SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND FEMALE STUDENTS SUICIDAL TENDENCIES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS

Bright Ikechukwu Bethel
*Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt
brightikechukwu22@gmail.com 08033380312*

Glory Ezems-Amadi
*No 20 Springs Boulevard, Suncity, Abuja
gloryezems@yahoo.com 08037057693*

&

Obikoye Oluwatoyin Gladys
*Wisdom Gate International School
146/148 East-West Road Rumuokoro PHC, Rivers State
tyglav@gmail.com 08037657657*

Abstract

The study investigated the socio-economic challenges and female students' suicidal tendencies in Nigerian universities with emphasis on its counselling implications. Three research questions and three hypotheses were tested in the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study while the population of the study was 36, 742 female students and 396 of these female students were selected as sample for the study using stratified random sampling technique. Data for the study was collected using a 15-item questionnaire titled "Social and Economic Challenges and Prevention of Suicidal Tendencies among Female Students Questionnaire" (SECPSTFSQ). The questionnaire was face and content validated and reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha statistics and it produced a reliability index of 0.88. The researcher and two Research Assistants collected all the data required for the study. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result indicated that the social challenges faced by these female students included problem of interpersonal relationship with the opposite sex, lack of health support system among others. The study also indicated that the economic challenges they faced included high cost of living and high cost of fees. It was revealed that the students require counselling intervention in the area of building

emotional resilience and coaching. The study recommended special orientation for new female students on how to deal with socio-economic challenges on campus.
Keywords: Social, Economic, Suicide, Female, Universities

Introduction

The university as the Ivory Tower of any nation is the place where scholars develop skills and knowledge that is required to improve on personal development and also contribute to the growth and development of the nation. In order to achieve its goals and development, the university is characterized by its own culture and manner of operations which contributes to the attainment of outlined goals and objectives and the stakeholders within the university are expected to abide by these regulations in all of their activities. However, students who are one of the critical stakeholders in the system are often caught in activities that not only threaten their educational attainment but also tamper with their lives and livelihood.

Several students in the university have been involved in different activities that in recent time have contributed to the loss of life and property. In recent time, the number of female students who have lost their lives within the university has grown at a disturbing rate. Some female students in the process of meeting their essential social and economic needs are involved in relationships, businesses and associations that have led to their death. This is common among new students who try to build a sense of belonging and also engage in activities that will ensure that their social and economic needs are met and this unexpectedly led to their demise.

Female teenagers and youths form a portion of the alarming rate of suicide victims around the world and Nock, Deming, Fullerton, Gilman, Goldenberg, Kessler, McCarroll, McLaughlin, Peterson, Schoenbaum, Stanley and Ursano (2013) asserted that these young people who are between 15-29 years of age engage in this health concern which does not only affect them negatively but also their families, friends and communities. The victims of suicide in the university were led to this extreme point as a result of social and economic needs which were not taken into consideration at the appropriate time and this went to the point of suicide without the notice of even closed ones. It therefore becomes important to address these issues in order to limit the exposure of new and old female students to suicidal tendencies.

Social challenges are simply issues people face in the process of managing their relationship with others. There are several social problems that female students face which create the avenue for suicide attempt. For example, Collins (2014:135) opined that "since it is believed that the right place for women is in the kitchen, some parents and others have considered it not necessary to provide equal educational opportunities to women with their male counterparts" and unfortunately some of the female students who go to the university under their guise find it difficult to cope as

they receive very little or no help in the process of pursuing their educational goal and some of these students give up eventually when it seems there are no prospects ahead. On the other hand, Sarchiapone *et al.,* as cited in Owusu-Ansah, Addae, Peasah, Asante and Osafo (2020) mentioned that protective factors such as good social support, self-esteem, maintenance of healthy and positive relationships are essential for meeting life needs but when these supports are not available, it leads to loss of confidence, interest and in some cases suicidal tendencies.

In addition to social challenges, there are several economic challenges that female students also face in the process of meeting their daily needs which sometimes become enormous and lead some of these students in contemplating suicide. Economic challenges which can be financial or material are necessary for a meaningful stay in the university but when these resources are not available, some students either engage in illegitimate economic ventures such as prostitution, internet fraud and theft and when this is not an option, then suicide is sometimes contemplated. It therefore becomes important for counsellors to rise to this occasion so as to be able to talk these students out of this public health crisis for the attainment of personal and societal goals and objectives from the university system. Female students require several social and economic needs that make schooling meaningful and comfortable in the university system. Some of these students especially the new ones have several expectations from the university when they gain admission into any course of study and when the right counsel is not gotten, some of these students are sometimes caught in the web of several social and economic challenges which some of these students have failed to handle properly and rather contemplated suicide. In some cases, some of these female students have gone ahead to commit suicide as a result of known and unknown social challenges while some others face several economic challenges which affect their ability to reason properly. Therefore, identifying these social and economic challenges and the role that counselling can play in reducing if not totally eliminate these suicidal tendencies is the crux of this study.

The study therefore investigated the socio-economic challenges and female students' suicidal tendencies in Nigerian universities with emphasis on its counselling implications. The objectives of the study in specific term were to:
1. identify the social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities
2. examine the economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities
3. ascertain the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities?
2. What are the economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities?
3. What are the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities

Literature Review

The university is a community with its own characteristics, culture and mode of operation and everyone within the system is expected to abide by the rules and regulations guiding the university system. Despite the presence of several stakeholders in the university, the students are one of the very important stakeholders in this system whose presence is important for the existence of the university system. Similarly, since the students are very important to the operation of the university, the culture and practices of the university have direct impact on the students first and then other stakeholders in the system.

The existence of the university is for the purpose of building citizens with high level skill and knowledge who will not only contribute to the growth and development of nation but will also lead to the production of reasonable and responsible citizens who will also pursue their own personal development meaningfully. However, in the process of meeting their goals and objectives in the university, students pass through several phases which require adequate social, economic and moral preparation in order to function adequately as an acceptable member of the university environment. In order to meet their educational and personal obligations, students require adequate social and economic resources which make it easy to pursue their short and long term goals and objectives. When these resources are not adequately supplied,

students are thrown into a state of confusion which if not properly handled can lead to different negative short and long term outcomes.

Female students more than their male counterparts require adequate resource support in order to live comfortably in the university. Parents, guardians, government and even the university administrators put necessary measures in place to ensure that female students have access to essential economic and social resources that will make them have a meaningful stay in the university. The shortage or absence of these resources sometimes put the students in a state where they try to take options that may lead to their hurt. New students especially the female ones who are in search of comfort similar to what is obtainable in the home front need to be properly guided in order not to make mistakes that affect their educational and developmental goals and objectives.

Social and economic challenges are one of the most striking challenges that students especially the female ones are likely to face in the university. Inn their words, Alordiah, Akpadaka and Oviogbodu (2015:131) asserted that "Socio-economic status (SES) is the way people are divided into groups in a society such that they have certain economic or/and social characteristics in common" and this aspect of life determines how well other needs of life can be met and as such students pay attention to their social and economic need since this aspect greatly affect their stay and engagement in the university. Therefore, any challenge that affects this aspect of the student's life can have great consequences.

Social challenges are challenges that affect the ability to engage in interpersonal relationships. Education in itself is a social service which every student intends to acquire so as to graduate to find a job and become an acceptable member of the society. However, more importantly, the female students in the university make effort to build a healthy academic life so as to improve on their economic relevance after graduation. However, when these students begin to have problem with their academics, some level of anxiety is likely to set in. Expatiating on this assertion, Gobena (2018:209) stated that "it had been noted that the female students' academic achievement was generally below average; yet, it is acknowledged that an educated female labour force plays a significant role in society as compared to an educated male counterpart". This is why most female students make concerted effort to acquire this social service at all cost. There are several other social problems that students face while in the university and some of this includes marital or interrelationship issues, environmental challenges, health related problems, inequality in the school, conflict, cultural practices and concerns among others. This is why Abu-Khadiar as cited in Evans-Obinna (2016) noted that existing cultural practices and beliefs view women in a disadvantaged manner and this affects the

extent even female students can go while in the university and some of the students who are not able to manage this situation have been affected negatively including attempting suicide.

Economic challenges also form an important part of the challenges that female students face while in the university. There are. several cases of poverty, malnutrition, financial needs, rising cost of living, lack of economic skill, income level among other economic challenges which makes it difficult for some female students to have a meaningful stay in the university. Economic challenges make it difficult for students to meet their basic needs and when this is the case, it becomes difficult for other higher needs to be met and this poses a huge threat to the life and living of the student thereby exposing them to adverse conditions such as depression even suicide contemplation.

Iro-Idoro *et al.,* (2014) investigated the challenges faced by adult female students in some faculties in Nigeria. There were 200 women attending part time programmes in five higher institutions in Ogun State who were sampled for the study. The "Adult Female Students' Concerns Scale" (AFCS) questionnaire was the tool used to collect the data, and it was analyzed using simple percentage and multiple regression. The study's findings showed that participants had a high commitment to enhance their academic performance, with a mean value of 57.3 (SD 18.9), and a strong conviction to motivational factors, with a mean value of 69.7. The findings showed that the order of efficacy of barriers depending on a woman's age and marital status and individual and environmental barriers to her education differed significantly.

Egenti and Omoruyi (2011) also conducted a study on challenges of women participation in continuing higher education programme focusing on implications for adult women counselling and education. The study's findings indicated that adult females enrolled in educational programmes faced a variety of difficulties, including time constraints, rising marital demands, a weak financial or economic foundation, poor learning environment, lack of support from employers and spouses, rising social pressure, and poor psychological disposition. Kangiwa (2015) also conducted a study on the socio–economic factors and effects of prostitution in Nigeria. There were 150 prostitutes sampled for the study. The respondents were chosen using a multi-stage sample procedure that combined cluster and random sampling techniques. Interviews were employed to collect data, and frequency tables and percentages from descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The study's result showed that prostitution is motivated by financial gain. Prostitutes are discovered to have pathological issues in their pasts, and their social interactions are based on primitive patterns. Prostitution has both favourable and unfavourable

effects such as social networking and the likelihood of sexually transmitted disease among those who practice it.

Ekesionye and Okolo (2012) carried out another study on women empowerment and participation in economic activities focusing on indispensable tools for self-reliance and development of Nigerian society. 402 women were chosen at random as a sample for the study from 6 of Anambra State's 21 local government Areas. A questionnaire was utilized to collect the data, and 351 copies of it were found and evaluated using the mean and t-test statistic. According to the study's findings, women in Anambra state mostly engaged in farming, trading, crafts, food processing, hairdressing, poultry, and similar economic activities. For their economic activities, the women had access to personal savings, family support, philanthropic support, loans and credits, cooperative society support, and group contributions. Women have contributed to society growth through services including food delivery, health promotion, and education. The challenges women face when engaging in economic activity include the inability of the government to provide assistance, corruption on the side of implementers, the load of a family, cultural limits, spouse influence, and illiteracy.

Egbe-Okpenge and Igbo (2013) investigated the relationship between counselling and entrepreneurship development skills of Nigerian final year undergraduates. For the study, 400 final-year students were chosen as a sample, and a survey approach was used. The data gathered for the study were examined using correlation and t-test statistics. The study's findings indicated a significant favorable association between career counselling and final-year undergraduate students in Nigeria's entrepreneurial development skills.

Salgong *et al.,* (2016) carried out another study on the role of guidance and counseling in enhancing student discipline in secondary schools in Koibatek District. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. 2,624 students, 23 principals, 23 school counsellors, and 227 teachers made up the study's population. Purposive sampling was utilized to choose 8 schools, 8 principals, and 8 school counsellors. Furthermore, 24 teachers and 262 students were chosen as the study's sample using simple random sampling and stratified random sampling. Data gathering methods included an interview schedule and a questionnaire. The study's dependability coefficient was 0.81. Tables, frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and percentages were used to examine the data collected. The study's conclusions demonstrated that counselling and guidance enhanced academic achievement and discipline. Indiscipline in the classrooms was caused by kids not receiving supervision and counselling. These studies make it relevant to say that female students need to receive appropriate counselling in the face of the many social and

economic challenges they encounter in order to be able to deal with any potential suicidal tendencies that could affect their short- and long-term educational aspirations.

Methodology

Design employed for the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of 36, 742 female students in the public universities in Rivers State (14, 296 new and 22, 445 old) out of which 396 female students (154 new and 242 old) female students were drawn as sample for the study using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for the collection of data was a 15-item questionnaire titled "Social and Economic Challenges and Prevention of Suicidal Tendencies among Female Students Questionnaire" (SECPSTFSQ). The instrument had two Sections namely; Section A used for the collection of demographic data on the respondents and Section B which consisted of the 15-item questions which were responded to on a four point modified Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1). The weighted values were summed and divided by 4 to arrive at 2.50 which is the criterion mean score used for decision making. The face and content validities of the instrument was determined by two experts (one in Measurement and Evaluation and the other a counsellor) from the University of Port Harcourt. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach alpha statistics and produced a reliability score of 0.88. Data for the study were collected by the researcher with the aid of two Research Assistants and all the copies of the questionnaire were retrieved on the spot. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What are the social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores on the social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities

S/NO	Variables	New Students n=154			Old Students n=242		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Unhealthy school environment which makes life unbearable for students	2.62	0.89	Disagreed	2.47	0.94	Disagreed
2	Problem of interpersonal relationship with students of the opposite sex	2.66	0.86	Agreed	2.88	0.83	Agreed
3	Lack of health support system to take care of one's health needs	2.74	0.83	Agreed	2.60	0.89	Agreed

4	Regular conflict with other school stakeholders which can be very frustrating	2.86	0.78	Agreed	2.62	0.88	Agreed
5	Lack of educational support which discourages some students from furthering their education	2.57	0.92	Agreed	2.51	0.92	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**2.69**	**0.86**	**Agreed**	**2.62**	**0.89**	**Agreed**

Table 1 revealed that the new students responded to items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with mean scores of 2.62, 2.66, 2.74, 2.86 and 2.57 while the old students responded to these same items with mean scores of 2.47, 2.88, 2.60, 2.62 and 2.51. All of the items were agreed since their mean scores are above the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for decision making except for item 1 from the old students with mean score of 2.47 which was disagreed since the item had a mean score that was below the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for making decision. The grand mean score of 2.69 and 2.62 from the new and old students indicated that they both averagely agreed on the items listed as social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities.

Research Question Two: What are the economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores on the economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities

S/NO	Variables	New Students n=154			Old Students n=242		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
6	Difficulty in procuring essential learning materials in school	2.94	0.75	Disagreed	2.67	0.86	Agreed
7	Lack of economic skills to make a living in school	2.88	0.77	Agreed	2.48	0.95	Disagreed
8	Low financial support from parents/guardians	2.44	0.93	Agreed	2.40	0.99	Disagreed
9	The rising cost of living which has reduced students purchasing power	2.97	0.73	Agreed	2.77	0.88	Agreed
10	High cost of fees and other charges by the school	2.71	0.82	Agreed	2.55	0.90	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**2.79**	**0.80**	**Agreed**	**2.57**	**0.92**	**Agreed**

Table 2 indicated that the responses of the new students to items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 had mean scores of 2.94, 2.88, 2.44, 2.97 and 2.71 while the responses of the old

students to the same set of items produced mean scores of 2.67, 2.48, 2.40, 2.77 and 2.55. All the items with means cores above the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for making decision were agreed while those with mean scores less than the criterion mean scores were disagreed. In summary, the new and old students with grand mean scores of 2.79 and 2.57 showed that they averagely agreed on the items listed as economic challenges leading to. suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities.

Research Question Three: What are the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation scores on the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities

S/NO	Variables	New Students n=154			Old Students n=242		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
11	Regular sensitization of female students on how they can get support for the challenges faced by them	2.91	0.75	Agreed	2.80	0.84	Agreed
12	Educating female students on how to build emotional resilience against their socio-economic challenges	2.80	0.79	Agreed	2.86	0.81	Agreed
13	Sensitizing female students on how to seek for counselling assistance when they are faced with adverse socio-economic conditions	2.93	0.74	Agreed	2.91	0.79	Agreed
14	Providing coaching assistance to female students on how they can dealt with possible socio-economic treats	2.74	0.81	Agreed	2.71	0.91	Agreed
15	Providing referral services to female students on where to get professional advise	2.77	0.78	Agreed	2.68	0.93	Agreed
	Grand Mean	2.83	0.77	Agreed	2.79	0.86	Agreed

In table 3, the new students responded to items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 with mean scores of 2.91, 2.80, 2.93, 2.74 and 2.77 while the old female students responded to the same set of items with mean scores of 2.80, 2.86, 2.91, 2.71 and 2.68. Since all the items had mean scores that were above the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for

making decision, it implied that all the items were agreed. Similarly, with grand mean scores of 2.83 from the new students and 2.79 from the old students, it implied that the students averagely agreed on the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities

Table 4: z-test analysis on the difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
New Students	154	2.69	0.86	394	0.79	1.96	0.05	Not Significant
Old Students	242	2.62	0.89					

Table 4 indicated that the value of z-cal. of 0.79 was less than the value of z-crit. of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 394 degrees of freedom and since the value of z-cal. was less than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was not rejected and this indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities

Table 5: z-test analysis on the difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
New Students	154	2.79	0.80	394	2.53	1.96	0.05	Significant
Old Students	242	2.57	0.92					

Table 5 showed that the value of z-cal. of 2.53 was more than the value of z-crit. of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 394 degrees of freedom and since the value of z-cal. was more than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was rejected and this indicated that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of new and

old students on the economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities

Table 6: z-test analysis on the difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
New Students	154	2.83	0.77	394	0.48	1.96	0.05	Not Significant
Old Students	242	2.79	0.86					

Table 6 revealed that the value of z-cal. of 0.48 was less than the value of z-crit. of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 394 degrees of freedom and since the value of z-cal. was less than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was not rejected and this suggesting that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities

Discussion of Findings

The new and old students used for the study indicated in their responses that they both averagely agreed on the items listed as social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities. In a related manner, that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the social challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities. The students identified that unhealthy school environment as well as lack of health support system are some of the social challenges they face in school which exposes them to suicidal tendencies. This aligns with the position of the study by Iro-Idoro *et al.,* (2014) on the challenges faced by adult female students in some faculties in Nigeria which identified a woman's age and marital status and individual and environmental barriers to her education as significant factors while Ekesionye and Okolo (2012) in the study on women empowerment and participation in economic activities focusing on indispensable tools for self-reliance and development of Nigerian society identified inability to get assistance, cultural limits, spouse influence, and illiteracy as major challenges. This was exactly the opinion of the sampled students as they further identified lack of educational support, problem

of interpersonal relationship with the opposite sex and conflict in the school as social challenges that make students contemplate suicide. This calls for the need for institutions to institute rules as well as introduced programmes that will promote the social wellness of these students.

Furthermore, the result of the study also showed that the students both new and old agreed on the items listed as economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities. It was also revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the economic challenges leading to suicidal tendencies among female students in Nigerian Universities. The students indicated from their responses that the high cost of living as well as high cost of fees are part of the economic challenges they face and this may explain why the study by Kangiwa (2015) on the socio–economic factors and effects of prostitution in Nigeria indicated that the need for financial gain was the motivating factor why some female students engage in prostitution and some of these students who cannot cope with this business in the long run are more likely to contemplate suicide. The responses from the students also showed that lack of economic skills may also be part of the challenges that face economically in the school and this gives credence to the result of the study by Egenti and Omoruyi (2011) on challenges of women participation in continuing higher education programme focusing on implications for adult women counselling and education which indicated that a weak financial or economic foundation was a challenge that women face in their educational pursuit. This reveals the need for better financial support system for students in the universities particularly female students who cannot meet their basic educational needs.

The study found out that the students averagely agreed on the counselling interventions required to mitigate suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities. Furthermore, that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of new and old students on the counselling interventions required mitigating suicidal tendencies among female students as a result of socio-economic challenges in Nigerian Universities. The students point to the need for counselling assistance in the form of coaching, referral services and adequate sensitization and this aligns with the result of the study by Egbe-Okpenge and Igbo (2013) on the relationship between counselling and entrepreneurship development skills of Nigerian final year undergraduates which indicated a significant favorable association between career counselling and final-year undergraduate students in Nigeria's entrepreneurial development skills as well as the study by Salgong *et al.*, (2016) on the role of guidance and counseling in enhancing student discipline in secondary schools in Koibatek District which showed that female students need to receive appropriate counselling in the face of

the many social and economic challenges they encounter in order to be able to deal with any potential suicidal tendencies that could affect their short- and long-term educational aspirations. Therefore, the social and economic need of female students both new and old on campus must be given priority by university administrators, parents and the government so as to be able to deal with the issues of suicidal tendencies in Nigerian universities especially among female students.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a significant difference between the opinion of new and old female students on the social and economic challenges that they face which makes them prone to suicide tendencies. This implies that female students who are new to the university face more social and economic challenges than the old female students who have been in the universities. However, there was no significant difference in the opinion of the students on their counselling needs as a way of preventing suicidal tendencies in these universities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were proffered in line with the findings of the study:

1. University administrators need to organize special orientation programme for female students who are new in the university on how they can manage social issues that may arise as a result of their activities within and outside the university environment as this will give these students some sense of belonging and minimize the cases of depression which leads to suicide attempt.
2. Special relief package should be arranged for female students through which their economic needs can be taken care of and this package should be provided based on the level of needs so that students who have severe economic needs can have their needs met and this will go a long way to remove suicide contemplation among these students.
3. Counsellors need to be invited and actively participate in student activities on campus as this will provide an avenue for the social and economic challenges that these female students are facing to be unravel so that the appropriate counselling strategy can be applied to eliminate suicide tendencies among these students.

Implication for Counselling

The result of the study has been able to point to the need for diversification of counselling services and interventions in schools. This is premised on the fact that no single counselling strategy can address the multifaceted needs of students. Hence,

counsellors must be trained and be ready to adopt a multidimensional strategy in meeting the needs of clients in whatever organization they operate.

References

Alordiah, C. O., Akpadaka, G. & Oviogbodu, C. O. (2015). The influence of gender, school location and socio-economic status on students' academic achievement in mathematics: *Journal of Education and Practice. 6*(17), 130-136.

Collins, E. N. O. (2014). Socio-economic development and the girl-child education: A look at Jos North Local Government, Plateau State. *African Research Review, 8*(1), 134-155

Egbe-Okpenge, E. G. & Igbo, H. I. (2013). Relationship between counselling and entrepreneurship development skills of Nigerian final year undergraduates: *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 84*, 120-127

Egenti, M. N. & Omoruyi, F. E. (2011) Challenges of Women Participation in Continuing Higher Education Programme: Implications for Adult Women Counselling and Education. Edo Journal of Counselling, 4(1& 2), 130-143

Ekesionye, E. N. & Okolo, A. N. (2012). Women empowerment and participation in economic activities: Indispensable tools for self-reliance and development of Nigerian society. *Educational Research and Review, 7*(1), 10-18

Evans-Obinna, R. (2016). Issues and challenges of southeastern Nigerian women in educational management in the 21st century: *European Journal of Training and Development Studies, 3*(2), 37-46

Gobena, G. A. (2018). Family socio-economic status effect on students' academic achievement at College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia: *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators, 7*(3), 207-222

Iro-Idoro, B. C., Aluko, O. O. & Ayodele, K. O. (2014). Challenges faced by adult female students in some faculties: The Nigerian experience. *International Journal of Current Business and Social Sciences, 1*(2), 31-37

Kangiwa, A. G. (2015). The socio–economic factors and effects of prostitution in Nigeria: *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences, 3*(5), 70-83

Nock, M. K., Deming, C. A., Fullerton, C. S., Gilman, S. E., Goldenberg, M., Kessler, R. C., McCarroll, J. E., McLaughlin, K. A., Peterson, C., Schoenbaum, M., Stanley, B. & Ursano, R. J. (2013). Suicide among soldiers: A review of psychosocial risk and protective factors. *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes, 76*, 97–125

Owusu-Ansah, F. E., Addae, A. A., Peasah, B. O., Asante, K. O. & Osafo, J. (2020). Suicide among university students: Prevalence, risks and protective factors. *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine, 8*(1), 220-233

Salgong, V. K., Ngumi, O. & Chege, K. (2016). The role of guidance and counseling in enhancing student discipline in secondary schools in Koibatek District: *Journal of Education and Practice, 7*(13), 142-151