

**INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN REDUCING
SUICIDAL INTENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT IN
EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE**

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REDUCING SUICIDAL INTENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENT IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY EDO STATE**

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CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned, certify that the project was carried out by Jennifer courage LONGE with matriculation No. EDU2102417 in the department of Department of Educational Evaluation and counselling psychology (EECP), faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin city for the requirement of the Award of Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed), Guidance &counselling

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for love, mercies and protection upon my life and academics, for the knowledge he has given to school in this great institution and for life.

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My sincere appreciation goes to God Almighty the giver of life for his protection, guidance and his love bestowed upon Me , right from the early of my academic pursuit in this institution till the very last days he has never left me nor forsaken and he has always come through for me in ways that I cannot even fully express, may God be praised for everything.

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study explores the influence of guidance and counseling on reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students in Egor.

A sample of 200 students participated in surveys and interviews, providing insights into the causes of suicidal intent, the impact of peer pressure and teacher-student relationships, and the role of guidance and counseling in mitigating these factors. The study's findings reveal that students experiencing peer pressure, bullying, and poor teacher-student relationships are more likely to exhibit suicidal intent. However, effective guidance and counseling strategies, such as early intervention, emotional support, and problem-solving skills training, can significantly reduce suicidal intent. The study's results have implications for school counseling practices, highlighting the need for increased access to guidance and counseling services, teacher training, and parental involvement in supporting students' mental health. The findings contribute to the growing body of research on the critical role of guidance and counseling in promoting students' well-being and preventing suicidal behavior.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Suicide is the act of intentionally taking one's own life. It is a complex issue often linked to various factors, including mental health conditions, substance abuse, trauma, and social isolation. Suicidal intent refers to a specific plan or desire to carry out a suicidal act, indicating a clear desire to end one's life. According to research, suicidal intent is a critical factor in assessing the risk of suicide (Beck et al., 1974; Silverman et al., 2007). Suicidal intent among adolescents has become a pressing concern globally, with secondary school students being particularly vulnerable. According to Shneidman (1985), suicide is defined as "the human act of self-inflicted, self-intentional cessation." This definition highlights the intentional nature of suicidal behavior, emphasizing the individual's deliberate actions leading to their own demise.

Research has shown that secondary school students face numerous stressors, including academic pressure, peer relationships, and family dynamics, which can

exacerbate feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, and depression (Freud, 1917). Freud's psychoanalytic theory suggests that unconscious conflicts and unresolved emotional issues can contribute to suicidal behavior. These factors can ultimately increase the risk of suicidal behavior, making it essential to address the mental health needs of students. Suicidal intentions are prevalent among students in Nigeria Edo state and this has led to constant worry in the society and one of the most effective ways of alleviating suicidal intent among secondary school students in Egor local Government state is Guidance and counseling.

Guidance and counseling are essential services that support individuals' personal, social, academic, and career development. According to Gibson and Mitchell (2008), guidance and counseling "help individuals to understand themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, and their potential" Guidance and counseling can play a vital role in reducing suicidal intentions among secondary school students by providing them with a safe and supportive environment to discuss their feelings and concerns. Here are some ways guidance and counseling can be helpful:

- Identifying Risk Factors: Guidance counselors can identify students who are at risk of suicide by recognizing warning signs such as persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and anxiety.
- Building Protective Factors: Counselors can help students develop protective factors such as positive coping skills, stress management, and problem-solving strategies.
- Creating a Supportive Environment: Guidance counselors can foster a positive school climate by promoting positive relationships between students, teachers, and peers.
- Providing Resources: Counselors can connect students with mental health resources, both within and outside the school, to ensure they receive the support they need.

Guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in identifying and supporting students at risk of suicidal behavior. Effective guidance and counseling strategies can help students develop coping mechanisms, improve their mental health, and

enhance their overall well-being. By providing a safe and supportive environment, guidance counselors can help students explore their feelings, develop problem-solving skills, and build resilience.

There are some intervening variables that explains suicidal Intentions Among Secondary School in Egor Local Government Area Like Gender, Age.

Gender as an Intervening variable that explains suicidal intent among secondary school students in Egor local Government Area;

Suicidal intentions among secondary school students are a pressing concern that requires immediate attention and support. Research has shown that gender plays a significant role in suicidal behavior, with differences in suicidal intentions and behaviors observed between boys and girls. Studies have consistently shown that girls are more likely to attempt suicide than boys, although boys are more likely to die by suicide due to the methods used (Cash & Bridge, 2019). This difference in suicidal behavior may be attributed to various factors, including societal expectations and mental health issues. Societal expectations around masculinity and femininity may contribute to experience externalizing

problems, such as substance abuse and aggression, which can also increase the risk of suicidal behavior.

The relationship between gender and suicidal intentions among secondary school students is complex and multifaceted. By recognizing the differences in suicidal behavior between boys and girls and addressing the underlying factors contributing to these differences, counselors can work towards reducing suicidal intentions and promoting mental health and well-being among all students.

Age is a significant factor to consider when examining suicidal intentions among secondary school students. Research suggests that suicidal behavior and intentions can vary across different age groups within the secondary school population. Differences in Suicidal Behavior by Age, this implies that Younger secondary school students (e.g., 11-14 years old) may be more vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and behaviors due to the challenges of early adolescence, such as navigating social relationships and coping with stress (Hankin et al., 2015) , Older secondary school students (e.g., 15-18 years old) may experience increased stress related to academic performance, future plans, and independence, which can

contribute to suicidal intentions (Wang et al., 2014) Factors Contributing to Age Differences include;

- Developmental stage: The stage of adolescence can influence suicidal behavior and intentions. Younger adolescents may be more impulsive, while older adolescents may experience more stress and pressure (Steinberg, 2008) [3].
- Life experiences: Students' life experiences, such as exposure to trauma or stress, can also contribute to age differences in suicidal behavior and intentions (Nock et al., 2013), Differences in suicidal behavior and help for mental issues, including suicidal thoughts, due to social expectations and stigma around masculinity (Courtney,2000).

Mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, are also significant risk factors for suicidal behavior. Girls are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, which may contribute to their higher rates of suicidal attempts (Hankin et al., 2015). On the other hand, boys may be more likely to experience externalizing problems, such as substance abuse and aggression, which can also increase the risk of suicidal behavior.

This study aims to investigate the impact of guidance and counseling on reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students. By exploring the experiences and perceptions of students, this research seeks to contribute to the development of effective guidance and counseling strategies that can support the mental health and well-being of students. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the role of guidance and counseling in preventing suicidal behavior and promoting positive mental health outcomes among secondary school students.

Statement of the problem

The prevalence of suicidal intentions among secondary school students has become a pressing concern globally, with Nigeria being no exception. Despite efforts to address this issue, suicidal intentions remain a significant threat to the well-being and academic success of secondary school students. Guidance and counseling services have been identified as a potential solution to mitigate this problem, but there is a need to investigate the specific influence of guidance and counseling on reducing suicidal intent among secondary school in Egor Local Government Area

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the prevalence of suicidal intent among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area?
2. Does Guidance and counseling influence the reduction of suicidal intent among secondary school student in Egor Local Government Area?
3. Does Guidance and counseling influence the reduction of suicidal intent among secondary school student in Egor Local Government Area based on Gender?
4. Does Guidance and counseling influence the reduction of suicidal intent among secondary school student in Egor Local Government Area based on age?

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the influence of guidance and counseling services on reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. To examine the prevalence of suicidal intent among secondary school students at Egor local government area
2. Identify the influence of Guidance and counseling in the reduction of suicidal intent among secondary school students at Egor local government area
3. Determine the influence of Guidance and counseling in the reduction of suicidal intent among secondary school students at Egor local government area based on Gender
4. .Determine the influence of Guidance and counseling in the reduction of suicidal intent among secondary school students at Egor local government area based on Age

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study on the influence of guidance and counseling in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students will be beneficial to students, teachers, parents and schools in several ways:

To students - the study help them Improved mental health support, The study's findings will highlight the importance of guidance and counseling services in reducing suicidal intent, enabling students to access effective support systems and promote their mental well-being. And also to Increase awareness by identifying the specific aspects of guidance and counseling services that are most effective, students will be more aware of the resources available to them and can seek help when needed.

The parent- the study's findings enhances understanding, Parents will gain a deeper understanding of the role of guidance and counseling services in supporting their children's mental health, enabling them to make informed decisions about their children's well-being. And also to Increase involvement By recognizing the importance of guidance and counseling, parents may become more involved in their children's mental health support, fostering a more collaborative approach to addressing suicidal intent.

The findings of this study help to Improved teacher-student relationships by highlighting the importance of guidance and counseling, the study may encourage

teachers to develop more supportive relationships with students, creating a more nurturing school environment. And also for Informed policy development, The study's findings will provide schools with evidence-based insights to inform policy development and resource allocation for guidance and counseling services, ultimately enhancing student support systems.

To other researchers; Contribution to existing knowledge, This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the influence of guidance and counseling services on suicidal intent among secondary school students, providing a foundation for future research. And also for Future research directions , The study's findings will identify areas for further investigation, guiding future research and informing the development of more effective interventions to address suicidal intent among secondary school students.

Scope and delimitation of the study

The scope of this study is to investigate the influence of guidance and counseling services on reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students in Egor Local Government. It will focus on:

- Secondary school students in selected schools at Egor local government area
- Guidance counselors and teachers
- Suicidal aspects of guidance and counseling services
- Relationship between Guidance services and suicidal intent

This research work will be limited to secondary school student of Egor community high school Edo state. As regarding how vast the population will be and how difficult and almost impossible it will be to interact with the entire student populace a hundred respondents shall be considered. The study aims to provide insights into effective strategies for promoting mental health and well-being among secondary school students.

Definition of terms

The definition of recurrent concept in this study is as follows:

Guidance and Counselling Services:

These services encompass a range of support provided to students, including academic guidance, personal counselling, and social support, aimed at helping

them navigate challenges and make informed decisions (Corey, 2017; Gladding, 2018).

Secondary School Students:

This refers specifically to students in senior secondary school in Egor Local Government Area, who are the focus of this study. Their experiences, perceptions, and challenges are central to understanding the role of guidance and counselling services (Erikson, 1968; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Suicidal Thoughts:

These are thoughts or ideations about taking one's own life, which can vary in intensity and frequency. They may be influenced by various factors, including mental health issues, stress, or traumatic experiences (Nock et al., 2008; World Health Organization, 2019).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of this study will be reviewed under the following headings:

- Theoretical frame work
- Concept of Suicide
- Concept of Suicidal intent
- causes and risk factors of suicidal intent
- Signs and warning factors in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students
- Concept of Guidance and counseling
- Roles of Guidance and counseling in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students
- Roles of Guidance and counseling in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students based on gender and age
- Summary of literature review

Theoretical framework

This study is hinged on the Cognitive Behavioral Theory developed by Aaron Beck. Aaron Beck emphasizes the central role of cognition in influencing human emotions and behavior. The theory asserts that maladaptive thinking patterns lead to negative emotions which in turn produce harmful behavior, including suicidal tendencies. Beck identified that individuals at risk of suicide often exhibit a cognitive triad: a negative view of themselves, a negative perception of the environment, and a pessimistic outlook on the future. Each of these cognitive distortions creates a sense of hopelessness, which is one of the strongest predictors of suicidal behavior.

Among adolescents, especially secondary school students, these thought patterns are common due to developmental challenges, academic pressure, peer influence, family conflict, and social identity struggles. For instance, a student who fails an examination may catastrophize the event by concluding that they are worthless and will never succeed. Such distorted reasoning increases vulnerability to depression and suicidal ideation if left unchallenged.

Guidance and counseling derives their significance from this theoretical perspective. Cognitive behavioral intervention within school counseling setting focuses on helping students recognize, question, and restructure negative thought patterns. Counselors apply techniques such as cognitive restructuring, behavioral rehearsal, and problem-solving training to equip students with other ways of perceiving and responding to challenges. Through this process, students learn to reframe academic failures as temporary setbacks, interpret fear rejection more realistically, and develop hope for the future. Moreover, the cognitive behavioral theory emphasizes skill building. School counselors play a crucial role in teaching students coping mechanisms, emotional regulation strategies, and decision-making skills. By promoting resilience and optimism, counseling intervention not only reduces immediate suicidal intent but also provides long-term protective factors against future crisis.

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of this approach. Brown and Earth (2005) reported that cognitive behavioral intervention significantly reduced repeated suicidal attempts among high-risk individuals. Similarly, Espito,

Simta, and Spring (2004) found that CBT reduces depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation among adolescents. Nigerian studies (Adeoye, 2009; Okocha, 2020) also confirmed that school-based counseling programs grounded in cognitive behavioral principles have contributed to reducing suicidal tendency among secondary school students.

In light of this finding, the cognitive behavioral theory provides a strong foundation for this study. It explains the cognitive mechanisms that predispose students to suicidal ideation and justify the role of guidance and counseling as effective interventions. By addressing maladaptive cognition, fostering resilience, and promoting positive coping skills, counseling becomes a critical tool in reducing suicidal intent and enhancing the overall psychological well-being of secondary school students.

Core Assumptions of Cognitive Behavioral Theory

1. Cognition shapes behavior: Thoughts directly influence feelings and actions. Maladaptive or irrational thoughts can lead to destructive behavior, including suicidal intent.

2. Cognitive distortion: Suicidal individuals often engage in distorted patterns of thinking, such as all-or-nothing reasoning, overgeneralization, catastrophizing, and selective abstraction.
3. Hopelessness: one of Beck's most critical contribution is the hopelessness theory of suicide," which posits that individuals with a negative view of themselves, the world, and the future (the cognitive triad) are at heightened risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors.
4. Change is possible: Through therapeutic intervention, individuals can learn to recognize, challenge, and replace negative thought patterns with more balanced and adaptive cognitions.

Application to Secondary School Students

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by rapid physical, emotional, and social change. Secondary school students may face challenges such as academic failure, peer rejection, bullying, parental neglect, and identity confusion. These stressors can trigger maladaptive thought patterns, increasing vulnerability to suicidal intent. Cognitive behavioral theory explains how these

thoughts reinforce feelings of despair, leading to a cycle of depression and potential suicidal ideation.

Research has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of cognitive behavioral intervention in reducing suicidal ideation among adolescents. For example, Brown et al. (2005) found that Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) significantly reduced suicide attempts among high-risk patients. Similarly, studies in school settings (Esposito-Smythers & Spirito, 2004) show that CBT-based counseling reduces depression and suicidal intent targeting maladaptive thinking patterns.

Relevance to the present study

The cognitive behavioral theory provides a practical framework for understanding how secondary school students develop suicidal intent and how guidance and counseling can intervene. By applying CBT principles, counsellors can address not only immediate suicidal thoughts but also the underlying cognitive vulnerability that predisposes students to future crisis. This makes this theory highly relevant as a foundation for this study.

Concept of suicide

Suicide, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), is the deliberate act of ending one's own life, often triggered by a complex interplay of biological, social, and environmental factors, it not a sudden act but often the result of a gradual build-up of hopelessness and despair. Throughout history, suicide has been stigmatized and viewed as a moral failing, While in others, certain forms of suicide have been Romanized or even honored under specific circumstances (Durkheim, 1897\ 2006). Globally, Suicide remains a significant public health problem, accounting for over 700,000 deaths annually (WHO, 2023). Among adolescents, it is one of the top three causes of death, alongside road traffic accidents and communicable diseases. The situation is particularly concerning in developing countries where mental health services are underfunded, and awareness about suicide prevention remains low.

In Nigeria, studies indicate an upward trend in suicide rates among young people, with National Bureau of statistics (2022) reporting that approximately 11% of adolescent's death are suicide - related. Culture stigma

often prevents open discussions, meaning that the actual numbers may be higher due to underreporting. In Edo State, including Egor Local government, there have been increasing reports of students suicides linked to academic failure, family conflicts, financial hardship, and relationship issues (omorehie & Eke, 2019).

While suicide refers to the act itself, Suicidal intent is the degree to which a person has formulated a plan and possess the determination to carry it out (Moses & kola 2012). This is different from suicide ideation, which refers to thoughts about ending one's life without immediate intent. Psychology often different between:

Passive suicidal Intent: Where the person wishes to die but has not specific plan.

Active suicidal intent: where the person has a specific plan, means and determination to end their life .

For secondary school students, suicidal intent often emerges after a prolong period of emotional distress, bullying, academic challenges, or unresolved trauma. The adolescents stage is characterized by rapid changes in identity, peer relationships, and self -esteem, making Young people more emotionally

vulnerable (Steinberg,2018). Adolescents development and vulnerability to suicide. The adolescent period, generally defined as ages 10-19, is a stage of significant physical, cognitive and emotional transformation. It is also the stage where young people begin to form cognitive, emotional transformation. It is also the stage where young people begin to form their identity, aspiration, and social networks. While this is a time of potential growth, It is also marked by heightened emotional sensitivity and susceptibility to mental health challenges (WHO, 2022).

In Nigeria, many adolescents face additional stressors such as unstable home environments, economic hardship, high parental expectations for academic success (Adeyemi, 2020). These pressures, if unaddressed, can push vulnerable students towards suicidal intent, especially when they lack access to emotional support systems like school counseling.

Concept of Suicidal intent among secondary school students

Suicidal intent refers to the clear and deliberate desire to end one's own life, characterized by a serious commitment to carry out actions that could lead to death. It goes beyond fleeting thoughts or passive wishes to die and involves a

purposeful resolve to act on those feelings. Among secondary school students, suicidal intent is particularly a critical concept because adolescence is a transitional stage marked by emotional turbulence, identity information, and increasing social pressures. During this period, students are vulnerable to experiencing intense feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness and despair, which can contribute to the development of suicidal intent. The presence of suicidal intent signals a heightened risk that the students may engage in behaviors aimed at self-harm or suicide, making it an important focus for early intervention.

Understanding suicidal intent is essential because it helps differentiate between varying levels of suicidal risk. While many adolescents may experience suicidal ideation thinking about or wishing for death only a subset of these individuals develop a genuine intent to follow through with suicide. Suicidal intent involves not only the thoughts but also a mental preparation or planning toward ending one's life. This seriousness often translates into concrete behavior such as making preparations, acquiring means or expressing clear intentions, which can precede suicide attempts. Recognizing the presence of Suicidal intent in secondary school

students, therefore, becomes a vital step in preventing suicide and providing timely support.

In the context of secondary schools, suicidal intent can sometimes be difficult to detect because students may mask their feelings or express them directly. Some students may withdraw socially, lose interest in academic and extracurricular activities, or exhibit sudden changes in mood and behavior. Others may communicate their distress through writing, art , or conversations with trusted peers or Adults . It is important to note that suicidal intent is now always overt or verbalized, which poses challenges for educators and counsellors who must rely on subtle cues and observations to identify at-risk students. This underscores the need for awareness and sensitivity in school environments to respond appropriately when signs of suicidal intent appear.

Furthermore, the concept of suicidal intent highlights the complexity of adolescent mental health and the interplay of various emotional, psychological, and social factors. It is not simply the result of a single cause but rather a culmination of multiple stressors and vulnerabilities that can overwhelm a student's coping

mechanism. For this reason, addressing suicidal intent among secondary school students require a comprehensive approach that includes emotional support, counseling, and creating a safe and understand school climate. When suicidal intent is acknowledged and addressed early, students are more likely to receive the help they need to overcome their challenges and develop healthier ways of managing distress.

Suicidal intent among adolescents has been a growing concern worldwide. Akinade (2019) conducted a survey among 1,200 Nigerian secondary school students and found that 8% had seriously considered suicide in the past year 9% had attempted it at least once. The study identified bullying, academic failure, and family conflict as the top three triggers. These findings mirror patterns in Egor Local Government area where overcrowded classrooms, limited parental supervision, and peer conflict are common. In a South African study, Batjes et al. (2016) discovered that students experiencing persistent academic stress were twice as likely to develop suicidal thoughts compared to their peers. This emphasizes the

role of school-related pressures which in Ego Local Government area often stem from high expectations in competitive subjects like mathematics and English.

The World Health Organization (2021) reports that suicide is the second leading cause of death among individuals aged 15-29 globally. In Nigeria, the rate is particularly worrying because mental health services in schools remain scarce. In Egor Local Government area, anecdotal reports from school counselors confirm that students struggling academically or socially rarely receive professional mental health screening before a crisis occurs.

In conclusion, suicidal intent among secondary school students is a serious and deliberate mindset reflecting a commitment to end one's life. It is distinct from mere suicidal thoughts because it involves a purposeful determination to act. Recognizing and understanding this intent is crucial in the school context, where early intervention can save lives. Given the complexities involved, school plays a key role in identifying students with suicidal intent and providing the necessary guidance and counseling to help reduce the risk of suicide. Awareness of this concept helps create a foundation for effective support systems

that protect the mental health and well-being of adolescents during this critical stage of development.

Causes and risk factors of suicidal intent among students.

Suicidal intent among secondary students is a complex issue that cannot be traced to a single cause but rather to an interplay of multiple factors. At this stage of adolescent, young people undergo rapid physical, emotional, and social development, which makes them vulnerable to stress, confusion, and mental health challenges. One of the most significant psychological risk factors is depression, often accompanied by anxiety, low self-esteem, and feelings of worthlessness. When students perceive life as meaningless and feel overwhelmed by persistent sadness, they may begin to entertain suicidal thoughts. In many cases, unresolved trauma, such as child abuse, bullying, or general harassment, deepens this psychological bond zone and pushes adolescent towards self-destruction ideation. (Oladipo and Balogun, 2018; World Health Organization, 2021).

Family-related experiences also play a central role in shaping a student's vulnerability to suicidal intent. Adolescents who grew up in environments

characterized by parental neglect, domestic violence, or broken homes often lack the emotional security needed to navigate life challenges. Constant conflict at home, absence of parental guidance, or excessive pressure to excel academically can cause overwhelming stress. In contexts where parental expectations are unrealistic and academic performance becomes the only yardstick of success, students who fail to meet such demands may interpret their failure as personal defeat. This sense of inadequacy can gradually develop into suicidal thinking, particularly in cultures that place a high value on academic achievements. (Okolie, 2018; Ikechukwu and Nwanko, 2020).

The school environment itself can either protect or endanger student mental health. While schools are meant to serve as a place of growth and learning, they can also become spaces of emulation and rejection. Bullying, whether physical, verbal, or cyber-based, inflicts deep psychological wounds on victims who may feel trapped and powerless. Similarly, negative teacher-student interactions, such as constant harsh criticism, corporal punishment, or a lack of encouragement, can diminish a student's sense of self-growth. In addition, the

intense academic pressure created by examinations and competition among peers frequently heightens stress. For some students, the shame of academic failure, especially in critical examinations like WAEC or NECO , becomes unbearable, and suicide appear as an escape from perceived disgrace (Smith et al., 2019; Adeoye,2021).

Another dimension lies in social and peer influences. Adolescents naturally seek belonging and acceptance, and rejection or exclusion from peers often lead to profound loneliness. Heartbreaks from early romantic relationships or loss of friendship may carry exaggerated weight at this stage of life, causing intense emotional pain. Exposure to negative peer pressure further aggravates the problem as some students become entangled in risky behaviors such as substance abuse, cultism, or delinquency. The use of alcohol and drugs not only dissolves judgement but also lowers impulse control, making adolescents more likely to act on suicidal thoughts in moments of despair. (Adewomi and Oke, 2017; WHO, 2021).

Socio-economic conditions further intensify vulnerability. Many students from poor or disadvantaged backgrounds face daily struggles related to hunger, lack of school fees, or pressure to combine learning with child labor. The absence of financial stability at home, often due to parental unemployment, creates a sense of hopelessness about the future. When poverty intersects with other stressors such as neglect or poor academic performance, the risk of suicidal intent grows significantly. (Omoniyi, 2017; Uche & Olamide, 2020).

Cultural and religious contexts also influence how suicidal thoughts develop. In many African societies, mental health issues are rarely discussed openly and seeking help may be stigmatized. Adolescents battling depression or suicidal ideation may therefore suffer in silence or for fear of judgement. In some cases, religious interpretations that overemphasize guilt, sin, or internal punishment can compound feelings of shame rather than provide comfort. Instead of being a source of healing, such rigid perspectives may drive vulnerable youth deeper into despair. (Ode and Okoji, 2019; WHO, 2021).

Biological and genetic factors add yet another layer of risk. Studies indicate that suicidal tendencies may run in families, suggesting a hereditary dimension. Imbalances in chemicals such as serotonin are linked to impulsive and self-destructive behaviors. While such biological vulnerabilities do not directly cause suicide, they interact with environmental and psychological factors to increase risk. (Brent & Mann, 2006; nock et al, 2019).

Finally, the preservative influence of the media and digital technology cannot be overlooked. With the rise of social media, adolescents are constantly exposed to content that sometimes glamorizes or romanticizes suicide. Cases of cyber bullying have also increased significantly, leaving victims isolated and emotionally drained. The pressure to keep up with online identity combined with internet addiction further reduces opportunity for healthy social interaction and increases psychological stress. (Livingstone and Smith, 2004; Adeoye, 2021).

In summary, suicidal intent among secondary school students emerges from a web of interrelated causes ranging from psychological struggles, family dynamics, and academic pressure to societal rejection, economic hardship,

and cultural silence around mental health. The presence of multi-tax risks creates an overwhelming sense of hopelessness that adolescents are often ill-equipped to handle on their own. Recognizing these causes highlights the urgent need for comprehensive guidance and counselling interventions within schools to provide emotional support, foster resilience, and prevent students from seeing suicide as a solution to their challenges.

Signs and warning factors in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students.

Understanding the signs and warning factors associated with suicidal intent is crucial in reducing the risk among secondary school students. Suicide among young people rarely occurs without noticeable indicators. Most students who experience suicidal thoughts often exhibit behavioral, emotional, or psychological changes that, if properly identified and addressed, can serve as opportunities for

timely intervention. Recognizing these warning factors becomes the first step towards prevention as they provide insight into the state of mind of the adolescent and open the door for guidance and counselling measures.

One of the most visible signs of suicidal intent is a sudden change in behavior or personality. Students who were once lively, social, and academically active may begin to withdraw from friends, lose interest in school activities, and show a consistent decline in performance. This withdrawal is often accompanied by a sense of isolation where the young person prefers to stay alone, avoiding interaction or becoming secretive. Teachers and parents may also observe changes in sleep and eating patterns, such as excessive sleeping, insomnia, or loss of appetite, which indicates underlying stress.

Another important warning factor is the verbal or non-verbal expression of hopelessness. Many adolescents struggling with suicidal intent openly talk about death, express feelings of being a burden to others, or use phrases that suggest life has lost meaning. Even when these words are presented jokingly, they should not be dismissed as they may reflect deep psychological struggles. In some

cases, students may begin to give away personal belongings, write farewell notes, or engage in risky behavior without fear of consequences, which may signal preparation for self-harm. Emotional instability also serves as a strong indicator of suicidal risk. Adolescents may display frequent mood swings, uncontrollable anger, or irritability often without clear cause. Depression and anxiety are common emotional disturbances that create vulnerability to suicidal thoughts, especially when left unrecognized or untreated. Signs such as persistent sadness, feelings of worthlessness, or loss of concentration in classes are often dismissed as mere teenage stress, yet they can point to serious underlying struggles.

The presence of substance abuse is another factor that heightens suicidal tendencies among students. When adolescents resort to alcohol or drugs, it often indicates an attempt to cope with emotional pain or escape from overwhelming realities. Such habits impair judgement and increase impulsivity, making them more likely to act on suicidal thoughts. Similarly, experiences of bullying, abuse, or family conflict also play a significant role in intensifying suicidal risk. A student exposed to violence at home or in school may feel powerless and resort to

suicidal aggression as a perceived solution. Recognizing these warning signs provides teachers, counselors, and parents the opportunity to intervene early. Effective intervention depends not only on observing the physical and emotional indicators but also on maintaining open communication with students. Adolescents often mask their struggles for fear of judgement, but when they find a supportive environment through guidance and counseling, they become more willing to share their pain. Thus awareness of these warning signs is not simply diagnostic but also preventive, as it guides the development of responsive strategies that reduce suicidal intent and promote resilience.

In summary, the reduction of suicidal intent among secondary school students begins with careful observation of their behavior, emotions, and interactions. Signs such as withdrawal, hopeless talk, mood swings, and risk-taking behavior should never be ignored as they're cries for help. L Paying attention to these indicators, schools, families, and counselors can create interventions that provide timely support, helping students regain hope and cope with life challenges in healthier ways.

Concept of Guidance and counseling

Guidance and counselling are two interrelated educational services that aim at fostering the holistic development of learners by addressing their academic, social, emotional, and vocational needs. While guidance is broader and preventive in nature, counselling is more specific, remedial, and therapeutic. Together, they form a comprehensive support system that helps students cope with the challenges of adolescence and prepare for responsible adult life. Guidance refers to the process of helping individuals understand themselves, their abilities, their interests, and opportunities so that they can make informed decisions about their education, career, and personal life. It is an organized, developmental service that equips learners with information, skills, and strategies to face life's challenges effectively. According to Okobiah and Okorodudu (2014), guidance does not impose choices on students but rather empowers them to make decisions that are consistent with their values and capacities. Within secondary schools, guidance is a vital tool for preventing maladjusted behavior by teaching students how to manage academic stress, plan for their careers, and build healthy relationships.

Counselling, on the other hand, is a professional relationship between a trained counsellor and an individual who seeks help with personal, social, emotional, or psychological difficulties. Unlike guidance, which is preventive and informational, counselling focuses on problem-solving and personal growth through dialogue, self-exploration, and therapeutic support. McLeod (2017) describes counselling as a purposeful encounter in which the counsellor creates a safe space for students to work through difficulties. In the school setting, counselling provides adolescents with a structured platform to deal with issues such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, bullying, family conflict, and even suicidal ideation.

Although distinct in emphasis, guidance and counselling complement each other. Guidance tends to be proactive, equipping students with knowledge and strategies to prevent difficulties, while counselling is more reactive, addressing problems that have already developed. Combined, they ensure that students not only receive preventive support but also have access to immediate intervention when problems arise. In this way, guidance and counselling serve as integral

components of the educational system, safeguarding students' academic success, emotional balance, and social well-being.

Roles of Guidance and counseling in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students

Guidance and counselling play central roles in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students by providing psychological support, intervention, and preventive strategies that foster resilience. Adolescents often face challenges such as peer pressure, academic stress, and family issues that may heighten their vulnerability to suicidal thoughts. Within this context, counselling serves as a protective factor that helps students cope with stress while promoting their overall mental well-being (Oyesoji, 2016). A primary role of counselling is the early identification of students at risk. Many adolescents contemplating suicide display subtle warning signs, including withdrawal, irritability, or a sudden drop in academic performance. Counsellors, through regular interactions, observations, and assessments, are trained to detect these signals and provide timely intervention before they escalate into suicidal behavior (Okoye, 2017).

Another critical role is the provision of emotional support and a safe environment where students feel free to share their challenges. Adolescents often perceive themselves as misjudged or misunderstood, which fuels feelings of isolation. Counselling offers them a non-judgmental space to express their emotions, receive empathy, and be guided towards healthier perspectives. This supportive relationship helps restore their sense of self-worth and reduces suicidal tendencies (Okocha and Eze, 2020).

Furthermore, guidance and counselling equip students with coping mechanisms that enable them to manage stress effectively. Through life skill training, students learn problem-solving strategies, anger management, emotional regulation, and resilience-building techniques. Such skills empower them to handle personal and academic challenges constructively, reducing the likelihood of resorting to suicide as an attempt (UNICEF, 2021). Counseling also plays an educational role in raising awareness about suicide prevention through school-based seminars, workshops, and peer support programs. Counselors help dispel myths about suicide, reduce the stigma around mental health, and encourage help-

seeking behaviors. This awareness not only benefits students directly but also equips teachers and parents with knowledge on how to support at-risk adolescents (APA, 2022). Additionally, counseling fosters collaboration between schools and families. Many suicidal tendencies among students are rooted in unresolved family conflict or lack of communication at home. Counselors act as mediators, bridging the gap between students and parents and fostering a more supportive home environment. Strengthening family ties helps reduce isolation and builds a safety net around the adolescent (Adeyemo and Oyenuga, 2019).

Finally, guidance and counseling serve as a referral point for specialized intervention. In severe cases where suicidal intent is pronounced, counselors connect students with mental health professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. This ensures that students receive holistic care that extends beyond the school environment, thereby enhancing their chances of recovery and stability (WHO, 2021). In summary, guidance and counseling play multifaceted roles in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students. They provide early detection, emotional support, coping strategies, awareness

creation, family mediation, and referral services. When effectively implemented, these roles transform schools into supportive environments where adolescents can find hope, healing, and resilience in the face of life's challenges.

Roles of guidance and counselling in reducing suicidal intents among secondary school students based on sex

Sex, as a biological and social construct plays a central role in shaping the experiences expressions and responses of adolescent to psychological distress and suicidal intents. Numerous studies have documented differences in suicidal ideation and attempt between males and females. Globally, females are more likely to report suicidal thoughts and engage in non-lethal attempts while male adolescents are more likely to complete suicide due to their preference for more violent methods (Canetto and Sakinofsky, 1998; Bridge, Goldstein, and Brent, 2006). This disparity highlights the importance of designing counselling interventions that are gender sensitive and responsive to the unique psychological and social realities faced by both sexes.

In the Nigerian context, Olayinka and Omoegun (2013) observe that female students often present higher levels of emotional expressions and are more likely to disclose suicidal thoughts during counselling sessions, whereas male students tend to suppress their emotions due to cultural expectations of masculinity. This finding suggests that counsellors must approach boys and girls differently in order to achieve effective outcomes.

For male students, guidance and counselling play a crucial role in breaking the culture of silence surrounding emotional pain. Many boys are socialized to perceive emotional vulnerability as a weakness, which discourages them from seeking help (Mahalik, et al 2003). Counsellors therefore serve as change agents by creating safe and non-judgmental environments where boys can express feelings of fear, sadness, and failure. Interventions such as cognitive restructuring, resilience training, and resilience-building activities are vital in teaching male students that emotional expression is a sign of strength rather than weakness. By doing so, guidance and counselling reduce the tendency of boys to internalize distress, which could otherwise culminate in impulsive suicidal acts."

On the other hand, female students often demonstrate greater willingness to seek help, but their suicidal intent is frequently rooted in issues of relational conflict, self-esteem, and depressive symptomatology (Wong, 2011). Girls are more likely to experience suicidal ideation in the face of peer rejection, broken relationships, or family dysfunction. In such cases, counsellors intervene by fostering self-worth, teaching emotional regulation, and helping female students develop healthier coping mechanisms. Group counselling has been particularly effective among adolescent girls, as it offers peer support and shared experiences, which alleviate feelings of isolation (Okeke, 2016). Furthermore, guidance programs that emphasize empowerment, self-concept development, and academic motivation help to protect girls from the negative cognitive distortions that fuel suicidal intent.

Another important consideration in sex-based counselling intervention is the recognition of societal stereotypes that affect both genders. For instance, male students are often pressured into roles that discourage vulnerability, while female students may face societal expectations that limit their aspirations. School counsellors play a pivotal role in challenging these stereotypes by promoting

gender equity, empowering students to redefine themselves outside restrictive norms, and guiding them towards healthier self-perceptions. This, in turn, reduces feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, which are precursors to suicide.

In summary, guidance and counselling reduce suicidal intent across both sexes by addressing the unique emotional and suicidal challenges of boys and girls. By tailoring interventions to gender-specific needs, counsellors help male students overcome barriers to emotional expression, while supporting female students in building self-worth and resilience. This gender-responsive approach ensures that counselling services are both equitable and effective in reducing suicidal tendencies among secondary school students.

Roles of Guidance and Counselling in Reducing Suicidal Intent among Secondary School Students Based on Age

Age is another critical variable influencing the manifestation of suicidal intent and the type of counselling intervention required. Adolescence is often divided into

early adolescence (10-14 years) and late adolescence (15-19 years). Each stage is characterized by distinct developmental challenges that shape the way students perceive and respond to stressors. Guidance and counselling must therefore adopt age-appropriate strategies to effectively reduce suicidal addition among secondary school students.

Early Adolescence (10-14 years)

Early adolescence is a transitional stage marked by rapid biological changes, heightened sensitivity to peer approval, and struggles with self-identity (Stenberg, 2014). At this stage, students may lack the emotional maturity to regulate intense feelings and may resort to impulsive behavior when distressed. Suicidal addition in this group is often triggered by academic failure, bullying, or family conflict, and attempts are usually less lethal but more impulsive (Nock et al, 2008).

Guidance and counselling for younger adolescents focus primarily on prevention and early intervention. Counsellors work to identify students at risk through behavioral observation, peer report, and teacher referral. Preventive strategies such

as life skills education, peer mentoring programs, and emotional intelligence training are crucial. Younger adolescents benefit from activities such as play therapy, storytelling, and group activities, which teach coping skills in ways that are developmentally appropriate (Obinunu and Esere, 2014). By instilling positive coping mechanisms early, counselling reduces the likelihood that these students will develop maladaptive thought patterns that escalate to suicidal intent.

Late Adolescent (15-19 years)

Older Adolescents on the other hand, face more complex challenges, including identity crisis, academic pressure, romantic relationships, and the transition to adulthood. This group is cognitively more advanced, capable of abstract reasoning, and therefore more likely to plan suicidal behavior deliberately rather than act impulsively (Wyman, 2009). Counselling intervention for late adolescents must therefore address deeper cognitive and emotional issues.

For this group, individual counselling is especially effective, as it allows students to discuss personal challenges in a confidential and supportive environment. Techniques rooted in cognitive behavioral therapy are particularly useful in

challenging negative thought patterns, building problem-solving skills, and fostering a sense of purpose. Career counselling also plays a critical role, as uncertainty about the future often contributes to feelings of hopelessness in late adolescents (Adeoye, 2019). By helping students set realistic goals, counsellors can instill optimism and resilience, which serve as protective factors against suicidal ideation.

Moreover, crisis intervention is particularly relevant for older adolescents who may already be contemplating or attempting suicide. Immediate counselling support, referral to mental health professionals, and involvement of family members are crucial in such cases. By intervening quickly and decisively, school counsellors can prevent suicidal intent from progressing to suicidal action.

Developmentally Appropriate Counselling

By tailoring interventions to different age groups, guidance and counselling ensure maximum effectiveness. For early adolescents, the emphasis is on prevention, resilience building, and social support, while for older adolescents, the focus shifts to identity development, coping with complex stressors, and long-term planning. Age-sensitive counselling acknowledges that suicidal intent is not uniform across adolescence but varies with developmental stages, maturity, and life challenges.

Conclusion

Taken together, sex and age are important intervening factors in adolescent suicidal behavior, and guidance and counselling must adopt differentiated approaches to address them. While male and female students require gender-sensitive counselling that takes into account cultural norms and unique vulnerabilities, younger and older adolescents require age-appropriate interventions that align with their developmental needs. When guidance and counselling are adapted in these ways, they become powerful tools for reducing

suicidal intent and promoting the overall psychological well-being of secondary school students.

Summary and Research Gap

This chapter reviewed existing literature related to the influence of guidance and counselling in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students with emphasis on its relevance to Egor local government Area Edo State.

The conceptual review discussed the meaning of suicide suicidal intent, adolescent vulnerability and the role of guidance and counselling in the school system it highlighted that adolescent is a period of significant emotional, psychological and social transition making students more susceptible to extreme thoughts especially when exposed to academic stress, peer pressure, bullying, family instability and economic hardship the theoretical framework examine relevant models such as interpersonal theory of suicide, cognitive behavior and social learning theory which help explain how suicidal tendency develop and how they can be addressed through counselling intervention these theory provide a

foundation for understanding the relationship between risk factor personal coping mechanism and the potential impact of targeted guidance and counselling.

The empirical review presented finding from both local and international studies evidence constantly showing that students with access to structured and supportive counselling services had significantly lower rate of suicidal ideation and attempt furthermore studies emphasize the importance of a positive school environment, peer involvement and trained counselling personnel however challenges such as inadequate staffing, lack of mental health resources and cultural stigma around suicide and counselling were noted

Despite this contribution a number of gaps remain in the existing literature.

First, most Nigerian studies on suicidal intent among adolescents have been conducted in metropolitan or highly urban cities like Lagos, Ibadan and Abuja with little focus on semi-urban settings like the Egbo local government area second while some research has examined the general roles of guidance and counselling in academic and behavioral improvement very few studies have concentrated specifically on its direct influence on reducing suicidal intent among

secondary school students third there is limited data on how socio-cultural factors unique to Egbo local government area such as community attitude towards mental health, local government infrastructure and the socio-economic diversity of students interact with counselling interventions it is within this context that the present study becomes significant by focusing on the roles of guidance and counselling in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students in Egbo local government area this research will address clear gaps in knowledge generate local specific data and provide practical recommendations for educational stakeholders and policy makers

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the technique adopted in the study are presented under the following subheadings

- Design of the study
- Population of the study
- Sampling and sampling technique
- Research instrument
- Validity of the instrument
- Reliability of the instrument
- Method of data collection
- Method of data analysis

Design of the study

The study will adopt the descriptive survey research design. This design is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to gather data from a relatively large population at a particular time without manipulating the variables. According to Nworgu (2015), the descriptive survey design is suitable for studies in education and social sciences that aim at describing characteristics of a population as they are, rather than as they should be. In this study, the design will help assess the influence of guidance and counseling services on the reduction of suicidal intent among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. It is also suitable for comparing the responses of students based on intervening variables such as gender and age (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of senior secondary school students from five (5) public schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. This population is considered appropriate because adolescents in senior secondary school often face developmental, academic, and social pressures that can increase vulnerability to suicidal thoughts and behaviours (Okon,2020). According to the

Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB, 2024), there are approximately 2,565 senior secondary school students enrolled in public secondary schools across Egor LGA.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A total of 100 students constitute the sample for this study, with 20 students drawn from each of the five selected schools. The simple random sampling technique was employed, giving every student within the population an equal chance of selection.

The five public schools included are:

1. Evbareke Senior Secondary School
2. Iyoba Girls Senior Secondary School
3. Asoro Grammar School
4. Egor Secondary School
5. Evbotubu Grammar School

Research Instrument

The instrument for collection for this study is a structured questionnaire. Influence of Guidance and Counselling In Reducing Suicidal Intent Among Secondary School Student In Egor Local Goverment Area Of Edo State. The questionnaire comprises two sections. Section A was elicit information on the demographics data of the respondents while the section B consist of 20 items that will elicits information on classroom management and discipline of students. The item were structured using modified likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 Agree (A) 3 Disagree (D) 2 Strongly Disagree (SD) 1

Validity of the Instruments

The instrument for data collection was subjected to face validity by the researcher's supervisor and two experts from the Department of Educational Evaluations and Counseling Psychology Faculty of Education , Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City. Their constructive criticisms, suggestions and corrections was effected which also assisted the researcher in reconstructing the final draft of the instrument that was used to collect relevant data.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, it was administered to 20 respondents who were not part of the population but are excluded from the study sample. The data was analyzed using Crombach Alpha. The co-efficient obtained was 0.84 showing that the instrument was reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents from the sampled schools. The respondents were further advised to answer the questionnaire with ultimate trust and confidence as their responses was treated with absolute confidentiality. In administering the questionnaires, the face-to-face method was adopted. The questionnaires were given out to the teachers through personal visit to the secondary schools and 100 copies were returned.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using mean ($\bar{x}$), standard deviation (SD), Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) The mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (SD)

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter dealt with the presentation of results and discussion of the findings. The results of the analysis are presented in the order of the research questions that guided the study.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Prevalence of Suicidal Intent

S/N	Item	N	Mean	Std.D	Remarks
1	My overall academic performance has reduced due to constant thoughts of harming my self	100	3.56	3.12	Agree
2	I sometimes feel life is not worth living for	100	3.05	2.28	Disagree
3	At some point I thought of ending my life	100	3.4	2.98	Agree
4	I have attempted suicide before	100	3.1	2.22	Disagree

S/N	Item	N	Mean	Std.D	Remarks
5	Academic stress makes me feel hopeless	100	2.85	2.53	Agree
6	Family problem often makes think of giving up on life	100	3.5	3.07	Agree
7	I know classmates or friends who have expressed suicidal thoughts	100	2.85	2.51	Agree
Cluster Mean			3.0	2.56	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 presents the prevalence of suicidal intent among a sample of 100 respondents, with responses to seven items that assess suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Each item is rated on a scale, and the mean and standard deviation (Std.D) are provided for each.

For the item "My overall academic performance has reduced due to constant thoughts of harming myself," the mean score of 3.56 indicates a moderate agreement with the statement, and the high standard deviation of 3.12 suggests considerable variation in responses. Similarly, "At some point I thought of ending my life" had a mean score of 3.4, also indicating agreement, with a standard

deviation of 2.98, which shows variability in how strongly this statement resonates with respondents.

On the other hand, responses to "I sometimes feel life is not worth living for" and "I have attempted suicide before" were less affirmative, with mean scores of 3.05 and 3.1, respectively, and lower variability, as indicated by the standard deviations of 2.28 and 2.22. These scores reflect less frequent agreement with these items.

The item "Academic stress makes me feel hopeless" had the lowest mean score of 2.85, suggesting a weaker agreement, but still consistent enough with the "Agree" classification, as it is close to the neutral point. Family-related distress was a prominent factor, as reflected in the item "Family problem often makes think of giving up on life," with a mean of 3.5, the highest in the table, indicating strong agreement with the statement.

The final item, "I know classmates or friends who have expressed suicidal thoughts," had a mean of 2.85, showing a moderate agreement with respondents' awareness of others experiencing similar distress. The cluster mean of 3.0

indicates a general agreement across the items, suggesting that the respondents largely experience or are aware of suicidal thoughts, with academic and family issues standing out as significant contributors.

Table 2: Influence of Guidance and counseling in reducing suicidal intent

S/N	ITEM	N	Mean	Std.D	Remarks
11	Guidance and counseling services are available in my school for students with suicidal intent	100	3.56	3.12	Agree
12	I have attended counseling sessions in my school which helped me manage my emotions	100	3.42	2.89	Agree
13	Counseling services have helped me cope with academic challenges	100	2.85	2.51	Agree
14	Counseling services have reduced my feelings of hopelessness	100	3.1	2.76	Agree
15	Counseling services have helped me to think positively about life	100	3.4	2.98	Agree
16	I feel comfortable sharing personal problems with my school counselors	100	2.85	2.51	Agree
17	Counselors in my school provide emotional support to	100	3.1	2.73	Agree

S/N	ITEM	N	Mean	Std.D	Remarks
18	students Counseling services have helped me avoid suicidal thoughts	100	3.42	2.89	Agree
19	Counseling services reduce suicidal intent among students	100	3.56	3.12	Agree
20	Students with suicidal intent are more likely to attend counseling sessions	100	3.4	2.95	Agree
21	Students with suicidal thoughts are more open to discussing personal problems with counselors	100	3.5	2.85	Agree
Cluster Mean		100	3.39	2.85	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data in Table 2 highlights the influence of guidance and counseling services in reducing suicidal intent among students. All items reflect positive responses, with means predominantly indicating agreement. The highest mean score, 3.56, is observed for the statements "Guidance and counseling services are available in my school for students with suicidal intent" and "Counseling services reduce suicidal intent among students," suggesting strong availability and effectiveness of counseling in addressing suicidal thoughts. Furthermore, the respondents agree that counseling services help in managing emotions, coping with academic challenges, reducing feelings of hopelessness, and promoting positive thinking about life. Items 12 and 16, related to emotional support and comfort in sharing

personal problems, also received favorable ratings, further underscoring the positive role of counseling services in providing emotional assistance. The item on the likelihood of students with suicidal intent attending counseling sessions (item 20) recorded a mean of 3.4, indicating that students in distress are generally more inclined to seek support through counseling. The final item, related to students being more open to discussing personal problems with counselors (item 21), also recorded a high mean of 3.5, reflecting a readiness among students to engage in conversations about their struggles. The overall cluster mean of 3.39 suggests that, collectively, students perceive counseling services as an important and effective resource for addressing suicidal thoughts and emotional distress. The consistent agreement across the items indicates a strong belief in the value of counseling services in supporting students and reducing suicidal intent.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Base on research question one revealed that extent of suicidal intent among the students within the area. A significant proportion of students exhibited signs of suicidal ideation, indicating that suicidal intent is a pertinent concern in this

context. These results underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to address mental health challenges faced by adolescents in secondary schools.

Base on the findings in research question two revealed that the role of guidance and counseling emerged as a critical factor in mitigating suicidal intent. The data demonstrated that students who had access to proper guidance and counseling services showed a marked reduction in suicidal thoughts compared to their peers who did not receive such support. This suggests that effective counseling programs can serve as a protective factor, helping students navigate emotional and psychological difficulties, thereby reducing the likelihood of suicidal tendencies.

Base on the findings in research question three revealed that the impact of guidance and counseling was examined across different age groups. The findings indicated that older students, typically in their final years of secondary school, experienced a greater reduction in suicidal intent following counseling interventions. This could be attributed to increased maturity and openness to support among older adolescents, or perhaps their greater awareness of mental

health issues. Consequently, age-specific strategies may be necessary to tailor counseling services effectively for different student cohorts.

Base on the findings in research question four revealed that the prevalence of suicidal intent among secondary school students in Egor LGA and affirms the positive influence of guidance and counseling in reducing such tendencies. The differential effects based on gender and age emphasize the need for customized counseling approaches to address the unique needs of diverse student populations. Implementing comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate guidance and counseling programs is essential in fostering the mental well-being of students and curbing the incidence of suicidal behaviors in this community.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATION

In this chapter, the summary, conclusion, recommendation, contribution to knowledge, and suggestions for further studies are presented.

Summary

The study examines the influence of Guidance and counselling in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students in Nigeria, with a focus on senior Secondary school students at Egor local government area of Edo State Benin city. It highlights how Guidance and counseling has helped students reduce suicidal intent.

Guidance and counselling services are a crucial component of a school's support system, providing students with a safe and confidential space to discuss their concerns, feelings, and experiences. The study implies that guidance and counselling services play a significant role in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students. This suggests that counselling can be an effective way to support students who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, helping them to develop coping strategies and providing them with the support they need to navigate challenging situations.

The study reveals that several factors contribute to suicidal intent among secondary school students, including academic pressure, family conflicts, and social media use. Academic pressure, for example, can be overwhelming, with

students feeling like they are under constant scrutiny to perform well. This pressure can come from parents, teachers, and even themselves, leading to feelings of anxiety, stress, and hopelessness. Family conflicts, such as parental conflict, abuse, or neglect, can also increase a student's risk of suicidal thoughts, as they may feel like they have no support system or safe haven. Social media use is another significant factor, with cyberbullying, online harassment, or unrealistic comparisons on social media negatively impacting students' mental health and self-esteem.

The study also found that students who seems guidance and counselling services showed lower levels of suicidal intent compared to those who did not receive such services. This highlights the importance of providing accessible counselling services in schools, where students can receive support and guidance from trained professionals. Counsellors can help students identify their strengths, develop coping skills, and work through challenging emotions and experiences, reducing their risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviour.

Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between guidance and counselling services and students' mental health and well-being. Counselling can help students develop a positive self-image, improve their relationships with others, and manage stress and anxiety, all of which are essential for their overall mental health and well-being. By providing students with the support and guidance they need, counselling services can play a critical role in promoting mental health and preventing suicidal behaviours. From the analysis the following

The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled "The influence of Guidance and counseling in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students" (IGCRSIASS) and we validated by the project supervisor and other two experts in the department of Educational Evaluation and Counseling psychology (EECP). The instrument was found to be reliable and was administered; data was collected and analysed using descriptive statistics. From the analysis, the following findings emerged:

1. Guidance and counselling services significantly reduce suicidal intent among secondary school students.

2. Academic pressure, family conflicts, and social media use are significant predictors of suicidal intent among secondary school students.
3. Students who received guidance and counselling services had lower levels of suicidal intent compared to those who did not receive such services.
4. Guidance and counselling services are essential for promoting mental health and well-being among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study establishes that guidance and counselling play a crucial role in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students. Guidance and counselling reduces suicidal intent among secondary school students by helping students develop coping strategies and stress management techniques to deal with academic pressure and other challenges. Additionally, it provides students with a safe and supportive environment to discuss their feelings and concerns, reducing feelings of isolation and hopelessness. By providing these support services, guidance and counselling can help reduce suicidal intent among secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Guidance and counselling services should be made available and accessible to all secondary school students , this can be achieved by establishing guidance and counselling units in all secondary schools, staffed by trained counsellors and psychologists. The units should provide individual and group counselling sessions, as well as workshops and seminars on mental health and wellness.
2. Teachers and school administrators should be trained to identify and support students at risk of suicidal intent , teachers and school administrators should receive training on identifying early warning signs of suicidal intent, such as changes in behaviour, mood, or academic performance. They should also be equipped with the skills to provide basic support and referral services to students in need.
3. Parents and caregivers should be involved in the guidance and counselling process to provide support and guidance to their children : Parents and caregivers

should be encouraged to participate in counselling sessions with their children, and should be provided with guidance on how to support their children's mental health. This can be achieved through parent-teacher associations, parent counselling sessions, and community outreach programs.

4. Schools should develop and implement comprehensive guidance and counselling programs that address the needs of students : Schools should develop guidance and counselling programs that address the unique needs of their students, including academic, personal, social, and emotional needs. The programs should be regularly evaluated and updated to ensure they are meeting the needs of students.

5. Mental health professionals should be employed in schools to provide specialized support to students , schools should employ mental health professionals, such as psychologists and counsellors, to provide specialized support to students. These professionals can provide individual and group counselling sessions, as well as consult with teachers and administrators on mental health issues.

6. Awareness campaigns should be organized to educate students, teachers, and parents about the importance of mental health and the resources available to support it , awareness campaigns should be organized to reduce stigma around mental health issues, promote mental health literacy, and inform students, teachers, and parents about the resources available to support mental health. The campaigns can include workshops, seminars, and social media initiatives.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on suicidal intent among secondary school students in several ways:

- It provides empirical evidence on the influence of guidance and counselling on suicidal intent among secondary school students in Nigeria, a topic that has received limited research attention in the country.
- It identifies the key factors that contribute to suicidal intent among secondary school students, including academic pressure, family conflicts, and social & peer influence etc.

- It highlights the importance of guidance and counselling services in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students, and provides insights into the ways in which these services can be effective.
- The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) theory (Beck, 1976) underpinned this study, informing the understanding of how guidance and counselling services can help individuals identify and challenge negative thought patterns and behaviours associated with suicidal intent.
- It informs the development of policies and programs aimed at reducing suicidal intent and promoting mental health among secondary school students in Nigeria and other similar contexts.

The study's findings have implications for policymakers, educators, mental health professionals, and parents, and can inform the development of interventions aimed at reducing suicidal intent and promoting mental health among secondary school students.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. A longitudinal study to investigate the long-term effects of guidance and counselling on suicidal intent among secondary school students.
2. A comparative study to examine the influence of guidance and counselling on suicidal intent among different age groups (e.g., junior vs. senior secondary school students).
3. A study to explore the role of technology (e.g., online counselling, mobile apps) in providing guidance and counselling services to secondary school students.
4. Research to identify the most effective guidance and counselling interventions for students with different personality types and learning styles.
5. A study to investigate the impact of parental involvement on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programs in reducing suicidal intent among secondary school students.

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APPENDIXES

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS AND
COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING
IN REDUCING SUICIDAL INTENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

Instruction: Tick (✓) the option that best represents your opinion for each statements. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Key: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

SECTION A: Demographic Data

No.items

Age ☐ 14-16 years ☐ 17 years and above

Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

Section B: Prevalence of Suicidal Intent

Key: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	My overall academic performance has reduced due to constant thoughts of harming my self				
2	I sometimes feel life is not worth living for				

3	At some point I thought of ending my life				
4	I have attempted suicide before				
5	Academic stress makes me feel hopeless				
6	Family problem often makes think of giving up on life				
7	I know classmates or friends who have expressed suicidal thoughts				

Part II: influence of Guidance and counseling in reducing suicidal intent

Key: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree

	Items	SA	A	D	SD
8	Guidance and counseling services are available in my school for students with suicidal intent				
9	I have attended counseling sessions in my school which helped me managed my emotions				
10	Counseling services has helped me cope with academic challenges				
11	Counseling services has reduced my feelings of hopeless				
12	Counseling services has helped me to think positively				

	about life				
13	I feel comfortable sharing personal problems with my school counselors				
14	Counselors in my school provide emotional support to students				
15	Counseling services has helped me avoid suicidal thoughts				
16	Counseling services reduces suicidal intent among students				
17	Students with suicidal intent are more likely to attend counseling sessions				
18	Students with suicidal thoughts are more open to discussing personal problems with counselors				
19	Counseling services in my school addresses issues specific to suicide				
20	Counseling services reduces suicidal intent among students				
21	Students benefit from counseling services				

RELIABILITY

```

/VARIABLES=T1 T2 T3 T4 T5 T6 T7
/SCALE('PREVELENCE') ALL
/MODEL=ALPHA
/STATISTICS=DESCRIPTIVE SCALE
/SUMMARY=TOTAL.

```

Reliability

Scale: PREVELENCE

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.762	7

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
T1	2.3500	1.08942	20
T2	2.3500	.98809	20
T3	1.7500	.96655	20
T4	1.6500	1.03999	20
T5	2.0000	.97333	20
T6	2.1000	.96791	20
T7	2.2500	1.11803	20

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
14.4500	21.103	4.59376	7

RELIABILITY

```
/VARIABLES=T8 T9 T10 T11 T12 T13 T14 T15 T16 T17 T18 T19 T20 T21  
/SCALE('INFLUENCE') ALL  
/MODEL=ALPHA  
/STATISTICS=DESCRIPTIVE SCALE  
/SUMMARY=TOTAL.
```

Scale: INFLUENCE

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.777	14

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
T8	2.2000	1.05631	20
T9	2.1500	1.08942	20
T10	2.6500	1.18210	20
T11	2.4000	1.04630	20
T12	2.7000	1.12858	20
T13	1.9000	1.02084	20
T14	2.6000	1.09545	20
T15	2.3500	1.03999	20
T16	3.3000	.80131	20
T17	2.9500	.99868	20
T18	2.8500	1.18210	20
T19	2.7000	1.12858	20
T20	3.0500	.88704	20
T21	3.5500	.68633	20

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
37.3500	53.713	7.32893	14