Perceived reasons for suicidal behaviour among undergraduates in Nigerian Universities: Implication for social work practice

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Abstract
The rate of suicide among Nigerian students is alarming and with attendant consequences. This study ascertains the perceived factors that contribute to suicidal behaviours among Nigerian undergraduates, aiming to inform interventions of social workers to curb the menace. An in-depth interview was used to collect data from 24 students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Thematic analysis was adopted to analyze the data. Frustration, poor academic records, and contact with the internet were found to be the leading causes of suicide. Students buffer suicidal thoughts by their faith in God. Interventions of social workers and religious leaders become pertinent in eradicating suicidal behaviours.

Keywords: Nigerian universities, prevalence, suicide behaviours, suicidal thoughts, undergraduates, social work.

Introduction
The advent of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 is to ensure the adequate healthy living and well-being of all individuals irrespective of age. However, this has not been achieved in many countries of the world with respect to suicidal behaviours and its attended perils including threats to individuals, families, and societal well-being. Suicide has caused great disaster in human life, and is responsible for psychological pain not only to the relatives but the friends of the victims. Suicide equally, can be responsible for the economic drain on many societies. It is responsible for about 1.4% of all deaths and remains the 15th leading cause of death across the globe (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2018; 2014). As one of the public health issues prevalent in both developed and developing countries, suicide causes over 800,000 deaths each year (WHO, 2019; 2018). In 2012, about 804,000 suicide deaths were recorded, accounting for 1.4% of deaths globally (WHO, 2012). In 2015, the rate of suicide death was 10.7 per 100,000, implying that, for every 20 deaths across the globe, one must be by suicide (Bilsen, 2018). Among individuals who are within the ages of 15 and 44 years, suicide was found to be the third leading cause of their death (Alabi et al., 2015), and equally ranks second for the death of people between the ages of 15 and 29 years old across the globe (WHO, 2014; 2018). The report of the WHO (2017) shows that in South-East Asia, about 15.6 per

100,000 deaths were by suicide while 5.6 per 100,000 in the Eastern Mediterranean region and 14.1 per 100,000 in Europe.

Africa, along with other low and middle-income regions has to grapple with the prevalence of suicide behaviours (Troister & Holden, 2012). Estimates show that about 80% of all suicides happen in low-income countries (WHO, 2018). For instance, about 3.3 per 100,000 deaths occur in Azerbaijan while 32.7 per 100,000 deaths occur in Lithuania (WHO, 2018). Each year, about 1500 deaths are attributed to suicide in Ghana (World Population Review, 2019). In South Africa, suicide accounts for 9% of all deaths involving teenagers, and the case of suicidal deaths is still on increase (Western Cape Government, 2020). Also, the report of the South African Depression & Anxiety Group (2014) shows that in South Africa, about 23 cases of suicides were recorded despite being under-reported as a result of the attached stigma.

In Nigeria, the WHO report shows that in 2016, about 17,710 [8,410 females and 9,300 males] cases of suicide were recorded across the population. The figures make Nigeria one of the countries with the highest cases of suicide in the African region. About 20% of all suicide cases in Nigeria which usually take the form of pesticide self-poisoning occur among people who are between the ages of 13–19 years as revealed by the Suicide Research and Prevention Initiative (SURPIN) (Muanya et al., 2019). Between the years 2009 and 2018, the three largest hospitals in Edo State, Nigeria experienced a drastic increase in an attempted suicide by individuals below 30 years (Okoedion & Okolie, 2019). As a result of the increase in the rate of suicidal activities, the Nigerian Senate considered it an important topic of discussion following the published report of the country's ranking of 95th happiest nation among 155 countries (Agency Report, 2017).

This study is framed on the strain theory of suicide (STS) which posits that suicide is usually occasioned by some underlying sociological and psychological strains (Zhang, 2019). Zhang found that strain is different from simple pressure or stress experienced by people in their daily activities. Strain emanates from two or more incompatible compressions in one's life, which usually take a toll by pulling the individual in two opposite directions (Zhang, 2016; Zhang, 2012; Zhang et al., 2011). These strains are categorized into four dimensions, though, are dependent on the strain type that the individual experiences. The strain includes value strain, aspiration strain, relative deprivation strain, and coping strain (Zhang, 2019). Each of these dimensions possesses two strong conflicting powers that control the individual in an environment, leading to suicidal ideations and behaviours due to severe psychological strain. The STS theory explains that undergraduate students experience value strain when they cannot ascertain things that seems to be right and wrong in their daily lives; also, experience aspiration strain when they could not change their living condition; experience deprivation

strain when they are not in the same economic levels with their peers and finally, experience coping strain when they withdraw from other in the face of crisis.

Suicidal behaviours are becoming a norm among Nigerian undergraduates, and it is most worrisome. About 15 Nigerian undergraduates were reported to have committed suicide in 8 months (Olufemi, 2019). For instance, a 300-level student of Medicine and Surgery at the Niger Delta University (NDU), Bayelsa State, dived into the Amassoma River after failing his examination and drowned in the process (Agbedo, 2019). Similarly, a 21-year-old female nursing student of Delta State University, DELSU, committed suicide after dropping out of the Department of Nursing. Going further, an 'extra year' Computer Science student of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife died after consuming a poisonous substance after failing some courses. In Kwara State, a National Diploma 1 student of the Civil Engineering Department, Federal Polytechnic consumed liquid insecticide and died due to an embarrassment by a lecturer. Also, a 100-level student at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, consumed two bottles of insecticide known as Sniper and died. In Anambra State, a student of the Federal Polytechnic Oko took his life after consuming insecticide (Sniper). At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), a final-year student of the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies reportedly consumed Sniper insecticide because of his inability to graduate. Also, on Monday, May 13, 2019, a 22-year-old final year student of the Department of English and Literary Studies at UNN committed suicide on account of mental imbalance (Nigeria Health Watch, 2019).

Several factors such as frustration and depression are recorded in the literature as influencing suicidal behaviours among the students (Hakeem, 2020; Onyekakeyah, 2018). Also, being older, female, single, poor economic status, anxiety, somatic symptoms, and disability causes suicide behaviours (Adewuya et al., 2016). In Nigeria, Aruah et al. (2020) revealed that factors like failed relationships, infrastructure, living conditions, and mental health challenges lead to suicidal behaviours. In the same vein, Ajibola and Agunbiade (2021) found that lack of financial support and breakup of intimate relationships leads to suicide behaviours. In Kwara State, Adesokan and Olawole (2020) found that low academic performance, depression, and drug misuse contribute to suicidal behaviours while Oladele and Oladele (2016) attribute suicidal behaviours to learning disabilities. In the views of Kim (2012) and Lee et al. (2016), social media and internet use are equally responsible for suicide by students. Other scholars have found that unemployment and poverty lead to suicide (Russell et al., 2017; Okoedion & Okolie, 2019; Shakil, 2019). Sadly, hardships, sexual violence, failure in examination lead to depression, and other subtle undiagnosed chemical imbalances are also vehicles for depression which may culminate in suicidal behaviours. At such disequilibrium, social work-based interventions become necessary. The activities of the professionals are very essential in

actualizing the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030 and African Union Agenda 2063 to ensure adequate wellbeing of all individuals (African Union, 2015; United Nations, 2015).

Social workers aim at promoting social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people; engage people and structures to address life challenges and enhance well-being (International Association of School of Social Work [IASSW] & International Federation of Social Work [IFSW], 2014). As a growing profession in Nigeria, social workers are charged to enhance the coping capacity of people to ensure they function optimally at the individual, family, and community levels. Maple et al. (2016) avers that professionals engage individuals at risk of suicide, directly or indirectly through advocacy, health promotion, and policy work. Also, the professionals are well-positioned to administer psychotherapeutic intervention to individuals at risk of suicide (Rageshm et al., 2017). This, they usually achieved through counselling and empowering the individuals at risk to attain their life goals and aspirations. They equally build a network of relationships through which emotional support and care are provided to guard against suicidal actions.

Issues of suicide have been extensively studied in Nigeria from a psychological, economic, social, and religious point of view (Asogwa & Onyezere, 2018; Fasogbon et al. 2019; Nwanyanwu & Okowa, 2017; Oladelea & Oladele, 2016). Nevertheless, we observed that these studies failed to suggest the intervention roles of social work professionals in curbing the rising spate of suicide behaviours among undergraduates in Nigeria. Thus, the study will fill this vital gap by addressing the following research questions: 1) what are the reactions of undergraduates towards committing suicide? Have undergraduates ever thought of committing suicide? 3) What are the reasons for suicidal behaviours among undergraduates? 4) What are the implications of findings to social workers? We hope that some of the points raised in the study will benefit the agencies in charge of education in the country as well as the governing councils of Nigerian Institutions to put appropriate measures to curb the seeming menace of suicide in Nigeria.

Method
Design and study setting
The study adopted an explanatory design using a qualitative approach to explore the causes of suicidal behaviours among Nigerian students. This study was conducted at UNN which is one of the Federal Universities in Nigeria. UNN was founded in 1955 and formally opened in 1960. The institution has two main campuses (Nsukka campus and Enugu campus popularly called UNEC) with 16 faculties and 102 academic departments domiciled across the two campuses. 10 faculties are domiciled within the Nsukka campus while six faculties are within

the Enugu campus. We opted to conduct the study in UNN as a result of recent suicidal incidences in the institution which attracted public attention.

Respondents and selection of respondents

We purposely selected 24 undergraduates who are students at the Nsukka campus (12 males and 12 females) see Table 1. The researchers purposively selected two faculties (Faculty of the Social Sciences [FSS] and Faculty of Arts [FA]). These two faculties were selected because the recent incidences of suicide in UNN took place in these faculties. In the FSS, six male and six female undergraduates were selected while the same number were selected from the FA. These selected students were in their 300 and 400 levels of study at the time of the study. We selected the students of these levels because, we felt they had been in the institution for a longer period; thus, they must have garnered much experience and stress associated with schooling activities. In selecting the participants, the class representatives (CRs) of the selected departments were approached to assist the researchers. The CRs provided the contacts (phone numbers) of the intended participants to enable us to discuss the nature of the study as well as the date, time, and venue for the interview. The information about the aims of the study, and the expected risks and benefits were made known to them. We equally assured them of their confidentiality and anonymity as well as the opportunity to withdraw from the participation at any time they are not comfortable with the study. In a bid to get the required sample size for the study, 32 undergraduates were approached, however, 8 declined to participate either because they were not comfortable with the date and timing or lack of interest in the study.

Data collection

The researchers adopted the use of In-depth Interview (IDI) for data collection. The IDI guide which contained semi-structured questions was used as an instrument to collect data. This permitted the researcher to probe for more responses but within the scope of the study. The study instrument was prepared in the English language and was designed to allow each session of the interviews to last for about 30-45 minutes. All the interviews with the students were done in the libraries of the Departments of Social Work and Music on different days and at separate timing. These locations were considered to ensure their confidentiality and conduciveness. We made certain that the interviews with male participants were conducted by male researchers while the interviews with female students were done by female researchers. This enabled us to ensure the safety of both the participants and the researchers. The study's instrument and methodology received approval from the Ethical Review Board of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, while informed oral consent and willingness to part-take in the discussion, and permission to use a digital recorder were obtained from the participants before the discussions.

Data analysis

We adopted the inductive thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) in the data analyses including the transcripts and field notes. With a digital recorder, we recorded the responses from the IDIs, together with notes taken. The data were transcribed verbatim in English to ensure exact meaning without alteration. The researchers independently read the analysis of transcripts to generate infinite categories that aided the initial coding. In the second coding, the transcript was read over time by researchers for familiarity which enabled the researchers to eliminate, combine or subdivide the themes that were generated in the initial coding to enable us to identify the themes upon which our reporting was made. The identified themes were feelings and reactions of students upon hearing about a suicidal incident, ever thought of committing suicide and buffer against such thoughts, and perceived reasons for committing suicide.

Results

The background characteristics of the study were summarized in Table 1. The information in the table reveals an equal number of both males and females. The participants were between the ages of 19 and 24.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of male participants

S/N	Pseudo Name	Gender	Age	Residence	*Allowance per month	Faculty	Level of study
1	Ifeanyi	Male	23	Hostel	$28	Art	300
2	Bob	Male	24	Off-campus	$20	Art	400
3	Noel	Male	21	Off-campus	$22	Art	300
4	Gerry	Male	23	Off-campus	$25	Art	300
5	Obiago	Male	23	Hostel	$30	Art	400
6	Aaron	Male	24	Off-campus	$27	Art	400
7	Ifedi	Female	23	Hostel	$35	Art	300
8	Nenye	Female	24	Off-campus	$30	Art	400
9	Kobi	Female	21	Off-campus	$20	Art	300
10	Lizzy	Female	22	Off-campus	$38	Art	300
11	Betty	Female	24	Hostel	$31	Art	400
12	Ujunwa	Female	23	Off-campus	$27	Art	400
13	John	Male	22	Off-campus	$22	Social sciences	300
14	Chris	Male	24	Off-campus	$25	Social sciences	400
15	Oando	Male	23	Hostel	$20	Social sciences	300
16	Edwin	Male	24	Off-campus	$21	Social sciences	400
17	Eugene	Male	22	Hostel	$26	Social sciences	400
18	Jacob	Male	21	Off-campus	$30	Social sciences	300
19	Jacinta	Female	19	Off-campus	$42	Social sciences	300
20	Candy	Female	24	Off-campus	$45	Social sciences	400
21	Ozioma	Female	23	Hostel	$30	Social sciences	300
22	Egeonu	Female	24	Off-campus	$25	Social sciences	400
23	Echinti	Female	22	Hostel	$57	Social sciences	400
24	Afuanya	Female	21	Off-campus	$30	Social sciences	300

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2019   *$1= ₦350

Feelings and reactions of students upon hearing about a suicidal incident
The analysis of the transcript revealed that almost all the participants indicated that they held negative feelings regarding suicide. While some participants felt that it is very bad for someone to take his or her life, other participants said that nobody has the right to his/her life. Some of the participants' views were captured in the following quotes:

> I feel very bad when I heard that someone committed suicide. Seriously, I feel touched on why someone can take his/her life. Sometimes…, I don't know… but one or two things may happen and prompt an individual to commit suicide. I feel bad about it, yes…, it is not normal to commit suicide, it is not the best option but one or two things will push people into such conditions **(Candy, 400-level, FSS).**

Also, a female participant (Ozioma, 300-level, FSS) expressed sadness over the issue especially bearing in mind the difficulties experienced by some students to secure admission into UNN, and one will just forfeit all the efforts and hard work at expense of suicide. According to her:

> I do feel very bad seeing a student that commits suicide, seeing a student that struggled to be admitted in higher institution, and in the middle of the effort, the students will take his or her life. It's too heartbreaking, it's abnormal, it's not normal and it needs to be handled.

Ever thought of committing suicide and buffer against such thoughts
The finding from the study also revealed that some of the participants indicated having thought of killing themself at one point or the other. A male student (Bob, 400-level, FA) said, "my brothers, I no go lie for una, I for don kill myself tete if no be God [to be honest with you, I would have taken my life a long time ago if not for God's intervention]. One of the male students (Aaron, 400-level, FA) laughed and giggled and stated thus:

> …yeah, when I was little, I felt I don't belong in my family because we are only two and my parent tend to love my sibling more than I; they see me as someone that is so slow and all those things, there tends to be a gap between me and my mum. I only have close relations with my dad, so when my mother came up with her disgusting words that were not going well with me, I felt like killing myself.

Following the responses from the participants regarding their attempts to take their lives at a point in their lives, the researcher probed further to know the measures the participants adopted to buffer the suicide ideations. Some of the participants indicated that they took solace in God. Others said that they were encouraged that nothing is worth taking one's life. A female participant, Echinti who is in 400-level in FSS said, "the best option I used was, I just have to go to God, God is just the final solution. I just made Him my friend." Another male participant (Noel, 300-level, FA) said "my life is too precious to me, I usually build a strong will against it; being close to God and making sure that whenever you have any problem you relate to God, He will surely send you a helper."

Perceived reasons for committing suicide
Frustration and poor academic records
The analysis of the transcript reveals many reasons students commit suicide. While some of the students noted "frustration from lecturers and stress" others were of the view that "poor academic performance and depression" propelled students into committing suicide. A male participant (Ifeanyi, 300-level, FA) reflected:

> To me, it's poor performance, …like not ordinary poor performance but very poor performance because most times, like when I was at 100-level, I heard of a final-year student in my department that committed suicide immediately after his project. What was the cause? …they said that his supervisor gave him a "D grade" in his 6-unit load course; meanwhile, he had been performing poorly previously. So, he can't bear adding an extra year to his stay.

Another participant said:

> One happened in either Religion department or Fine Art in one of the courses. The guy was to graduate in 2016 but the professor or the supervisor of his project kept him from graduating with his set. This boy was crying that he cannot graduate since then and at the end of it he killed himself. So, you see poor performance and depression in some cases lead to suicide. You know, people behave differently. Some people are introverts; they easily feel depressed at every slighted provocation including family issue. Some of the students are having family related problems and at the same time battling with their academic difficulties and in most cases, they are unable to cope and they see suicide as alternative. **(Gerry, 300-level, FA).**

In support of the assertion above another participant (Bob, 400-level, FA) said:

> Ok, initially I said one or two things can prompt people to commit suicide but now to the best of my knowledge, within the school sector, I think that one of the reasons is frustration, this frustration may be coming from lecturers. Some of the lecturers will ensure that your examination grades (results) are bad. The rate of poor results that we usually have can be one of the reasons some of the students commit suicide. Also, when some students feel that they are not matched with their mates in terms of academic performance, they feel insecure, unhappy, uneasy and in this condition, they tend to develop suicide ideation as best remedy.

Excessive contacts with social media

Another major reason behind suicide incidence by students as revealed by the analysis of transcript is much engagement on social media by Nigerian students. Most of the participants thought that students' excessive engagements in social media encourage suicidal acts. Some of the participants stated that some students usually surf dangerous websites because they want to explore how to acquire power. A male student (Oando, 300-level, FSS) said, "the free internet service in the school has exposed some of the students into different deceptive sites". Another male student (Bob, 400-level, FA) reflected, "you remember wetin I yan before, I for don kill myself tete, I be dey follow some guys online" [you recalled my earlier assertion, I would have killed myself a long time ago, there are a group of boys I have been following online]. Other participants noted that some false and extravagant lifestyles postings on social media by many other youths usually trigger negative thoughts by students. In some cases, these students are being lured into fraud. One of the male participants (Jacob, 400-level, FSS) was of the view that: social media [Facebook, Instagram, etc.] encourages suicidal acts. I'm saying this because a lot of people have been defrauded and some especially women have suffered heartbreak as a result of online dating". An opinion of a female participants is captured in the quote:

> Another reason is that through social media you might be seeing your friends showing off and living fake life on social media not knowing that they are going to places to snap and come back just to be feeling like they are living

big while they're not living big. Maybe, after watching your friends visiting places going to places to snap living good life on social media which is not real you will feel like this person has gone to this extent and I'm still here suffering they might be like let me just die and end it. **(Kobi, 300-level, FA).**

In support of the above assertions but in a different way, a female participants reflected:

Social media do encourage suicide, … I mean, people only show their happy moments on social media. Exposing their happy moments might make one start seeing him/herself as a failure and lagging, in absence of collective consciousness, such individuals might begin to nurse suicidal thoughts. **(Lizzy, 300-level, FA).**

Discussion

The study aimed at describing the reasons for suicidal behaviours among undergraduates in Nigerian Universities and also point out the expectations from the social work profession to curtail the fast-rising incidence of suicide among Nigerian students. From the analysis of the transcript, many findings were made. The finding from the study showed that the participants indicated that at one point in their lives, they have thought of committing suicide. This is as a result of some filial-related issues and problems including a preference for showing love and care. This finding is supported by the STS theory which revealed that people tend to commit suicide when they experience aspiration and deprivation strain (Zhang, 2019). In Pakistan, Osama (2014) found that some of the students had once considered committing suicide while some other students have attempted suicide in their life. The reason for wanting to commit suicide by Pakistanis was because of high expectations of the family as well as being scolded by their family members, especially the parents (Shakil, 2019). Also, Wilcox et al. (2010) found that some students reported experiencing suicide ideation at some point during university while others have experienced multiple suicide ideation.

Professionals such as social workers should ensure that through family life education, adult family members especially the parents are endued with adequate skills necessary for healthy family life including equal love care to every member of the family. Through systematic desensitization, social workers should modify the harsh and unacceptable attitudes and behaviours of the parents that may lead to committing suicide by their children. They should also, teach the parents the need of developing adequate bonding with their children through frequent and adequate conversations that will reinvigorate their life's hopes, goals, and aspirations. Family support especially from the parents to their children to a great extent protects them from suicidal ideation (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Usually, adolescents desire that their family members love, value them, and always be there to support them when they are faced with diverse life issues (Grav et al., 2012).

The finding also shows that social media contributes to suicide acts and attempts among Nigerian students. The finding shows that people communicating their affluence, especially in an extravagant manner pushes some unguarded students to accept that they are useless. In supporting this finding, STS revealed that aspiration strain and relative deprivation strain (Zhang, 2019) usually lead to suicidal behaviours. Similar findings were made across other studies that show how information about suicide methods or communication is spread through the internet, eventually negatively impacting suicidal behaviours (Ruder et al., 2011). The emergence of the internet has assisted in circulating suicide videos that expose and encourage suicide activities and practices among young ones (Memon, 2018). Among young South Koreans, Kim (2012) and Le et al. (2016) found that excessive internet use increased suicide attempts compared with no internet users. Owing to the prevalence of social media in this era, people with likes of mind and interests are more connected. This implies that young people are more connected, and communicate online than in real life. The media's influence on suicidal behaviour, especially suicide methods used, has been well documented, and social media may increase the risk of the media contagion effect, especially among young people (Luxton et al., 2012). Sedgwick et al. (2019) revealed that social media has made information easily and readily available, however, the available information on the internet or social media could be dangerous to youth who are susceptible. Therefore, through family life education, social workers are expected to help the parents to regulate the pattern of social media use by their children by censoring the sites they visit, videos, and pictures they access. Also, social workers should facilitate the bill that regulates the pattern of social media use among Nigerians. By this, some of the negative provoking posts will be regulated.

The finding from the study also revealed that students commit suicide because of poor academic performance, stress, and frustration from lecturers. Students who were found to perform poorly in their academic activities either because of their inability or being caused by the lecturers usually opt for suicide as an alternative. The finding is supported by STS which revealed that suicide occurs given the presence of two conflicting forces that are capable of pulling an individual in opposite directions (Zhang, 2012; Zhang, 2016; Zhang et al., 2011). The pressure can be caused by the experience of aspiration strain and relative deprivation strains. Similar findings obtained from other studies have shown that poor academic performance and study pressure are some key factors that bring about suicide among students (Adesokan & Olawole, 2020; Adewuya et al., 2016; Li et al., 2012; Shakil, 2019). Social workers should assess the ability of undergraduates to cope with stress, depression, and frustration from lecturers as regards to suicide and to evaluate the importance of participation in class and other social activities that will help to buffer the effect of stress and depression. Social workers are trained to enhance the coping capacity of people to function

optimally at the individual, family, and community levels (Rageshm et al., 2017). Social workers should through advocacy engage the systems or structures that impinge on the academic activities of the students. For instance, proper assessment should be made to ascertain if students are being maltreated by the lecturers and ensure that the culprits are punished accordingly. As teachers, they should educate the students on the coping strategies and required skills needed to overcome stress, especially in crises. Social workers should engage individuals at risk of suicide, directly or indirectly in their daily activities, through advocacy, health promotion, and policy work (Maple et al. 2016).

From the analysis of the transcripts, participants indicated that they have resorted to taking solace in God to buffer the thoughts of committing suicide. The participants noted that the best option against suicide is to seek God as He is the final solution. Similarly, Ebimgbo, Agwu, and Okoye (2017) have found that people usually resort to faith in God when they are faced with diverse life issues such as trauma, illness, loss or bereavement, substance abuse, or violence either in their various homes or workplaces, and when unemployed. Ibrahim et al. (2019) found that an effective relationship with God and active involvement and participation in spiritual activities help members to overcome their problems. Religion to a great extent shapes people's views, attitudes, and behaviours; thus, young ones resort to religious activities to overcome some life obstacles including suicidal behaviours (Shaheen et al., 2014). Also, Smith et al. (2013) revealed that spiritual activities involving family members help young ones to maintain spiritual well-being and also develop resilience. Since, religion and spirituality have formed part of the everyday conversation of people, especially in a country like Nigeria (Ebimgbo et al., 2017) and social work is beginning to integrate the people's belief systems into their interventions (International Federation of Social Work [IFSW], 2014), social workers are spurred to encourage parents, family members especially young ones to be deeply involved in faith-based activities which will help them to occupy their mind against negative thoughts. Ibrahim et al. (2019) suggested the importance of incorporating spiritual well-being in the existing psychotherapy and chemotherapy approaches and treatments to suicidal cases involving adolescents and young adults.

As with other many other studies, the current study acknowledges some limitations. First, the narratives that formed the data for the study would have been better explored by persons with lived experiences of suicide. Although we believe that the generated data were rich in providing evidence on the reasons for suicidal behaviours, we still recommend further study that will capture the opinion of individuals with lived experiences. Second, the study was not able to disaggregate the data by gender to ascertain the level of suicidal knowledge. We also suggest that a similar study with a gendered approach should be considered.

Conclusion
This study aimed at describing the reasons for suicidal behaviours among undergraduates in Nigerian universities. Frustrations from lecturers were found to be a veritable reason for suicide among undergraduate students. The use of social media was found to be a contributing factor to either committing or reducing suicide. This study, therefore, suggests that undergraduate students should be encouraged to share their problems with family or seek one on one professional help from professional social workers. Social workers should as a matter of urgency take up an enlightenment campaign to inculcate in people the social and economic effects of suicide. Through television and radio shows, and jingles, they should educate the public about the perils of committing suicide. Through counseling, resource mobilization, and linkage, social workers should provide psychosocial services and support to students who are at risk of committing suicide. Also, the policy should be made by the universities, and on how to reduce frustration by the lecturers to overcome suicide. Also, family members should always ensure that they should have one on one interaction with their undergraduate children to know their depressing and frustrating moments and seek needed help.

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