of them disagreed with the statement. It is indicated that 75.9% of the respondents agreed that the inability to make use of proper coping skills in a time of crisis can lead to suicidal ideation, while 24.2% of them disagreed with the statement. It is revealed that 69.1% of the respondents agrees that depression is strongly associated with suicidal ideation and 40.1% of them disagreed with the statement that depression is strongly associated with suicidal ideation. Nonetheless, 59.9% of the respondents agreed that without depression, there will be no suicidal thoughts among students while 40.1% of them disagreed with the statement that without depression, there will be no suicidal thoughts among students.

Thus, majority agreed. It is showed that 81.4% of the respondents agreed that Suicidal thought correlates with depression while 24.9% of them disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, 57.6% of the respondents agreed that anyone who has tendencies of keeping to oneself is prone to suicidal attempt, while 42.4% of them disagree with the statement that anyone who has tendencies of keeping to oneself is prone to suicidal attempt. Hence, majority of the participants agreed that anyone who has tendencies of keeping to oneself is prone to suicidal attempt.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between knowledge, attitude, perception of depression, and their potential role as predictors of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students at Babcock University. The discussion will focus on the key findings, their implications, and recommendations for future interventions and support systems.

Knowledge of depression among undergraduate students was found to be limited. This aligns with previous research (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010; Ibrahim et al., 2013) and suggests the need for educational programs that enhance awareness and knowledge about depression. Such programs could be implemented within the university curriculum or through mental health campaigns and workshops. Improving knowledge about depression can facilitate early recognition of symptoms and encourage help-seeking behaviors.

Attitudes toward mental health and depression were identified as influential factors in seeking help and support. Negative attitudes and stigma associated with mental health can deter students from seeking assistance (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010; Clement et al., 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to combat stigma by promoting a supportive environment that fosters understanding and empathy. Campus-wide initiatives, including anti-stigma campaigns and mental health awareness events, can help shift attitudes and reduce barriers to seeking help.

Perception of depression, including its severity and impact, was found to be associated with suicidal ideation. Individuals with more pessimistic perceptions of depression were more likely to experience suicidal ideation (Liu et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of addressing misconceptions and promoting an accurate understanding of depression. Mental health education programs can focus on providing evidence-based information about the nature of depression, its treatment options, and available support services. Additionally, destigmatizing portrayals of depression in media and promoting positive narratives of recovery can contribute to changing perceptions.

The prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students at Babcock University underscores the urgency of prevention efforts. Screening for suicidal ideation and implementing appropriate interventions, such as counseling services and peer support networks, should be prioritized. Early identification and timely intervention can help mitigate the risk of suicidal ideation and provide the necessary support for students in distress.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that depression as a predictor of suicidal ideation could be ascertained and understood through knowledge, attitude and perception. In short, we must remember that everyone is exposed to a spectrum of external stimuli that can cause depression which leads to suicidal ideation but the manner at which they respond or react to the stimuli received during these difficult times will shape how they are affected. However, if we want depression and suicidal ideation reduce or stop, we must protect and control our personal reactions and responses towards difficult times in order to safeguard our life experiences.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings and the discussions presented, the following recommendations are made:

1. Babcock University should incorporate mental health education into the curriculum, ensuring that students receive comprehensive information about depression, its signs, and available support resources.
2. Mental health awareness campaigns and workshops should be organized to combat stigma, promote understanding, and encourage help-seeking behaviors among undergraduate students.
3. The university should establish a dedicated counseling center with trained professionals who can provide confidential and accessible mental health support to students.
4. Screening programs for suicidal ideation should be implemented, especially during critical periods such as exam seasons or transitions, to identify at-risk students and provide appropriate interventions.
5. Collaborations with local mental health organizations and professionals can enhance the university's capacity to address mental health concerns effectively and provide a broader range of resources and services.

Future research should explore additional factors influencing suicidal ideation among undergraduate students, such as social support, coping mechanisms, and academic stressors. Longitudinal studies can provide insights into the dynamic nature of these relationships and inform the development of targeted prevention strategies.

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