

Social Factors as Predictors of Suicide Ideation Among Police Officers in Police Training Schools in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria: Educational Implications

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Abstract – The study investigated social factors (perception of corruption and domestic pressure) as predictors of suicide ideation among Police Officers in Police Training Colleges in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. A sample size of 3,373 Police Officers in training in four Police Training Colleges in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria was randomly selected through simple random sampling technique. Multiple Prediction Design of Correlational Research Method was used for the investigation, while Linear Regression was used for the entire analyses and hypotheses testing. The result showed that there is a significant relationship between psychological factors (corruption and domestic pressure) and suicide ideation of Police Officers in Police Training Colleges; also the result showed that there is a very positive relationship between perception of corruption and domestic pressure as predictors of suicide ideation among Police Officers in Training Colleges in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The result also suggests that among other variables, corruption and domestic pressure are some of the predictive variables of suicide ideation. Recommendations were made.

Keywords – Social Factors, Predictors of Suicide Ideation, Police Training Schools, South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria, Educational Implications.

I. INTRODUCTION

Suicide is the act of taking one's life by one's own hands. It was previously a phenomenon associated with drug addicts, terminally ill persons, convicts on death rows etc. Surprisingly, it has migrated to every nook and cranny of the globe; it has traversed professions, class, education, age, gender, economic status, religious affiliations etc. This is really very disturbing. It is even more worrisome that it has infiltrated military and para-military agencies, whose duty among others it is to protect lives and properties.

Interestingly, suicide is not just automatic; it goes through processes that climax to suicide. Before people take their lives, they think about it, plan about it and then decide to do it. Reynolds (1987) defines suicide plans as an intermediate stage between suicide thoughts and suicide attempts. He distinguishes the concept of suicide thoughts and suicide plans by describing four phases of suicide: suicide thoughts, suicide plans, suicide attempts and completed suicide. Suicide thoughts and plans often lead to suicide, even though not everyone thinking of suicide does commit suicide (Kim & Lee, 2014).

Corruption seems to be prevalent in poor countries of the world and unfortunately, corruption is the main reason the advanced countries are not willing to give any economic assistance to these poor countries. Corruption as a concept has been viewed from different perspective. Corruption is the acquisition of that to which one (as a member of society not public officer alone) is not

entitled (Ibanga; Thomas and Ekpiken-Ekanem, 2019). Corruption is viewed as a violation of moral code or normative standard within the society.

Olurode, Akinboye & Stiftung (2005) observed that corruption becomes endemic when the rising expectation is profound and many have become more money and materially conscious. He blamed this on the faulty socialization processes in which individuals abandoned the norms generally approved means of realizing the valued societal goals, but seek other means (perversion of the norms) that is easier to them. Ibanga, Thomas and Ekpiken-Ekanem (2019) opined that in Nigeria, corruption is embedded in the origin of the Nigerian State. Right from colonialism, corruption has been introduced to the geographical expression later christened Nigeria by the missionaries who introduced Christianity and western way of life so that they would be able to exploit the masses and their environment. Besides, the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates to form Nigeria was corruption. These scholars agreed that it is a political and administrative corruption to merge two geographical entities that would, otherwise have nothing in common. It is therefore, not surprising that, shortly after independence, corruption was nurtured and elevated to a state virtue, permeating the entire fabric of the Nigeria society.

Police officers are public servants who in diverse ways have been blamed for corruption among others. There are several reports in the media that depict the pitiable image of the security operatives in Nigeria. Our security operatives namely the army, police, civil defence corps, etc. easily get involved in acts such as giving and taking bribe, street fighting, adultery, rape, stealing and drunkenness. These acts portray them as law breakers instead of law custodians. However, other police officers who might not be corrupt might be victims of police corruption, which might generate a perception of police corruption that might threaten their mental health.

Domestic pressure is one reality that every Nigerian police officer is very likely to face, given the strenuous nature of the work and the natural demands of domestic life. Alexander & Walker (1996) acknowledged that police work can dominate family life even when the officer is off duty. Shift-work and the incestuous and cohesive effect of the police culture may also conspire to confine police families to a narrow range of relationships which rarely extend beyond police colleague. In particular, it has been noted that police officers become less inclined to discuss work-related feelings, fears and needs when they are at home. As a consequence, they may become emotionally distant from their families and more secretive and more suspicious. Also, the authoritarian attitude, which may be effectively used at work, if displayed at home, may threaten the stability of the marital relationship. This may have disruptive effects on the domestic relationships of the police officer, especially in cases where he may be pressured to take out on his family the frustrations caused by their work. These are all summed up as domestic pressure. These pressures, if not properly dissipated or managed might cumulatively trigger thought processes that might lead to suicide in some cases.

It is the purpose of this study to examine whether social factors (corruption and domestic pressure) are predictors of suicide ideation among Nigeria Police officers in Training in Police Training Schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. examine whether corruption predicts suicide ideation among police officers in training in Police Training Schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.
2. ascertain whether domestic pressure predicts suicide ideation among police officers in training in Police Training Schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does perception of corruption level predict suicide ideation among Police officers in training in Police Training Schools?
2. To what extent does domestic pressure predict suicide ideation among Police officers in Training in Police training Schools?

The following hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance:

1. H_{O1} Perception of corruption does not significantly predict suicide ideation and anxiety.
2. H_{O2} Domestic pressure does not significantly predict suicide ideation.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study examined social factors (perception of corruption and domestic pressure) as predictors of suicide ideation among Police Officers in Police Training Colleges in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. It is a correlational study. The predictor variables of the study are perception of corruption and domestic pressure, while suicide ideation is the criterion variable.

A sample of 3, 373 Police Officers from four Police Training Colleges in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria were randomly selected using the simple random sampling technique. Two questionnaires: Police Domestic Pressure Assessment Scale (PDPAS), Perception of Police Corruption Scale (PPCS) and Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire - Revised (SBQ - R), whose reliability co-efficients are 0.59, 0.51 and 0.71 respectively, were used to obtain information about the extent to which police officers understand, accept and view corruption in the Nigeria Police, measure various family oppressions and distresses, a Police Officer most likely experiences domestically and suicide ideation. The data collected were analyzed using Linear Regression. The hypotheses were tested accordingly. The results were presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses.

Table 1 Linear Regression analysis showing the extent to which Perception of corruption predicts suicide ideation among Police officers in Police Training Colleges in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria

					Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std Error	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.071	.005	.005	2.362	6.389	.187	.071	34.103	.000
Corruption					.025	.006			

Table 1 shows the model summary. Here the independent regression coefficient (R) for perception of corruption is .071. The coefficient of determination R² for Perception of corruption is .005. The Adjusted R-square for perception of corruption is .005. The standard error of estimate is shown to be 2.362 and β, 6.389. The correlation coefficient between perception of corruption and suicide ideation among Police officers in Police Training Colleges in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria is 0.071, revealing a low relationship. The coefficient of determination is .005; this shows that 0.5% of the variance in suicide ideation among Police officers in Rivers State is accounted for by perception of corruption. The Beta value reveals that as the values of perception of corruption increases or decreases by a unit, there will be a corresponding 6.389 increase or decrease in the values of suicide ideation among Police officers in Police Training Colleges in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. In other words a unit variation in perception of corruption will result in 6.39% variation in suicide ideation among Police officers in the South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria.

Furthermore, perception of corruption was found to be a significant predictor of suicide ideation among police officers in the South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria [t = 34.103; p < .01]; hence the null hypothesis which states that perception of corruption does not predict suicide ideation among Police officers in Police Training Colleges in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Information from the table shows that where perception of corruption was the predictor variable, the regression constant (B) is 6.389, while the unstandardized regression coefficient is .025. Thus the simple linear equation to predict suicide ideation from perception of corruption would be; $Y = 6.389 + (.025) X$. Where Y is the predicted score of suicide ideation and X is any given score for perception of corruption. That means, suicide ideation = 6.389 + (.025) perception of corruption.

Table 2. Linear Regression analysis showing the extent to which domestic pressure predict suicide ideation among Police officers in Police Training Colleges in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria

					Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std Error	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.098	.010	.009	2.357	8.674	.271	-.098	32.037	.000
Domestic Pressure					-.055	.010			

Table 2 shows the model summary. Here the independent regression coefficient (R) for domestic pressure is .098. The coefficient of determination R² for domestic pressure is .010. The Adjusted R-square for anxiety is .009. The standard error of estimate is shown to be 2.357 and β , 8.674. The correlation coefficient between domestic pressure and suicide ideation among Police officers in Police Training Colleges in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria is 0.098, revealing a low relationship. The coefficient of determination is .010; this shows that 1% of the variance in suicide ideation among Police officers in Rivers State is accounted for by domestic pressure. The Beta value reveals that as the values of domestic pressure increases or decreases by a unit, there will be a corresponding 8.674 increase or decrease in the values of suicide ideation among Police officers in Police Training Colleges in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. In other words a unit variation in domestic pressure will result in 8.674%, variation in suicide ideation among Police officers in the South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria.

Furthermore, domestic pressure was found to be a significant predictor of suicide ideation among police officers in the South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria [$t = 32.037$; $p < .01$]; hence the null hypothesis which states that domestic pressure does not predict suicide ideation among Police officers in Police Training Colleges in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Information from the table shows that where domestic pressure was the predictor variable, the regression constant (B) is 8.674, while the unstandardized regression coefficient is -.055. Thus the simple linear equation to predict suicide ideation from domestic pressure would be; $Y = 8.674 + (-.055)X$. Where Y is the predicted score of suicide ideation and X is any given score in domestic pressure. That means, suicide ideation = $8.674 + (-.055)$ domestic pressure.

III. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that perception of corruption is a significant predictor of suicide ideation among police officers in training in Police Training Schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

The statistic result shows a low positive relationship between perception of corruption and suicide ideation among police officers in police training colleges, shown by the correlation coefficient of 0.071. The results from the Beta values also indicate very clearly that any unit increase or decrease in the perception of corruption level of police officers in police training colleges in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria, results in a 6.389 increase or decrease in their suicide ideation. This indicates that perception of corruption is a significant predictor among police officers in police training colleges in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

This result agrees with the study conducted by Yamamura and Andres (2011) among 24 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, to explore how corruption influences suicide rate using panel data regressions. The result showed that people are less inclined to commit suicide in less corrupt societies.

The result of the study also shows that domestic pressure is a significant predictor of suicide ideation among police officers in training in Police Training Schools in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The statistic result also shows a correlation coefficient of 0.098 between depression and suicide ideation which indicates low positive relationship between depression and suicide ideation among police officers in police training colleges. The results from the Beta values also indicate very clearly that

any unit increase or decrease in the perception of corruption level of police officers in police training colleges in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria, results in a 8.674 increase or decrease in their suicide ideation. This indicates that domestic pressure is a significant predictor among police officers in police training colleges in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

The finding of this study agrees with the study carried out by Janik and Kravitz (1994) on linking work and domestic problems with police suicide. The records of 134 police officers who had undergone their first fitness-for-duty evaluation at a center were reviewed. Fifty-five percent admitted to previous suicide attempts. Possible contributing factors were examined. A logistic regression model correctly classified 79.1% of subjects as to whether or not they attempted suicide. Results indicated that officers reporting marital problems were 4.8 times more likely to have attempted suicide, and 6.7 times more likely if they had been suspended.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study focused on social factors (perception of corruption and depression) as predictors of suicide ideation among police officers in police training colleges in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. A total number of 3, 373 police officers being trained in four (4) police training colleges in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria were used. It was discovered that police officers with high perception of police corruption and domestic pressure levels are most likely to experience suicide ideation, while those with low levels of perception of corruption and domestic pressure are most unlikely to experience or express suicide ideation. Thus, the study reveals that social factors (perception of corruption and domestic pressure) are significant predictors of suicide ideation among police officers in training in police training colleges in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made from the study:

1. Anti-corruption machineries, policies and ideologies should be developed to revive confidence in the system among Police Officers; this would most likely reverse the frustrations of Police Officers that may lead many to suicide ideation, resulting to suicide.
2. Since most domestic pressures experienced by Police Officers are family related and of course economically motivated, a constant review of the remuneration of Police Officers in line with economic realities, as well as regular orientations on family planning and management techniques will drastically reduce the pressure to consider suicide as an option.
3. The welfare of police officers should be regularly reviewed and improved upon, to contain certain avoidable domestic pressures that arise from poor welfare management with regards to police officers and their families.
4. Proper orientation and emphasis should be given to the officers and men of the Nigeria Police on the need to frequently visit the Police Force's Psychologist or Psychotherapist.

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