

*Original Research Report*



## The Role of Home Management in Suicidal Mediation among Undergraduates in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This paper underscores the significance of home management in suicidal mediation especially among undergraduates in the three universities that offer Home Management in the Southeastern geopolitical zone in Nigeria. The Universities include, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The study adopts a descriptive survey design. The population comprises 173 respondents. This is made up of 126 students and 47 lecturers chosen from the universities. The entire populations were used as the sample of the study because of the manageable size. A 27-item questionnaire entitled, Questionnaire on Home Management Suicidal Mediation (QHMSM) was deployed to elicit data from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts. The instrument was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability method to determine the internal consistency which yielded a coefficient of 0.91. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. The study revealed that provision of a stable environment through active Home Management for a child enables him experience a childhood filled with both love and bond which help to reduce suicidal mediation amongst undergraduates. The study recommends that parents should provide the basic needs of children, as these will boost their morale and prevent instability. Children should be engaged in positive habits and activities so as to reduce incidence of drug abuse and other social vices.

**Keywords:** Home Management, Suicidal Mediation, Suicidal Behaviour, Undergraduates

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### 1. Introduction

Suicide behaviour among Nigerian undergraduates is a growing social and psychological issues which has assumed at an alarming rate over the years leading to numerous deaths. The increase of suicide cases in Nigeria especially amongst undergraduates has assumed an alarming rate recently, and this has led to a lot of avoidable psychological and health issues to people from diverse economic makeup. Suicide cases as a result of suicidal mediation have a devastating effect on friends and families of these undergraduate students and also have great negative effect on the community of staff and students. According to Blasco et al. (2019), suicide is an act in which one makes an intentional direct and conscious effort to end one's life. Carvalho, Guerrero, and Chambel (2018) states that suicide is a process of engaging oneself in self-induced elimination. World Health Organization (cited in Eskin, Baydar & Harlak, 2021) defines suicide as the process of eliminating oneself deliberately and which is usually initiated and performed by the individual concerned in the full knowledge or expectation of its fatal outcome. Suicide is the deliberate act of taking one's own life or self-inflicted death. Wickremasinghe, (2020) reports that suicide is the fifteenth leading cause of death, accounting for 1.4% of all deaths in the world.

In recent times, suicide cases amongst undergraduate students have increased in Nigeria. Onwuama et al. (2021) reports a suicide which occurred on 19th April, 2019 involving a first-year student of Kogi State University, who committed suicide after she was allegedly dumped by her lover. Daniels, (2022) reports that a lifeless body was found suspended from a height in an uncompleted building on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. The body was identified as a third year Physics and Astronomy student of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. Another report has it that a student allegedly committed suicide due to poor academic performance at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife on 5th May, 2022. Ogboghodo, Osadieye, and Omosun (2018) also recounted that a final year student allegedly committed suicide due to poor academic performance on April 14, 2018. The Pharmacy student of the Delta State University was alleged to have ingested two packets of insecticide, when he discovered he would not be graduating that year but would be spending another session in the school on account of poor academic performance.

Various factors have been given to be associated with suicidal behaviour especially amongst undergraduate students. According to Ammerman et al.(2021), absence of meaningful family ties and lack of social interactions resulting from break-in relationships between students and the society are some of the social factors responsible for suicide behaviours. Adekoya, (2010) notes that suicidal mediation among students can occur as a result of low school achievement, stress and breakdown in communication between students and the society leading to isolation. Other risk factors according to Azim, Ojeh, Rahman, and Sa (2020) include hopelessness, lack of social support, mental disorders and a history of suicidal plans and attempts. Blasco et al. (2016) opines that depression covers over 40% of the causes of suicide in universities. Depression and suicidal mediation among undergraduates stem from complexes of life as a result of increased tools and a changed in tactics of living affecting family bonds, family relationships. Family living or strategic home management could be used as a tool for reduction of suicidal mediation amongst undergraduates because it is a very important factor which contributes to the health, happiness and well-being of a family.

Home Management refers to the efficient and effective organization, administration, and supervision of household activities and resources to maintain a well-functioning and harmonious home environment (Rollins & Rollins, 2000). Home management plays a very important role in shaping the dynamics and well-being of families. Home management helps families through the following; by promoting family cohesion, by enhancing family communication, by facilitating time management, by

supporting financial stability, by fostering life skills development, by promoting good health and well-being. Home management helps to create a way for a better growth and development of every family member in which undergraduate students are part of. Eskin et al. (2021) stated that a family consists of two or more persons related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption who are living in the same household. Family is also a social institution which performs the activities of procreation, economy, education and recreation. Every-Palmer et al. (2020). Family is made up of human beings living together with love, affection and mutual understanding. Effective management of family enhances the chances of achieving goals by making wise decisions and proper utilization of resources. The process of management becomes a rational and intelligent method of dealing with change which affects the undergraduate directly and their welfare as well. The management of a family is basically concerned with the qualities of human relationships. Home management is the administrative aspect of family living because it deals with the practical application of the principles of management to the home. Fonseca-Pedrero, and Albéniz, (2020) stated that home management is application of science and arts towards achieving a healthy and happy home. Gezova, (2015) stated that home management seeks to help the individual, the home, family and the community in all aspects of living. Home management is designed to train individuals to become good homemakers and to provide opportunities for self-development in the society. It is a field of study that provide the necessary knowledge for guiding and assisting undergraduate students towards a more self-compatible relationship with society especially within the context of home and family life.

The study of Home management is linked with values and goals which give meaning to the lives, thoughts, feelings and experiences of the members of the family. They are closely related to each other and help to motivate the family to make decisions in order to achieve their desired goals. Home Management consists of several components such as: the act of planning and organizing actions related to the home; the utilizing of various home resources for proper benefit of family members; upholding of stable family economy and effective distribution of family income amongst family members and resources. Home management also includes other aspect of home making such as; meal planning through the selection of food according to preference of family members, selection of food in relationship to cost and requirements, the selection clothing, laundering, child-care, care and maintenance of household tools and equipment's. All these indicate that a systematic knowledge of Home Management could be detrimental for homemakers in enabling/aiding reduction in the rate of suicidal mediation amongst undergraduate students in Nigeria.

### *1.1. Statement of Problem*

The institutions of higher learning in recent times have witnessed increased cases of suicide and other suicidal behavior by undergraduate students. There are no doubts that getting a good education is a daunting challenge in all ramifications, socially, financially, psychologically, culturally and morally. These challenges often make youths more susceptible to suicide related behavior. This is usually because they are dealing with a complex interaction of multiple relationships (including peer pressure, family problems, or romantic issues), mental health, and school stressors (such as lack of connectedness to school and lack of supportive school environment).

The impact of western technology, mass education, democracy, industrialization, and employment in the present society has led to a decline in the joint family system. It has brought in so many changes in the home and family life which has resulted in an increase in suicidal cases especially amongst undergraduate students. A look at the recurring suicide cases among Nigerian undergraduate students is indeed worrisome. According to the Guardian Newspaper of June 12, 2018, Nigeria lost about 80

persons, mostly undergraduates, to suicide in a year, and Daily Trust of 23rd, June 2019 about forty-two including undergraduates. It has been a longstanding claim that social isolation elicits suicidal behavior. Evidence from literature suggests that most undergraduates go into depressed state, especially when there is a lack of social support from family, friends, school and which eventually leads them into suicide and suicidal behaviours. There have been studies on suicidal behaviours of adolescents and youths in civilized countries of the world. However, there is a lack of studies on mediation of suicidal behavior among youths in Nigeria, mostly undergraduate students. It is on the basis of these problems that this study was conducted to find out the role of Home Management in Suicidal Mediation among Undergraduates in Nigeria.

### 1.2. Purpose of the Study

The study aims at finding out the ways Home Management can reduce Suicidal Mediation among Undergraduates in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- (a) *Ascertain the factors that contribute to suicidal mediation among undergraduate students in Nigeria.*
- (b) *Ascertain the preventive strategies used by home makers to reduce suicidal mediation among undergraduates in Nigerian universities.*

### 1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- (a) What are the factors that contribute to suicidal behaviour among undergraduate students in Nigeria?
- (b) What are the preventive strategies used by home makers to reduce suicide mediation among undergraduates in Nigerian universities?

### 1.4. Hypotheses

*The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:*

- (a) There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the factors that contribute to suicidal behaviour among undergraduate students in Nigeria.
- (b) There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on how home management can contribute to preventive strategies of suicide mediation among undergraduates in Nigerian universities.

### 1.5. Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by the interpersonal psychological theory propounded by Thomas Joiner in 2005. The theory states that an individual will not die by suicide unless he or she has the mediation, suicide and the ability to do so. This theory asserts that for suicide to take place, the perceived burden indicates a sense of loneliness and a sense of low belongingness or social alienation for a long period before the desire to die. The theory further explains that the longer a person desires mediates on suicidal thoughts, the higher the chance of attempting suicide. Boredom sets in the moment that young adults begin to feel they are alone with their problem and feels cutting off their lives is better than living.

Burdensomeness is also strengthened by accumulation of issues or unpleasant experiences and insufficient quality of support from friends and family. The individual will likely act on this thought. Examples of such moments among undergraduate students include when intimate relationships are unstable and infrequent. Academic difficulties and financial issues could drive someone to commit suicide. The burden could also appear as academic pressure on these students. Thwarted belongingness;

which is the absence of reciprocally caring, positive and supportive social relationships in general or during awkward moments generates the feeling of social isolation. Peer relationships also play an essential role for undergraduates such as giving social support, providing encouragement and succor when dealing with difficult situations. Peer relationships could enable students to engage in social activities which are protective factors against suicidal mediation. However, the absence of such peer relationships or rejection can make undergraduate students susceptible to suicidal mediation. The capability for suicide is mostly acquired through repeated exposure to painful and fearsome experiences. The repeated exposure to ugly experiences may give way to a higher tolerance for pain and a sense of fearlessness in the face of death.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### *1.1. Design for the Study*

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey research design is used for those studies which aim at collecting and describing data in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population (Nworgu, 2015).

#### *2.1.1. Ethics Statement*

This research was ethically cleared by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Nigeria, Nigeria. All respondents provided informed consent verbally before completing the study instrument.

### *2.2. Area of the Study*

This study was carried out in all the Federal Universities in the South East, Nigeria that offer Home Economics Education in which Home Management or Family Living is one of the courses taught. These Universities are the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The South were chosen because the area is made up of universities that teach Home Management courses and many students offer the course in the area.

### *2.3. Population and Sample*

The population for this study was 173 students. The population is made up of all Home Economics students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU) and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki (EBSU). The population was therefore made up of 126 students and 47 lecturers in UNN, MOUUAU and EBSU respectively, making a total of 173 respondents. The entire number of the population were used as the sample of the study because of the manageable size.

### *2.4. Instrument for Data Collection and Study Procedure*

A 27-item questionnaire entitled the Questionnaire on Home Management Suicidal Mediation (QHMSM) was used in answering research questions. The questionnaire was made up of two parts. Part 1 which elicited information from the respondents on their demographic data, and Part 2 which was made up of two sections – section A and section B. Section A elicited information on the factors that contribute to suicidal behaviour among undergraduate students in Nigeria, while, Section B sought information on How Home Management can contribute to preventive strategies of suicide behaviour among undergraduates students of Nigeria. Both Sections were structured on a five–point response

options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The instrument was validated by three experts. The experts' comments and suggestions were used in modifying the questions and items. The Reliability of the instrument (QHMSM) was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability method to determine the internal consistency which yielded a coefficient of 0.91. This shows that the instrument was reliable.

### 2.5. Data Collection Technique

The administration and retrieval of the QHMSM questionnaire was carried out by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. One hundred and seventy three copies of the questionnaires were administered on the home management students and lecturers which were retrieved within one week after administration.

### 2.6. Data Analysis Technique

Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. Decision on research questions were taken based on real limits of numbers. Thus, mean rating of 3.50 and above were considered as agreed, while items with mean rating below 3.50 were considered as disagreed. Consequently, any item with a mean range of 0.50 – 1.49 was interpreted as strongly disagree, any item with a mean value ranging from 1.50-2.49 was regarded as disagree, any item with a mean value ranging from 2.50-3.49 was regarded as agree, while an item with a mean value of 3.50 and above was interpreted as strongly agree.

## 3. Results and Discussion

**3.1. Research Question 1:** What are the factors that contribute to suicidal behaviour among undergraduate students in Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Mean responses and t-test analysis of male and female students on the factors that contribute to suicidal behaviour among undergraduate students in Nigeria.

S/N	Items:	X <sub>G</sub>	SD <sub>G</sub>	X <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	t-cal	Sig (2-Tailed)	Rmks RQ Ho
1	Pre-existing family psychiatric conditions	4.99	1.16	4.99	1.13	4.98	1.19	0.03	A	NS
2	Depression	4.13	0.92	4.14	0.91	4.11	0.93	0.13	SA	NS
3	Poor Academic performance	4.44	0.62	4.47	0.60	4.40	0.63	0.46	SA	NS
4	Terminal illness	4.49	0.90	4.54	0.90	4.44	0.97	0.48	A	NS
5	Frustration	4.49	0.57	4.49	0.57	4.48	0.57	0.07	A	NS
6	Hopelessness	4.56	0.50	4.56	0.50	4.55	0.50	0.05	A	NS
7	Substance abuse	4.37	0.73	4.38	0.73	4.37	0.74	0.05	SA	NS
8	Alcoholism	4.37	0.89	4.40	0.89	4.33	0.96	0.34	SA	NS
9	Crashing of a business	4.44	0.50	4.43	0.50	4.44	0.50	0.50	SA	NS
10	Loss of loved ones	4.47	0.76	4.49	0.76	4.44	0.80	0.27	A	NS

11	Betrayal	4.28	0.84	4.31	4.25	0.85	0.85	0.28	A	NS	
12	Guilt	4.60	0.56	4.61	4.59	0.57	0.57	0.16	SA	NS	
13	Possession of lethal weapons	4.63	0.56	4.63	4.62	0.56	0.56	0.15	SA	NS	
14	Heartbreaks from failed relationships	4.31	0.66	4.33	4.29	0.66	0.66	0.23	A	NS	
15	Loneliness	4.41	0.63	4.42	4.40	0.63	0.63	0.09	A	NS	
16	Lack of proper parenting and poor upbringing	4.37	0.89	4.40	4.33	0.96	0.96	0.34	SA	NS	
17	Decline in religious training and moral laxity	4.44	0.50	4.43	4.44	0.50	0.50	0.50	SA	NS	
18	Influence of social media, science, technology and poor family involvement	4.47	0.76	4.49	4.44	0.80	0.80	0.27	A	NS	
Grand X and SD		4.47	0.77								

**Note:**  $X_t$  = Total mean;  $SD_t$  = Standard deviation total;  $X_1$  = mean of lecturers;  $SD_1$  = Standard deviation of lecturers;  $X_2$  = mean of students;  $SD_2$  = Standard deviation of students;  $N_1$  = Number of lecturers (47);  $N_2$  = Number of students (126).

Table 1 reveals that all the 18 items had their mean values ranging from 4.14 to 4.99, which were above the criterion mean of 3.50, indicating that the respondents agreed that all the 18 items are the factors that contribute to suicidal behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria. The t-calculated values of all the items ranged 0.03 to 0.50 were lower than the t-critical value of 1.96 at an alpha level of 0.05. The result therefore indicated that no significant differences exist in the mean response of two groups of respondents. It was therefore concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the factors that contribute to suicidal behaviour among undergraduate students in Nigeria. The hypothesis was retained.

The findings of the study in table 1 revealed how the factors that contributes to suicidal behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria. Some of them includes: loneliness, poor academic performance, poor parental upbringing and heartbreak from failed intimate relationships. These findings are in line with Fonseca-Pedrero et al. (2022) who stated low school achievement, betrayal, guilt, depression and a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed can lead undergraduate students into suicidal mediation. The study is also similar to Gezova, (2015) who stated that negative self-esteem and self-administration of a psychoactive substance like alcohol and drug are causes of suicide among undergraduate students.

**3.2. Research Question 2:** How can Home Management contribute to preventive strategies of suicide behaviour among undergraduates in Nigerian universities?

**Table 2:** Mean Responses and t-test analysis of male and female students on how Home Management will contribute to preventive strategies of suicide behaviour among undergraduates in Nigerian universities.

		N= 173								
S/N	General strategies:	$X_G$	$SD_G$	$X_1$	$SD_1$	$X_2$	$SD_2$	t-cal	Sig (2-Tailed)	Rmks RQ Ho

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1	Through active home management, parents can ensure stability by providing strong bonds, consistent discipline, & unconditional love for their child.	4.99	1.16	4.99	1.13	4.98	1.19	0.03	A	NS
2	Through effective home management, parents can engage children in positive habits and activities to reduce incidence of drug abuse or crime.	4.13	0.92	4.14	0.91	4.11	0.93	0.13	A	NS
3	Provision of a stable environment through active home management for a child enables him experience a childhood filled with both love & bond	4.44	0.62	4.47	0.60	4.40	0.63	0.46	SA	NS
4	Stable & nurtured child-parent relationships through effective home management are essential to ensure that children reach their full potentials and also to prevent early adversity.	4.49	0.90	4.54	4.44	0.97	0.97	0.48	A	NS
5	Provision of adequate/basic needs of children through effective home management will help boost their morale & prevent instability.	4.49	0.57	4.49	4.48	0.57	0.57	0.07	A	NS
6	Building a divine foundation, showing affection to children and giving a wise leadership ensures their stability in the society.	4.41	0.63	4.42	4.40	0.63	0.63	0.09	A	NS
7	Responsible, good, committed and stable parenting through effective home management make children stable and enable them achieve their goals.	4.37	0.89	4.40	4.33	0.96	0.96	0.34	SA	NS
8	Through home management, parents can teach attitudes, knowledge skills necessary for effective management of limited resources to meet desired goals.	4.44	0.50	4.43	4.44	0.50	0.50	0.50	SA	NS
9	Through home management, parents can teach and prepare families to identify needs, make	4.41	0.63	4.42	4.40	0.63	0.63	0.09	A	NS

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decisions and utilize resources to improve life.	
Grand X and SD	4.47 0.77

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Table 2 shows that all the 9 items had their cluster mean values ranging from 4.99 to 4.13, which were above the criterion mean of 3.50 indicating that the respondents agreed that all the 9 items are how Home management will contribute to preventive strategies of suicide behaviour among undergraduates in Nigerian Universities. The grand mean of 4.47 with standard deviation of 0.77 suggested that the items were perceived as highly required by the respondents as how home management will contribute to preventive strategies of suicide behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria. The t-calculated values of all the items ranged 0.03 to 0.48 were lower than the t-critical value of 1.96 at an alpha level of 0.05. The result therefore indicated that no significant differences exist in the mean responses of two groups of respondents. It was therefore concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on how Home Management will contribute to preventive strategies of suicide behaviour among undergraduates in Nigerian Universities. The hypothesis was retained.

The study in table 2, also investigated how home management will contribute to preventive strategies of suicide behaviour among undergraduates in Nigerian Universities. Some of these strategies include that: through Home Management, parents can teach attitudes, knowledge skills necessary for effective management of limited resources to meet desired goals and through active home management, parents can ensure stability by providing strong bonds, consistent discipline, & unconditional love for students. These Home Management practices can help to prevent students from engaging in suicidal thoughts and behavior. These findings align with Ogboghodo et al., (2018) who describes several prevention efforts which include, creating a mental health task force, raising awareness in the college community about symptoms of mental illness, teaching about risk factors for suicide, restricting access to lethal means, offering programs focusing on strengthening life skills, and matching the mental health resources on campus to the demand for services.. These findings are consistent with Wickremasinghe, (2020) who suggested a comprehensive campus mental health promotion and suicide prevention program in the campus to reduce the rate of suicidal mediation amongst undergraduates.

#### 4. Conclusion

Home making is the management and care of the home including the house, garden and family. Traditionally such responsibilities were given to women known as house wives. Today as a result of changing western society feminist movement, the term homemaker is used to refer to both housewives and husband. The role of parents is very crucial in every child's life and in the attainment of life's goals. Parents are expected to raise good, cultured, and well-mannered children that would be useful to themselves, family and society. Negligence of this all important role has very devastating effect on the child's development including suicidal ideation and behaviours. Based on the findings made and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made. Seminars and conferences against

depression behaviours, self-destructive behaviours and suicide thoughts should be organized periodically for students. Home Economists should counsel families and organize talks and seminars to help families adopt Home Management practices and improve their resource management skills and their lives. The Home Economics association should come out more to adopt some villages and help the women folk and children in Home Management practices. Home Management education is very vital for living so all students should be made to study it especially through Home Economics in senior secondary level to prepare them for life. Parents should ensure stability by providing strong bonds, consistent discipline, and unconditional love in the home. Child-parent relationships should be made stronger and well-cultivated to enable all children reach their full potentials. A financially and emotionally stable environment should be provided for a child to enable him experience a childhood filled with both love and bond. The basic needs of children should be adequately provided, as this will boost their morale and prevent instability. Children should be engaged in positive habits and activities so as to reduce incidence of drug abuse or crime. Attention should be given to the making of a strong spiritual foundation for children. Responsible, good, committed and stable parenting/leadership style should be practiced to make the children stable and achieve their goals.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

### **Author Contributions**

JOO and CAO were responsible for overseeing all aspects of this research project including conceptualization, materials and methods, data collection, data analysis, writing and approval of this article for publication.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to authors.

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