

Research Paper

Attitude Towards Suicide Among Male and Female Young Adults

Iswarya V.¹, Mufina Begam J.^{2*}, Dr. C.N. Ram Gopal³

ABSTRACT

Suicide is a critical global health issue, claiming over 800,000 lives annually and ranking as the second leading cause of death among individuals aged 15 - 29 (WHO, 2014). In India, it accounts for 17% of global suicides. Attitudes toward suicide play a key role in shaping suicidal ideation and influencing prevention efforts. This study aimed to examine gender differences in attitudes toward suicide among young adults. An ex post facto research design with a convenience sample of 108 participants (54 males, 54 females) aged 18 - 40 was employed. The Attitudes Towards Suicide Scale (ATTS; Renberg & Jacobsson, 2003) was used to assess attitudes. Results showed significant gender differences, with females scoring higher across all attitude factors. Most participants agreed with statements on permissiveness (21%) and preventability (20%), while fewer agreed with those on loneliness and appeal (11%). These findings suggest the need for gender-specific suicide prevention strategies tailored to differing attitudes.

Keywords: *Attitude towards suicide, Suicide, Young Adults, gender difference*

The World Health Organization described suicide as “an act of the deliberate killing of oneself” (WHO, 2014). Suicide kills 800,000 people worldwide each year, and it is the second leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 29 (WHO, 2014). In India alone, 17 percent of suicides have been registered, with 14.7 percent of male suicides and 11.1 percent of female suicides (WHO, 2014). In a 2005 study, Wasserman discovered that male suicide mortality is 2-3 times higher than female suicide mortality. In terms of suicide attempts, females outnumber males by a rate of 3 to 9 (Wunderlich U et al., 2008). According to research results, female suicide rate was much higher in middle adolescence, while male suicide rates have risen in early adulthood (Lewinsohn et al., 2001). People who have a financial crisis, a relationship breakdown, a chronic illness, people who are grieving, conflict, violence, harassment, and people who face oppression because of their

¹Master student of Counseling Psychology, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute (CHRI), Chettinad Academy of Research and Education (CARE) (Deemed to be University), Kelambakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 603 103. India.

²Master student of Counseling Psychology, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute (CHRI), Chettinad Academy of Research and Education (CARE) (Deemed to be University), Kelambakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 603 103. India.

³ Professor of Counseling Psychology, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute (CHRI), Chettinad Academy of Research and Education (CARE) (Deemed to be University), Kelambakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 603 103. India.

*Corresponding Author

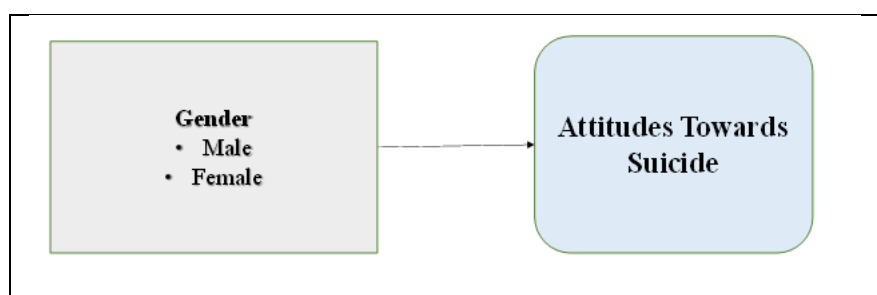
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gender, status, ethnicity, or race are at a higher risk of suicide. Low and middle income countries accounted for seventy-nine percent of all suicides worldwide. However, risk factors such as depression and alcohol use disorder were discovered in high-income countries (WHO, 2014). Externalizing factors such as conduct disorder, deviant behavior, and drug misuse were the most common risk factors for suicide among young males (Mergl R et al., 2015). Female risk factors, on the other hand, were mainly internalizing, such as anxiety and mood disturbance (Fergusson et al., 1993). Aislinné Freeman et al. (2017) performed a cross-national study of 5212 respondents on gender differences in suicide intent and discovered a strong association between gender and suicide intent, with men having a higher incidence of serious suicide attempts than females. Andrea Miranda-Mendizaba et al. (2019) discovered that females are at a higher risk of suicide failure and suicide death in males in a systematic study and meta-analysis of 67 longitudinal findings on Gender differences in suicidal behaviour in teenagers and young adults.

Attitudes are the major element of the socio-psychological framework for explaining and predicting individual behaviour and the social structure of our surroundings (Rus, 1994). Attitudes are categorized into three: affective, cognitive, and behavioural (Altschui, A. 1985 & Botega, N et al., 2005). Human attitudes toward the emotional reaction to the problem are called affective elements. The cognitive factor refers to people's beliefs and awareness about problems, while the behavioural component refers to the individual's explicit behaviour toward another person or problem. Vijayalakshmi Poreddi et al. (2015) conducted a descriptive survey of 436 randomly chosen urban residents to investigate gender variations in suicide attitudes. The study discovered that males possessed more pro-preventive attitudes toward helping individuals with suicidal thoughts, although males had more permissive attitudes toward helping individuals with incurable conditions and voicing a desire to die. Males are also more likely than females to perceive suicide as a call for help. Adelino A. G. Pereira et al. (2019) performed a cross-sectional study on Stigmatizing Attitudes Towards Suicide by Gender and Age including 344 respondents aged 16-6 revealed that men had more stigmatised attitudes towards suicide, and youth have more stigmatised attitudes towards suicide than adults. Previous research findings have supported that attitudes towards suicide have an impact on suicidal ideation, and gender variations in suicide prevention can aid in the development of better suicide prevention strategies. More research on suicide and variables linked to suicide are desperately needed to investigate the gender gap in suicidal behaviour or the gender paradox. Therefore, the current research seeks to explore the differences between male and female attitudes toward suicide (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Aim: To find the attitude towards suicide among young male and females.

Objectives:

1. To find the attitude towards suicide among male young adults.
2. To find the attitude towards suicide among female young adults.
3. To estimate the differences in attitude towards suicide between male and female young adults.

Hypotheses:

There will be no difference between the Attitudes towards suicide among male and female young adults.

Operational definition:

The first definition of Attitude towards suicide was introduced by Bayet in 1922. He described Attitude towards suicide can be characterized as two basic positions: morale simple, which represents rejection of suicide in any circumstances, and morale nonce which represents a more accommodating and permissive attitude, respectively, under particular conditions but still without approving of it (Salander Renberg, 1998).

Research design:

Ex post facto research design was used in this present study.

Sample description:

The sample consists of 108 young adults, which include 54 males and 54 females between the ages of 18 to 40. Most of the samples were from the early age of young adulthood.

Sampling technique: convenience sampling method was used in the present study.

Tool used in this study:

Attitude towards suicide questionnaire (ATTS) 37 –item by Salander Renberg, E., and Jacobsson, L. (2003)

Statistical analysis:

Data analysis consisted of independent sample t-test was which used to find the difference between the attitude towards suicide among male and female young adults. Statistical analysis was done by the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Difference between attitude towards suicide of male and female young adults

Variable	N	M	SD	t	p
Male	54	3.01	0.65		
Female	54	3.37	0.43	3.388	.001*

Table 1 shows the “t” value for the difference in males and females on their attitude towards suicide. The mean (M) and the standard deviation (SD) for male are found to be (M=3.01), (SD=0.65) and female are found to be (M=3.37), (SD=0.43) respectively. The “t” value was found to be 3.388 and the p values was found to be .001 which is smaller than 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). The p values were found to be significant at 1% level of significance. Hence the null hypotheses stating that there would be no difference between the Attitudes towards suicide

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of male and female young adults was rejected and inferred that there is a significant difference between the Attitudes towards suicide of male and female young adults.

Figure 2 shows the difference between attitude towards suicide of male and female young adults

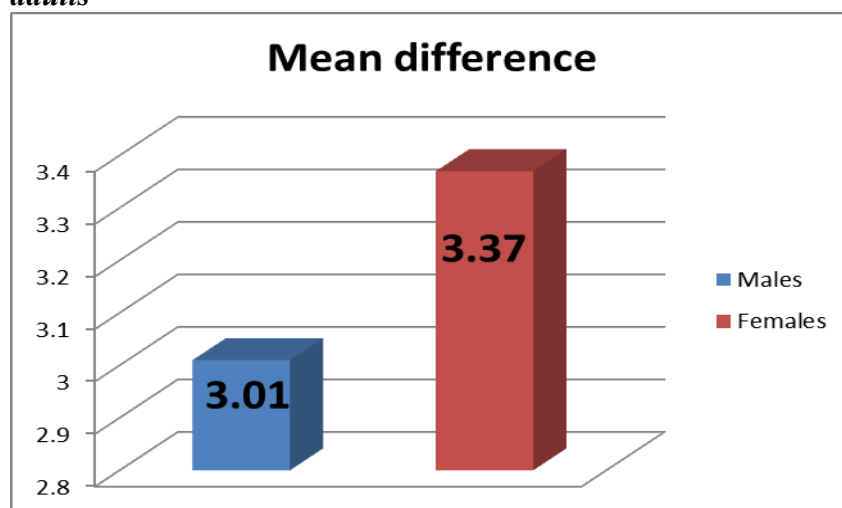


Table 2: Shows the mean scores of males and females in the different factors of attitude towards suicide questionnaire

N= 108 Male =54 Female = 54	Males		Females	
	M	SD	M	SD
Permissiveness	2.44	0.93	2.93	0.73
Preventability	3.23	0.72	3.57	0.49
Incomprehensibility	3.54	0.90	3.64	0.74
Avoidance of talking	3.16	0.80	3.44	0.60
Unpredictability	3.02	0.79	3.45	0.58
Loneliness and appeal	2.94	0.92	3.38	0.72

Table 2 shows the mean scores of males and female in different factors in attitude towards suicide questionnaire. Equal number of participants from both sex have participated (n= males 54 & females 54). In permissiveness factor, the mean score of the female respondents (M=2.93) was higher than the male respondents (M=2.44). It indicates that females were agreeing that an individual has the right to kill themselves and also, they show acceptance of suicidal behaviour and suicide in the case of incurable illness more than males. This finding differed from the findings of Arnautovska, U., & Grad, O. (2010) on high school students were males found to have mean (3.07) and standard deviation (.78) which is higher than females mean 2.92 and standard deviation (.66). Different age groups, different places and differences in socio-cultural may have resulted in different scores. In the preventability factor, males have (M=3.23) which is low when compared to females (M=3.57) which indicates that females are more agreeing that self-killing is preventable than males. This result was similar with the findings of Arnautovska, U., & Grad, O. (2010). Incomprehensibility males found to have (M=3.54) and females (M=3.64) which shows that females more agreeing that suicide can't be rationalized or justified. Considering the next factor (i.e) Avoidance of talking, males have scored (M=3.16) and females scored (M=3.44) which indicates that males are less agreeing that speaking about the suicide will provoke the thoughts about suicide than female. With regard to the Unpredictability factor males

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(M=3.02) and females (M=3.45) which shows that females are more agreeing than males that Suicide occurs without either notice, and those who discuss suicide do not generally attempt it (female respondents have a higher mean score of M=3.45 than the mean score of the male respondent(M=3.02). And in Loneliness and appeal factor male has (M=2.94) which was lower than females (M=3.38) which inferred that females are more agreeing that Solitude is the cause of suicide, and suicide attempts are often a signal for help. The similar result was found in Arnautovska, U., & Grad, O. (2010) was result from high school students was found to be (M boys = 3.03, SD = .85 & M girls = 3.22 SD = .75) and also the results were similar to the findings of Poreddi, V et al., (2015). The vast majority of men (78.6 percent) acknowledged that a suicide attempt is ultimately a signal for help. Probably this could correlate to the studies of Andrea Miranda-Mendizaba et al. (2019) who discovered that females are at a higher risk of suicide attempts and suicide death in males in a systematic study and meta-analysis of 67 longitudinal findings on Gender differences in suicidal behaviour in teenagers and young adults.

Figure 3 shows the overall percentage of attitudes towards suicide

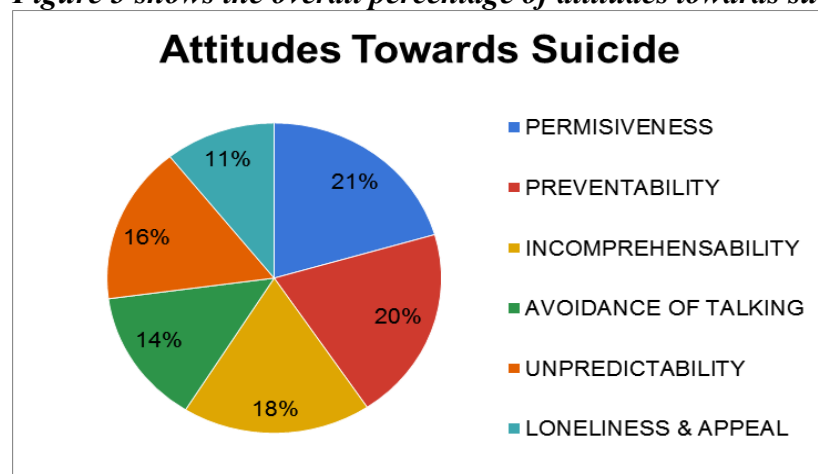


Figure 3 shows the overall percentage of attitude towards suicide possessed by male and female respondents towards suicide questionnaire in different factors. From the figure 3, it is revealed that most of the males and females were agreeing on permissiveness 21% and preventability 20%. Similarly, the study conducted by Arnautovska, U., & Grad, O. (2010) found that most respondents agreed with the statements of Preventability. This implicates that a permissive attitude towards suicide could be a risk factor for suicidal behaviour. And most of the participants were found to be disagreeing with items of loneliness and appeal (11% of agreeableness) which shows that most participants' disagreeing that Solitude is the cause of suicide, and suicide attempts are often a signal for help. This may affect the individuals to helping attitude towards people who have attempt suicide and also, they may find it difficult to ask for help when they face suicidal ideation. In other factors, the percentages of agreement to factors are 18% for incomprehensibility, 16% for unpredictability and 14% for avoidance of talking. Interestingly, the risk effect of such social attitudes towards suicidal behaviour has been indirectly indicated already by Durkheim's anomic suicide (1951). Some misleading presentations (of suicide by the media may produce a familiarity with the idea of suicide showing suicide as an acceptable alternative solution to life stresses. Since social media is highly influential and can play a decisive role in causing self-destruction (Fekete, Schmidtke, Takahashi, Etzersdorfer, Upanne & Osvath, 2001), these findings are of significant importance for developing media guidelines regarding suicidal behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The current study findings show that attitude towards suicide is significantly different among male and female young adults. Comparatively female respondents have higher mean value in all the factors such as permissiveness, preventability, incomprehensibility, avoidance of talking, unpredictability, and loneliness and appeal among males in attitude towards suicide questionnaire. Overall, both males and females are mostly agreeing to permissiveness and least agreeing to loneliness and appeal factor.

Limitations

- The small sample size and all the samples were only from metropolitan cities.
- Since a western psychometric questionnaire used in this study, the cultural aspects of attitude towards suicide was not able to investigate the cultural context including the religious beliefs and stereotype aspects of attitude towards suicide were not investigated.

Implications

The main implication of this study is that the major risk factors for suicidal behaviour of a young adult are permissiveness, loneliness and appeal. Considering that public attitudes are strongly connected to people's social presentations which help to create social reality. The risk of permissiveness and loneliness and appeal should be considered to develop better preventive guidelines. And gender difference should be considered when developing preventive strategies and suicide prevention programs.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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