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The Relationship Between Suicidal Ideation and Cognitive Distortion Among Undergraduates

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Abstract

Suicide has become a debilitating issue. Although it is a preventable condition but failure to understand the thinking pattern could significantly dampen the effort to avert it. Despite being an important issue, there is still a lack of study centralising into the thinking pattern when suicidal thoughts are mooted in. Due to this gap, this study was set to examine the relationship between cognitive distortion and suicidal ideation. Using purposive sampling 414 students whose were seeking career advice were recruited to participate in this study. Results indicated that there was a significant relationship between cognitive distortion and suicidal ideation. Using multiple regression, the finding showed that out of 10 thinking patterns, overgeneralisation contributes the most to the suicidal thoughts. These findings will help professionals to understand better the nature of suicidal ideation and assist them in providing better services and alleviating its symptoms. This study also discussed the limitations and the directions for future research.

Keywords: suicidal ideation, thinking pattern, cognitive distortion, catastrophizing, overgeneralization

Introduction

Suicide has become a debilitating issue that happens globally. It is not only affecting individuals adversely, but also causing destructive impacts to the society. For instance, almost 500 million individuals suffer from bereavement due to loss of significant individuals who have committed suicide annually (Pitman, Osborn, King, & Erlangsen, 2014). According to World Health Organization (WHO) (2018), suicide has been classified as the 17th cause of death among general population, and specifically the 2nd main cause of death among individuals with the age range from 15 to 29 years old. Although the global crude suicide rate had been decreased approximately 12.4% across 15 years (2000: 12.2 to 2015:10.7), the rate was still relatively static and worrying. Unlike global rate, the crude suicide rate in Malaysia had been increased around 3.8% from 2000 (5.3) to 2015 (5.5), and is expected to have continuous growth if no appropriate preventive interventions would be implemented (Malaysian Digest, 2015; WHO, 2018).

Suicide is an intended action that leads to death. It is basically initiated by the formation of suicidal ideation, which is an uncommon suicidal beliefs ranged from fleeting thoughts, extensive thoughts, comprehensive planning until incomplete suicide attempts (Choi, Lee, Yoon, Won, & Kim, 2017;