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THE CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF SUICIDE AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN NORTH -CENTRAL COLLEGES OF EDUCATION NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study aimed to find out the causes and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in North Central Nigeria Colleges of Education. The research was conducted using four Colleges of Education in North-central, Nigeria. The researchers adopted a cross-sectional research design paradigm method. The population of sampled Colleges of Education was 22,600 pre-service teachers for 2025/2026 academic session. A sample of 465 comprised of 212 (45.6%) and 253(54.4%) male and female pre-service teachers respectively. A purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of these four Colleges of Education, in North-central Nigeria, while multi-stage sampling procedure was used for selection of sample pre-service teachers in the study. The researchers used questionnaire which has a reliability index value of 0.842. descriptive, t-test and one way ANOVA were employed. the findings of the study revealed that negative self-esteem, depression, self-administration of psychoactive substances, interpersonal conflict between parents and siblings, family history of mental disorders, low academic achievement, betrayal, access to firearms, trauma resulting from physical and sexual abuse, and family history of suicide are major factors contributing to suicide among pre-service teachers in North-central, Colleges of Education. Based on the results the researchers recommended that Colleges of Education management, in collaboration with counselling centres, should organise regular suicide awareness programmes, mental health campaigns, and psychological support services to reduce suicide behaviours among pre-service teachers

Key words: Causes, Prevention, Pre-service teachers, Colleges of Education, & North-central Nigeria.

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Introduction

Suicide is a serious health problem as it is currently the third leading cause of death for teenagers between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The rate at which pre-service teachers in Nigerian Colleges of Education are intentionally terminating their own lives is on the increase and this creates a concern for society (Lawrence, 2022). Suicide has emerged as a global problem, and students are committing suicide for a variety of reasons (Kumar, 2012).

Suicide is one of the major public-health challenges all over the world which is among adolescents and young adults that constituted a large population of students in tertiary institutions. The transition of students to higher education is always coincides with significant developmental, and social changes. It is expected that the students may cope with the academic programmes, financial challenges, social adjustment family expectations, and decisions concerning their future careers. The pressures from some students may be as a result to psychological, anxiety, depression, distress, hopelessness or suicidal thought (Akinlotan et al., 2026). Reports from World Health Organization (WHO) showed that more than 720,000 people die by suicide globally each year.

Suicide is one of the social problems affecting youths in our society. This remains a silent issue with less efforts being done to prevent it. More so, churches and mosques are not preaching against suicide in the society as a result the number of suicides cases in Nigeria are in increasing (Ladi-Akinyemi, et.al., 2023: Aruah, et.al., 2020). Therefore, Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among students in Tertiary institutions in Nigeria (CDC, 2020; Ajibola, & Agunbiade, 2022).

A study identified some of the academic's performance and academic environment, socioeconomic and psychological factors that are associated with suicidal behaviour Suicidal behaviour involves biological, psychological, cultural social, and environmental influences. Therefore, suicide does not only attribute to just a factor but it may occur when an individual finds difficulties to coping with stress, anxiety and depression and with inadequate protective resources (WHO), 2026).

A most recent systematic review and meta-analysis involving 53 Nigerian studies and 132,514 participants found substantial evidence of suicidal ideation, planning and attempts across the Nigerian population. The findings revealed that suicidal behaviour was relatively elevated among secondary and tertiary students (Abubakar et al., 2026). Similarly, Studies conducted among Nigerian tertiary institution showed that psychological factor of suicide is one of the factors attributed to suicide.

The findings of the two states tertiary institution in Lagos found that 22.5% of the students have depression, while 21.6% had suicidal ideation (Olufela et al., 2026). There are cases of suicides at Lagos State University and Lagos State Polytechnic, colleges of education, and polytechnics in Adamawa Central Senatorial Zone, Adamawa State. Studies have showed that suicide ideation rates among students in tertiary institutions in North-central, Nigeria ranging from 11.4% to 28% (Okereke, et.al., 2021: Adewale and Salami, 2022). Nigeria has witnessed a trend of suicides among students from streets of her cities, where there are stories of tragedies that have captured the attention of the nation in which students take their own lives (Ijaseun, 2023). These cases of suicides continuing to emerge and shed more light on the student's mental health.

Suicide cases in Nigeria are being devastating for friends and family, and may also have profound impacts on the wider community of students and staff. In recent years, Nigeria has recorded more suicide deaths, making this call for counselling intervention more important. The existence of

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suicide cases among pre-services teachers is a major issue that needs to be looked into and to creating effective counselling strategies for its prevention as a matter of urgency.

There is less research in the area of suicide (Jaison et al., (2018). The effective strategies for suicide prevention in academic settings in Nigeria which suicide has been perpetrated by both students and staff alike, causing chaos in these institutions, and affecting the teaching, learning and working condition (Oladeji, 2022).Therefore, suicide remains under-explored, and there has been insufficient attention to the causes, and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in North Central Colleges of Education Nigeria.These are the main constitutes of the problem of this study. The aim of this study is to prioritize suicide cause and prevention among pre-services teachers in North Central Colleges of Education, Nigeria and to raise awareness of suicide as public health issue in the society.

Suicide is a widespread issue in the world and Nigeria inclusive, in which students and adults are no longer happy with themselves and their environment. Studies have showed that about 800 000 teenagers and young adults died by suicide in Nigeria yearly (Muanya et al., 2019; WHO, 2017). This implies that in every 40 seconds one person dies of suicide. Nigeria is the 30th most suicide-prone (out of 183 nations) in the world, and ranked 10th African country with higher rates of suicide.

Globally, there are more than 300 million people of all ages suffering from depression, which is a serious mental health problem that has its ripple effects. suicidal ideations may lead to suicide. Therefore, suicide accounts for an estimated 6% of all deaths among young people. Depression and suicide results are from a complex interaction of social, psychological, and biological factors (Ogboghodo, et.al., 2018). Depression, which is also a serious problem for adolescents, which is one of the significant biological and psychological risk factors for youth suicide (Animasahun & Animasahun, 2016). There are several factors that causes suicide and attempt among pre-service teachers. These factors include academic pressure, poor mental health support systems, financial stress, substance abuse, and interpersonal relationship issues, societal expectations, and psychological risk factors (Abdulmalik, et.al.,2019; Ogunsemi, et.al., 2018; Yöyen and Keleş, 2024). Other causes of suicide is the overcrowding and lack of adequate recreational spaces for the students (Bichi, et al., 2018; Philip,et.al., 2018).

In North central Nigeria colleges of education about 80% of buildings, including staff residences, offices, and classrooms suffer from dilapidated, conditions, including poor plumbing, bathrooms, toilets, doors, windows, paintings, walls, floors, and electrical installations (Shakantu and Adamu, 2016; Ugwu, et.al., 2018). Students living off-campus also face challenges, such as insufficient maintenance by landlords, despite annual rent increases (Wanie, et.al., 2017). These factors are characteristics that increase the likelihood for an individual student to commit suicide

Definition of suicide

Suicide is the intentional act of causing one's own death, or carried with the awareness and expectation that the act will result in death

Different Types of Suicide

There are four different types of suicide identified by Durkheim which are manifesting within the society (Nwayankwu and Okowo, 2017).

(i). Egoistic Suicide: This is the kind of suicide that occurs when an individual is having a weak social interaction with friends, family, religion groups, peer groups. The person has been disconnected

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from the society and the family; this could be as a result of rejection from the past criminal behaviour, sickness, and loneliness or social isolation

(ii)**Fatalistic Suicide:** This type of suicide is associated with excessive social regulation. The individual that is been affected feel trapped, oppressed, and helpless, perceiving the situation as an inescapable form of imprisonment or annihilation.

(iii) Anomic Suicide: This is the type of suicide that is associated with disrupted social regulation The anomic suicide occurs when an individual feels he had made irreversible mistakes in life, For instead when he has failed to utilize a given opportunities or when age has run out of the individual. This type of suicide could be induced by sexual assault, embarrassment, or loss of a loved one. This is however commonly found among teenagers.

(iv) Altruistic Suicide: This type of suicide that occurs as a result of overwhelming influence and control by the society over the individual. This kind of suicide is manifested in the extreme actions in which the individual has been compelled to sacrifices his lives for cause of suicide bombings, which the individual view as an ultimate sacrifice to appease gods.

Problem Statement

There is concern by the society about the recent reported increased rate of suicide among students in Nigeria (Lawrence, 2022), which has become an important public health and social concern worldwide. This has negative effects to the families, individuals, communities and the educational institutions. More so, there is evidence abounds that the majority of unreported suicides occur in developing countries, such as Africa (Adewuya, et.al., 2016). As a result, Nigeria is still struggling with unclassified reports on the occurrence of suicide (Okafor, 2020). Suicide rate in Nigeria which is 3.2% which is a worrying figure between Africa and other developing countries (Adewuya et al., 2016).

Suicide among Nigerian students is a cause for concern coming from the background that in most cultures of this country, suicide is regarded as an abomination, in which suicide is something that is never thought of (Joel,2022). It has become a trend raises cause for concern. Similarly, most suicides are reported mostly by the media without been captured by the national population commission (Joel, 2022). This recent surge in media attention has helped the issue of pre-service teachers suicide become a topic of discussion and, in some cases, outrage.

There is insufficient context specific evidence on the causes of suicide and the effectiveness or availability of the preventive measures among pre-services teachers in Colleges of Education in North-central Nigeria. This however, creates a need to investigate the factors that may predispose pre-service teachers to suicidal behaviour and examine the appropriate preventive strategies that can be adopted by Colleges of Education, counsellors, families and other relevant stakeholders. This has necessitated the researchers to raised questions that will reveal the highlight of the existing gaps pertaining to the study

Objectives

The main aim of this study is to find out the causes and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in North Central Nigeria Colleges of Education. The following specific objectives were raised in order to address the main goal of the research and was completed within six months. The study was be based on the following specific objectives:

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1. Determine the factors that causes suicide among male and female pre service teachers in North-central Nigeria Colleges of Education
2. Acescent the preventive strategies of suicide prevention among pre service teachers in North-central, Nigeria Colleges of Education based on age

Research Questions

Based on the specific objectives, the following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of this research:

1. What are the causes of suicide among male and female Preservice teachers in North-central, Nigerian Colleges of Education?
2. What are the preventive strategies of suicide among pre-service teachers in North-central Nigerian Colleges of Education?

Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female pre-service teachers on the causes, and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in North-Central Nigerian Colleges of Education

Ho_2: There is no significant difference among pre-service teachers on the causes, and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in North-central Nigerian Colleges of Education based on age.

Literature Review

A study conducted by Martinengo, et.al., (2019) used Google Play and Apple's App Store to examined depression and suicide prevention in six evidence-based clinical at centre for population Health, Lee Kong Chian school of Medicine, Nanyang Technological university, Singapore. The researchers used a descriptive research design and chi-square test statistics for data analysis. The findings of the study showed 20 (29%) of depression management apps, 3 (4%) addressed both depression management and suicide prevention apps, and 46 (67%) indicated suicide prevention apps. The results further revealed that 8 (12%) depression management apps were chatbots, and 5 (7%) apps were incorporated all six suicide prevention strategies, also 94% apps, indicated emergency contact information and 67%) apps has a direct access to a crisis helpline. This means that the study demonstrated variation in which apps monitoring of suicidal thoughts and access social support and emergency.

In the prevention of suicide, a study conducted by Iyoha, et al., (2020) investigated counselling strategies for suicide prevention among undergraduate students in southeastern Nigeria, using a sample of 155 university-based counsellors and 36 mental health practitioners The finding revealed that there is no significant difference between counsellors' and mental health professionals' opinions regarding counselling strategies for suicide prevention. This suggested that suicidal behaviours among university students is influenced by a combination of psychological, interpersonal, and behavioural factors rather than by one isolated cause.

Isara, et al., (2022) explored the risk factors of depression among 300 undergraduate medical students from 200 to 600 levels at the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. A cross-sectional

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research design was adopted. The researchers used Chi-square tests and Binary logistic regression analysis, and the findings showed that 96 (32.0%) have depression, 59 (19.0%) with mild depression, and 4 (1.3%) had severe depression. These results came from pre-clinical students with 53 (39.3%), and clinical students with 43 (26.1%). The results further revealed that Emotional problems, financial challenges, and smoking were significant independent predictors of depression.

In a similar study. Omeje, et al., (2022) investigated the factors that contributed to suicidal behaviours among Nigerian undergraduates in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. They researchers used in-depth interviews and thematic analysis using undergraduate students, 12 males and 12 females respectively. The results showed that frustration, poor academic performance, and internet exposure were the major contributors to suicide. and the results showed that 43.3% of participants indicted that life is not worth living, 33.3% showed that they wished they were dead, 37.1% thought about taking their life, while 16.6% indicated they are seriously considered suicide/made a plan, and 8.7% showed that they had previous suicide attempt.

Kukoyi, et.al., (2023) used a sample of 384 students from undergraduate students of Afe Babalola University Ekiti State, Nigeria to examined factors for self-harm and suicidal ideation. The researchers adopted a cross-sectional research design. The findings revealed more than 46% (208) moderate social support while 80.4% a high self-esteem and 72.7% low environmental factor scores, the findings also showed that there is an association between self-esteem, social support, and self-harm but no association between social support and suicide ideation as well as between gender and self-harm. The researchers concluded that there is need for these factors in order to improve mental health outcomes among undergraduates

A mixed research design was adopted by Cecchin, et al., (2024) to determined risk factors associated with suicidal ideation with a sample of 20 undergraduate students, 12 mental health professionals, and 12 course coordinators from a public university in the North of Brazil The findings revealed risk factors of suicide such as: family conflicts, low social support, conflict in overload of academic activities, and mental suffering resulting from income inequality. These factors can increase vulnerability to suicidal ideation.

In the study of associated factors of suicide among 616 undergraduate students from universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics in Adamawa Central Senatorial Zone, northeast Nigeria. Iweama, et.al., (2024) found 34.9%, of suicidal behaviour, depression 27.3%, Hopelessness 54.2%, perceived burdensomeness 35.1% and 69.2% for thwarted belongingness This suggested that the students were aged 15-19 years, and were in 100 level, while female, students in 200 and 300 levels were found to be associated with suicidal attempts.

Similarly on the risk factors, Visesh, et al., (2025) examined various risk factors that can cause suicidal thoughts among medical students at eastern Uttar Pradesh. A cross-sectional research design used with a sample of 423 participated on online questionnaire. The findings showed that 4.2% are having suicidal ideation thoughts, and depression, academic stress, use of alcohol, and abuse by physical or sexual means were the risk variables significantly linked to greater suicidal ideation thoughts. This suggested that prevalence of suicidal ideation among medical students is worrisome.

Seedat, et al., (2025) used a sample of 1, 211 undergraduate Health Sciences students at university of Witwatersrand, South African in 2020 to examined the prevalence of suicidal ideation and its

determinants. The findings showed 21.8% prevalence of suicidal ideation and female students had significantly higher suicidal ideation than males 24.1% against 17.8%. There are also several factors contributing to suicide such as depression, symptoms, anxiety, limited social support, and coloured race is significant determinants of suicidal ideation. A most recent study by Egwuonwu, et al., (2026) used a sample of 389 undergraduate students of Olabisi Onabanjo university Ogun State in South-western Nigeria to investigated self-esteem and cyberbullying as a predictor of suicidal ideation. The results of their findings showed that self-esteem, and cyberbully are 41.2% of suicidal ideation, also the result indicated that cyberbully is significant independent predictor.

Arjona, et al., (2026) examined the reasons why university students are experiencing suicidal ideation in university of Malaga, Spain. The researchers used ordinary regression for the analysis and their results showed that 43.3% of participants indicted that life is not worth living, 33.3% showed that they wished they were dead, 37.1% thought about taking their life, while 16.6% indicated they are seriously considered suicide/made a plan, and 8.7% showed that they had previous suicide attempt

The risk factors study for suicidal ideation among university students in La Libertad, Peru was carried out by Aguilar Chavez, et al. (2026). The researchers adopted a quantitative, non-experimental, and multivariable analytical design. A sample of 380 students participated in the study. The researchers used logistic Regression and odds ratios. The results revealed that 25% of students reported to have suicidal ideation, and the prevalence is prominent among female students aged 17-21 years which is most especially by first year students with no good socioeconomic. The findings also revealed that depression, sexual violence, and childhood/ adolescent traumatic experience is strong correlates of suicidal ideation with odds ratios of 5.437, 3.437, and 2.402 respectively.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design which was performed from February 22 to May 25 2026, within the four Colleges of Education in North -central Nigeria. This design is appropriate because it enabled the researchers to collect data from a large pool of subjects and compare between and among groups (Thomas, 2020). The population of the four sampled Colleges of Education in North, central, Nigeria, included Nasarawa State College of Education, Akwanga, Federal Capital Territory College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Niger State College of Education, Minna, and Federal College of Education Okene, Kogi State encompassed 22,600 pre-service teachers for 2025/2026 academic session.

The research was conducted in North-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria using two state Colleges of Education and two Federal Colleges of Education which comprises of Nasarawa State College of Education, Akwanga, Niger State College of Education, Minna, Federal College of Education, Okene, Kogi State and Federal Capital Territory College of Education, Zuba, Abuja. A sample of 465 pre-service teachers in the study consisted of 230 male and 235 female students respectively for the four Colleges of Education in North-central, Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of these four Colleges of Education, in North-central Nigeria, while multi-stage sampling procedure was used for selection of sample pre-service teachers in the study. The questionnaires were used in the study as instrument and distributed to pre-service teachers with

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the aid of two research assistances to obtained data regarding the factors causes and prevention strategies of suicide among pre-service teachers in North-central, Nigerian Colleges of Education, based the causes and prevention of suicide among the pre-service teachers. Two experts validated the content of the instrument and it was 78.5%. A trial testing was conducted using 100 pre-service teachers in two Colleges of Education in North west, Nigeria to obtained the reliability of the instrument. A Statistical Packaged for Social Science (SPSS) software version 26.0 was used for the reliability of the instrument with index value of 0.842.

Results

The data collected for the study were analysed based on the research questions and hypotheses formulated. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, with decision rule based on a criterion mean of 2.50. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as Agreed, while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was regarded as Disagreed. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The Independent Samples t-test was used to test Hypothesis One **Ho_1** because it compared the mean ratings of respondents in two groups. While One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test Hypotheses two **Ho_2**
This section presented the results and analysis related to causes and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in Nigerian Colleges of Education

Research Question 1: What are the causes of suicide among Preservice teachers in Colleges of Education, North-central, Nigeria**?**

Table 1: The causes of Suicide Among Preservice teachers in Colleges of Education, North-Central, Nigeria N=465

S/No	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Negative self-esteem	2.63	0.62	Agreed
2	Depression	2.67	0.72	Agreed
3	Self-administration of a psychoactive substance e.g alcohol and drug	2.74	0.68	Agreed
4	Interpersonal conflict between parents and siblings	2.75	0.83	Agreed
5	Family history of a mental disorder	2.83	0.56	Agreed
6	Low school achievement	2.65	0.84	Agreed
7	Betrayal	2.68	0.67	Agreed
8	Having guns or other firearms in the home	2.76	0.66	Agreed
9.	Trauma such as physical and sexual abuse	2.82	0.78	Agreed
10	Family history of suicide	2.75	0.75	Agreed
	Sectional Mean Score	2.83	0.84	Agreed

Table1 presents the respondents' ratings on the causes of suicide among preservice teachers in colleges of education, North-central Nigeria. The findings revealed a sectional mean score of 2.83 with a standard deviation of 0.84, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that the listed causes of suicide among pre-service teachers in the selected colleges of education, North-central Nigeria.

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Overall, the findings suggest that psychological, family, academic, social, and environmental factors contributed to suicide behaviour among pre-services teachers in colleges of education North-Central Nigeria, as shown by the overall mean score above the criterion value.

Research Question 2: What are the preventive strategies of suicide among pre-service teachers in North -central Nigeria Colleges of Education?

Table 2: Prevention Strategies of Suicide Among Pre-service Teachers in Colleges of Education ,North-centralNigeria N = 465

	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
11	Public information and education about the danger of known risk factors of should is been provided in my college	1.57	0.56	Disagreed
12	Students who attempt suicide do attend weekly assessment session conducted by psychologist	1.76	0.76	Disagreed
13	Counsellors in my College do conduct face-to face screening evaluation of students identify with risk of suicide with the plan preventive programme to them	2.67	0.82	Agreed
14	The College authorities do treat students with anxiety, drug abuse and depression	2.75	0.74	Agreed
15	Students in my College in possession of dangerous weapons are ban	2.83	0.65	Agreed
16	My college organised seminars for students on danger of drug abuse and with possession of dangerous weapons	2.65	0.72	Agreed
17	My college do dismissed students found with dangerous weapons, selling or using of hard drugs	1.42	0.78	Disagreed
18	My college promotes and supports research on suicide	2.78	0.83	Agreed
19	The College authority screen programs to identify risk factor of suicide	2.67	0.69	Agreed
20	The College educates students about stress, depression, self-destructive and suicide	2.89	0.82	Agreed
	Sectional Mean Score	**2.75**	**0.75**	**Agreed**

Table 2 presents the respondents' ratings mean on the prevention strategies of suicide among preservice teachers in colleges of education, North-central Nigeria. The findings revealed a sectional mean score of 2.75 with a standard deviation of 0.75, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that the listed prevention strategies of suicide among pre-service teachers in the selected colleges of education, North-central Nigeria.

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female pre-service teachers on the causes, and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in colleges of education North-Central Nigeria

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Table 3: t-test results on the causes and Prevention of Suicide Among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education North-Central, Nigeria Based on Gender

Variables	N	X	Std. Dev.	Df	t-value	Sig.(P)	Decision
Male	230	1.32	0.56				
				460	0.101	0.070	Not Significant
Female	235	1.43	0.76				

***= Not Significant at 0.05 level**

Table 3 presents the independent samples t-test results comparing the mean ratings of male and female pre-service teachers on the causes, and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education North-central Nigeria. The results indicate that male respondents had a mean score of 1.32 (SD = 0.45), while female respondents had a mean score of 1 43 (SD = 0.63). The computed t-value of 0.101 with 670 degrees of freedom yielded a p-value of 0.070, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Since the p-value (0.070) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female pre-services teachers on the causes, and prevention of suicide in colleges of education North-central Nigeria

Ho_2: There is no significant difference among pre-service teachers on the causes, and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in colleges of education North-central Nigeria based on age.

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA Results on the Mean Ratings of Respondents on the causes, and prevention of Suicide among preservice teachers in colleges of education North-Central Nigeria Based on Age.

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	Df	Mean	F-value	Sig.@0.05	Decision
Between Groups	2.142	2	1.109			
				2. 135	0.030	Significant
Within Groups	304.532	**462**	0.543			
Total	**510.160**	**464**				

***= Significant at 0.05 level**

Table 4 presents the results of the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference among pre-service teachers on the causes, and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in colleges of education North-central Nigeria based on age. The analysis yielded an F-value of 2.135 with 2 and 462 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.030, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

Since the p-value (0.030) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference among pre-service teachers on the causes, and

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prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in North-central Nigerian Colleges of Education. The observed difference may be attributed to age-related variations in life experiences, emotional maturity, coping strategies, academic demands, financial responsibilities, and social expectations. Students in different age categories often encounter different developmental and psychosocial challenges, which can influence how they perceive suicidal thoughts, risk factors, warning signs, and preventive measures. Older students may experience greater pressure related to graduation, employment, and family responsibilities, while younger students may struggle more with adapting to university life and peer influence. These differences could account for the variation in responses across the age groups.

Discussion of the Findings

There are several factors that contributed to suicide among pre-service teachers in North-central Colleges of Education. The respondents agreed that negative self-esteem, depression, alcohol and drugs, poor academic achievement, betrayal, access to firearms, and family history of suicide are major factors contributing to suicide among pre-service teachers. This suggests that suicide prevention programmes should adopt a holistic approach that addresses students' emotional well-being, family relationships, academic challenges, and substance abuse.

This finding is in line with the study of Okoedion and Okolie (2019), who found that depression and mental illness, anxiety and stress, sexual violence, substance abuse, unemployment, poverty, and interpersonal conflict were major predictors of suicidal behaviour among Nigerian youths. The finding also agrees with Aruah et al., (2020), who reported that relationship problems, poor living conditions, inadequate infrastructure, and mental health challenges were major factors influencing suicide among university students and emphasized that these factors could be effectively addressed through appropriate student support services. Likewise, Desai et.al., (2021) identified academic stress, family-related stress, relationship problems, alcohol use, abuse, and female gender as significant predictors of suicidal ideation among undergraduate medical students. Similarly, Ajibola and Agunbiade (2021) found that academic challenges, substance abuse, and parental marital problems significantly increased students' vulnerability to suicidal ideation.

The present finding also agrees with Visesh et al. (2025), who reported that depression, academic stress, alcohol use, and physical or sexual abuse were significantly associated with suicidal ideation among medical students. The consistency between these findings and the present study demonstrates that the factors contributing to suicide among pre-service teachers are multifaceted and cut across psychological, social, family, academic, and behavioural domains. Overall, the present finding provides empirical evidence that suicide among pre-service teachers cannot be attributed to a single cause but results from the interaction of several risk factors.

This finding agrees with the study of Iyoha et al., (2020), who found no significant difference between counsellors and mental health practitioners regarding counselling strategies for suicide prevention, emphasizing that suicide prevention interventions should be universally applied irrespective of gender. The finding also supports Kukoyi et al. (2023), who reported no significant association between gender and self-harm among undergraduate students, suggesting that psychological distress and suicidal tendencies are experienced by both male and female pre-service

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teachers Hypothesis two revealed a statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the factors, and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in North-Central Nigerian Colleges of Education based on gender family background.

The second hypothesis revealed a statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of pre-service teachers on the factors, and prevention of suicide based on age. This implies that pre-service teachers of different age groups do not perceive suicide-related issues in the same manner. The finding suggests that age influences how pre-service teachers experience, recognize, and respond to suicidal thoughts, associated risk factors, and preventive strategies. Younger and older pre-service teachers may differ in their levels of emotional maturity, coping abilities, life experiences, academic responsibilities, and exposure to stressful situations, which may account for the observed variation across age groups.

This finding is consistent with the study of Aroyewun et al., (2022), who reported significant age differences in the prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students in South-West Nigerian universities. Their findings showed that suicidal ideation was more among students aged 26–30 years than among younger students, indicating that age plays an important role in suicidal behaviour. Similarly, the present finding agrees with Desa et al., (2021), who identified academic stress, family-related stress, and relationship challenges as significant predictors of suicidal ideation among undergraduate medical students, with the effects varying across different age categories.

The finding also corroborates the study of Nahrin, et al (2023), who found significant differences in suicidal ideation among university students of different age groups following the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study revealed that age influenced exposure to psychological distress, anxiety, burnout, and suicidal thoughts. Likewise, the finding supports Looijmans et al., (2024), who reported that age was among the strongest predictors of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among students in vocational education over a ten-year period. They concluded that age-related developmental and psychological changes significantly influence students' vulnerability to suicide. Furthermore, the finding agrees with Iweama, et al (2024), who found that suicidal ideation and suicide attempts varied significantly across different age and academic levels among undergraduate students in northeastern Nigeria. Their study emphasized that as students progress in age and academic level, they encounter different psychosocial challenges that may increase or reduce suicidal tendencies. The finding is equally supported by Shahsavar and Choudhury (2025), who reported that age significantly influenced suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among adolescents and young adults, recommending that intervention programmes should be tailored to the developmental characteristics of different age groups. The finding, however, contrasts with the study of Olubukola (2020), who reported that age and level of study had no significant influence on suicidal ideation among university students. The difference between the findings may be attributed to variations in geographical location, sample characteristics, institutional environments, and the variables investigated. While the present study examined the broader dimensions of suicide prevalence, factors, symptoms, and prevention Olubukola focused primarily on suicidal ideation and its relationship with self-esteem and depression.

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Conclusion

The results showed that negative self-esteem, depression, self-administration of psychoactive substances, interpersonal conflict between parents and siblings, family history of mental disorders, low academic achievement, betrayal, access to firearms, trauma resulting from physical and sexual abuse, and family history of suicide are major factors contributing to suicide among pre-service teachers in North-central, Colleges of Education The findings further indicated that was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female pre-service teachers on the factors, and prevention of suicide among pre-service teachers in North-central, Nigerian Colleges of Education.

In line with the above findings, this study concluded that suicide remains a significant mental health challenge among pre-service teachers in North-central Nigerian Colleges of Education. The study further concluded that psychological factors such as depression, negative self-esteem, emotional distress, hopelessness, and substance abuse constitute major contributors to suicidal behaviour among pre-service teachers Furthermore, the study concluded that preventive measures against suicide require collaborative efforts involving College of Education management, professional counsellors, lecturers, parents, health professionals, peers, religious organizations, and government agencies. Strengthening counselling services, mental health awareness programmes, psychosocial support systems, and early intervention strategies will significantly contribute to reducing suicidal behaviours among pre-service teachers.

Recommendations

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

1. College of Education management, in collaboration with counselling centres, should organize regular suicide awareness programmes, mental health campaigns, and psychological support services to reduce the prevalence of suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and other suicide-related behaviours among undergraduate students.
2. Professional counsellors, psychologists, lecturers, and College health services should develop intervention programmes that address the major factors contributing to suicide, such as depression, negative self-esteem, substance abuse, academic difficulties, family conflicts, trauma, and emotional distress, through counselling, stress management, and referral services.
3. College of education counselling units should implement early identification and intervention programmes by training lecturers, hostel administrators, student leaders, and peer counsellors to recognize the warning signs and symptoms of suicide and promptly refer at-risk pre-service teachers for professional counselling and psychological support.

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