

Predictors of Depression and Suicidal Ideation of Filipino College Freshmen in a Philippine State College

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ABSTRACT. This study described the prevalence and predictors of depression and suicidal ideation of 365 Filipino college freshmen in a Philippine State College during the academic year 2019–2020. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational design, psychosocial predictors were measured using the Bar-On EQ Inventory and participants' socio-demographic profile respectively. Depression and suicidal ideation were measured using Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-21 and Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale respectively. Emotional intelligence and family structure were inversely associated with depression and suicidal ideation while sex was associated with suicidal ideation. Parents/guardian's educational attainment was associated with depression and suicidal ideation. EQ and family structure were predictors of depression and suicidal ideation, while sex predicted suicidal ideation. Prevalent depression, higher suicidal tendencies among female students, and those living alone, and students' underdeveloped EQ point towards an urgency for gender-specific, psycho-socially oriented, and strategic school-based mental health program.

1.0. Introduction

Pursuing college can be a stressful time for many students in different parts of the world. Aside from coping with academic pressure, some students have to deal with lots of tasks while living away from home and thrive independently from their family of origin (Hysing et al., 2018).

In the same vein, University students worldwide have a greater chance of developing depression. It is among university students' common mental health problems and has a harmful impact on students' emotional, psychosocial, interpersonal functioning, and academic performance (Ahmed et al., 2020). Aside from depression, suicidal ideation among college students is also included in this current study. Suicidal ideation links to mental health problems or illness (Bachman, 2018), particularly depression. The context, however, is on suicidal thoughts rather than the suicide completion itself but includes the act of planning prior to suicide attempt or completion.

In the world today, suicide is an emergent cause of death among adolescents. Previous studies conducted in affluent countries suggest that students in alternative schools are more prone to suicidal behaviors than those in formal schools (Estrada et al., 2019).

In the Philippines, a total of 555 college students were surveyed from private higher education institutions. It was found out that three dimensions of school burnout, namely exhaustion, cynicism, and a sense of inadequacy, were significant predictors of depression and suicidal ideation (Aranas et al., 2020). Locally, college students in Iloilo province who conceived suicidal ideations were found to have experienced hardships, difficulties, pain, anger, joy, and happiness just like any typical adolescent. However, they cannot cope with the overwhelming circumstances and problems (Palma, 2016).

Indeed, the college years mark a period of heightened vulnerability to a gamut of mental health challenges (Liu et al., 2018). However, only a few available mental health data and institutional integration of mental health programs are found in colleges and universities outside Metro Manila (Cleofas, 2019).

In response to this need, this study conceives itself within the context of an increasing number of incidences of mental health challenges such as depression and suicidal ideation observed among college students in the Philippines.

Thus, this investigation aimed to determine and describe the prevalence and predictors of college freshmen's depression and suicidal ideation in a Philippine State College that will serve as a point of reference for a workable school-based mental health program.

2.0. Framework of the Study

Theoretical assumptions and models for this research underpin contentions on the association of psychosocial factors on depression and suicidal ideation. Aaron Beck's Cognitive Theory and Emotional Intelligence (EQ), [Psychological] and Reciprocal Determinism (Social) elucidate the associations of psychosocial factors of depression and suicidal ideation.

The psychosocial model recognizes that mental health and well-being depend on the things that happen to an individual, how he makes sense of events, and how he responds to them (Kinderman, 2014). Likewise, the key factors associated with depressive symptoms, for instance, were family and relationship related as well as individual behaviors and attitudes (Ngin et al., 2018). College freshmen need to adjust to their new environment, new people to meet and work with. These social transitions are stressful aside from prior concerns they have, such as finances, transportation, housing, and homesickness by being away from home and the like.

Aaron Beck's cognitive theory (1967, cited in Saul McLeod, 2015) explains depression using the negative triad: negative view of self, the world, and the future. Individuals with depression tend to associate negative events with personal, psychological, moral, or physical defects, which gives them a negative view of the self. Next, they perceive the world as making irrationally high demands and giving overwhelmingly high obstacles to reaching life goals. This gives them a negative view of the world. Thirdly, they make long-range predictions, forecasting that prevailing difficulties or suffering will remain indefinitely, giving them a negative view of the future or the feeling of hopelessness. On this premise, the transition to college can challenge or trigger depressive states in college freshmen, that is, if they already have a negative view of themselves, and that the world of college academics and its demands can be overwhelming that they are unable to cope. They might think they are doomed to fail and ruin everything they planned and that of their parents' expectations.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the person's ability to perceive, control, and evaluate his or her emotions and understand, interpret, and respond appropriately to others' emotions (Howard Gardner, 2020, as cited in Norboevich, 2020). Research has documented that EQ is a protective factor for depression (Moeller et al., 2020). Depression negatively influences one's emotions, beliefs, and actions. Depression creates feelings of sorrow and a decline of interest in activities a person once liked and enjoyed. It can cause various emotional and physical difficulties. It can weaken one's capability to perform both at work and home (American Psychiatric Association, 2020). However, when an individual is equipped with higher levels of EQ competencies such as good interpersonal and stress management skills, and optimism, then EQ becomes a protective factor to depression.

In a study among South African university students, EQ affected mental health indicators among first-year university students. Further, findings revealed that students with high scores on well-being or EQ emotionality dimensions tend to be higher in social functioning. In contrast, those with high self-control scores or high EQ sociability dimensions tend to account for less somatic and depressive symptoms, respectively. EQ is undoubtedly an indispensable tool should college freshmen be able to cope and blend in any given environment. In any school climate, hostility can emerge. If a student is socially and emotionally inept, this could be a precipitant to a potential mental health problem such as depression or suicidal ideation.

Albert Bandura's reciprocal determinism explains the role of an individual's behavior as it interacts with one's thinking and physical environment, where maladaptive behavior results in mental health problems (Bandura, 1985, as cited in Zeng et al., 2020). In light of this view, the association of social factors with mental health has been studied by professionals worldwide. Gender, ethnicity, and living arrangement, for example, are associated with psychological distress (Ran et al., 2016).

Additionally, higher levels of financial stress were associated with more considerable family and academic distress (Cadaret & Benette, 2018). Financial problems seem to lead to students' poor mental health, with the possibility of a vicious cycle occurring (Richardson et al., 2016).

Given Bandura's reciprocal determinism, where college freshmen's mental state and their reaction to a given school climate or environment converge, they can manifest a resultant adaptive or maladaptive behavior. For instance, the student's inability to cope with a situation or fail to satisfy his needs can result in distress and depression (Sarita, 2015). Likewise, adolescents who are dissatisfied with their social contacts and experience poor social support reported more psychological distress, anxiety, and depression (Droogenbroeck et al., 2018). Moreover, psychological well-being associating self-acceptance, quality relationship with others, sense of autonomy and purpose of life, and ability to manage complicated situations play an essential

element in predicting the development of the suicidal idea (Ganaprakasam, 2018). Student's cognition, the way they perceive things, and their disposition in a given environment, and how they react to it determine either positive or adverse outcomes.

The results of this study can contribute essentially to the limited data available on the prevalence and severity of mental health problems in the local setting. Findings on the prevalence of depression and suicidal ideation among college students in a state college could prompt the institution's stakeholders for an urgent response through a viable mental health program.

3.0. Methods

This study is descriptive-correlational by design. Using stratified random sampling, the researcher surveyed 365 samples of 4,173 college freshmen in a Philippine State College. Data were personally gathered by the researcher from the state college through a paper and pencil test. An informed consent form was given, discussed, and duly signed by each respondent before voluntarily participating. To ensure confidentiality, the gathered answer sheets were kept secured in a safe place and were shredded after the analysis of the data.

For the instrument of the study, the psychological predictor (EQ) was measured using the standardized Bar-On EQ Inventory. Social factors were the socio-demographic profile of respondents obtained through a checklist. The depression levels of respondents were measured using the standardized Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-21 (DASS 21), wherein the measure of depression is an index to either non-clinical or clinical depression. Suicidal ideation was gauged using the standardized Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS). From the five escalating categories of suicidal ideation severity, an arbitrary scale was developed: Mean Scale 1-3 is Low suicidal ideation, and 3.01-5 is High suicidal ideation.

Frequency distribution, percentage, mean, Pearson product-moment of correlation, Point-biserial, Pearson's Chi-square, and Multiple Regression were used to analyze the data.

4.0. Results and Discussion

Profile of respondents

Table 1 shows that male respondents (56.99%) are greater in number than females (43.01%), and 69.86% of the sample has a monthly family earning below 11,021 pesos a month (the average income of the respondents). In the Philippines, families with a monthly family income of less than 10,481 pesos are considered poor (Zoleta, 2020). Thus nearly 69% of the respondents belong to a poor social class based on their family income. The highest number of respondents live with their parents (87.40%) and the lowest number of respondents are those living alone (5.75%), accounting for 21 out of the 365 respondents. Furthermore, more parents or guardians finished college (44.93%). The majority of the college freshmen have a very low (50.8%) EQ level.

Overall prevalence of depression and suicidal ideation of college freshmen

From a bigger picture, depression among college freshmen in Table 2 (65.21 %) ranges from moderate, severe, to extremely severe levels. The prevalence of depression and suicidal ideation of the respondents in the current study is consistent with the pervasiveness found in a study with more than 100 institutions, results showed that 20% of college students had depression and suicidal thoughts (Liu et al., 2019).

Moreover, the higher levels of suicidal ideation are at 23%, an index of suicidal thoughts that is described in Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale C-SSRS (Naval Center for Combat & Operational Stress Control, 2015) as active suicidal ideation where respondents contemplate committing suicide; have had thoughts about the specific plan and intent to commit suicide, and have done preparatory acts to commit suicide. All these are considered suicidal ideation based on C-SSRS.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Variables	f	%
Sex		
Male	208	56.99
Female	157	43.01
Family Income		
Lower Income (Below P11,021)	255	69.86
Higher Income (P11,021 and above)	110	30.14
Family Structure		
Living with parents	319	87.40
Living with relatives	25	6.85
Living alone	21	5.75
Educational Attainment of Parents/Guardians		
Elementary	45	12.33
High School	156	42.74
College	164	44.93
Emotional Intelligence		
Average	32	8.5
Low	92	24.3
Very Low	192	50.8
Markedly Low	49	13.0
Total	365	100.00

Table 2. Prevalence of depression and suicidal ideation of college freshmen as a whole

Variables	f	%
Depression		
Extremely Severe	35	9.59
Severe	63	17.26
Moderate	140	38.36
Mild	69	18.90
Normal	58	15.89
Suicidal Ideation		
High	85	23.29
Low	280	76.71
Total	365	100

Prevalence of depression and suicidal ideation of college freshmen according to psychosocial factors

When grouped according to psychosocial factors, the prevalence of depression (Table 3) among male students is 67.31%, with severity ranging from moderate, severe to extremely severe. In contrast, female students have a prevalence (50.96%) of depression with a severity range of moderate to extremely severe. However, in terms of severity, female students have a higher prevalence at 11.46% at an extremely severe level, compared to male students with an 8.17% prevalence. Based on this data, depression is more prevalent in male students but more intense among female students.

In terms of family structure, college students living alone have a higher prevalence of depression (28.57%) at an extremely severe level. Students with parents or guardians who finished high school have the highest prevalence (50%) of depression at a moderate level. When grouped according to emotional intelligence, students with the highest prevalence of depression (40.82 %) at a severe level have markedly low emotional intelligence.

Table 3. Prevalence of depression when grouped according to psychosocial factors

Factors	Normal		Mild		Moderate		Severe		Extremely Severe	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Sex										
Male	29	13.94	39	18.75	87	41.83	36	17.31	17	8.17
Female	29	18.47	30	19.11	53	33.76	27	17.20	18	11.46
Family Income										
Low Income	35	13.73	55	21.57	94	36.86	44	17.25	27	10.59
High Income	23	20.91	14	12.73	46	41.82	19	17.27	8	7.27
Family Structure										
Living with parents	47	14.73	65	20.38	128	40.13	56	17.55	23	7.21
Living with relatives	7	28.00	1	4.00	8	32.00	3	12.00	6	24.00
Living alone	4	19.05	3	14.29	4	19.05	4	19.05	6	28.57
Educational Attainment of Parents/Guardians										
Elementary	10	22.22	8	17.78	13	28.89	12	26.67	2	4.44
High School	8	5.13	29	18.59	78	50.00	30	19.23	11	7.05
College	40	24.39	32	19.51	49	29.88	21	12.80	22	13.41
Emotional Intelligence										
Markedly low	3	6.12	5	10.20	16	32.65	20	40.82	5	10.20
Very low	12	6.25	41	21.35	78	40.63	36	18.75	25	13.02
Low	24	26.09	15	16.30	41	44.57	7	7.61	5	5.43
Average	19	59.38	8	25.00	5	15.63	0	0.00	0	0.00

As the data indicate, depression is more prevalent among male students. At the same time, it is less prevalent but more intense among female college students. Students who experienced a more intense depression are those who are at a lower income bracket, living alone, students whose parents/guardians attained college, and those with markedly low EQ.

These findings are consistent with studies concerning social factors with mental health. Gender, ethnicity, and living arrangement, for example, are associated with psychological distress (Ran et al., 2016).

It is observable in Table 4 that female college students have a higher prevalence of suicidal ideation (29.94%) than their male counterparts (18.27%), where prevalence in both sexes is at high severity. In terms of monthly family income, students who belong to higher-income families have higher suicidal ideation prevalence (25.45%). In comparison, those students with lower monthly family income have a 22.35% prevalence. Students living alone have the highest prevalence (57.14%) of suicidal ideation compared to the rest of the family structure and the rest of the psychosocial factors of mental health problems. In terms of parents' or guardians' highest educational attainment, the more prevalent suicidal ideation is in a category of students whose parents finished college (27.44%). In terms of emotional intelligence, students with the most prevalent suicidal ideation have "markedly low" emotional intelligence levels (32.65%). Those with "very low" emotional intelligence have (19.71%) prevalence.

In this current study, results show that higher levels of suicidal ideation are prevalent among female students. This finding is consistent with studies in other parts of the world. Worldwide, suicide is still the primary cause of death in the 15 to 34-year age bracket, particularly for girls aged 15 to 19 (Curtin, 2017). In China, mainly, the suicide rate of females is 60% higher than males.

Higher suicide ideation is also prevalent in students with higher family income. However, this finding is incongruent with the study of Elliot (2016), where results revealed that poverty exacerbates the risk of mental health problems. Also, students living alone have more prevalent and high intense suicidal ideation than college freshmen living with their family or relatives.

For students whose suicidal ideation is inversely associated with EQ, this finding is consistent with the study of Ganaprakasam (2018), which documented a very critical notion of EQ on overcoming suicidal thoughts and improving mental health among students.

Table 4. Prevalence of suicidal ideation when grouped according to psychosocial factors

Factors	Low		High	
	f	%	f	%
Sex				
Male	170	81.73	38	18.27
Female	110	70.06	47	29.94
Family Income				
Low Income	198	77.65	57	22.35
High Income	82	74.55	28	25.45
Family Structure				
Living with parents	249	78.06	70	21.94
Living with relative	22	88.00	3	12.00
Living alone	9	42.86	12	57.14
Educational Attainment of Parents/Guardians				
Elementary	43	95.56	2	4.44
High School	118	75.64	38	24.36
College	119	72.56	45	27.44
Emotional Intelligence				
Markedly low	33	67.35	16	32.65
Very low	151	72.60	41	19.71
Low	74	47.13	18	11.46
Average	22	68.75	10	31.25

Relationship between emotional intelligence, depression, and suicidal ideation

Table 5 shows that utilizing the Pearson’s r yielded a significant relationship between psychological factor and mental health problems, specifically with depression [$r(365) = -0.378, p = 0.000$], and suicidal ideation [$r(365) = -0.105, p = 0.044$] at 0.05 level of significance.

EQ had a significant inverse relationship with both depression and suicidal ideation. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Lawal, Idemudia, and Senyatsi (2018). Students with high scores on well-being or emotionality (EQ dimensions) tend to be higher in social functioning. In contrast, those with high self-control scores or high sociability (EQ dimensions) tend to describe fewer somatic symptoms of depression.

In the aforementioned, EQ proved to be a robust buffer against depression and suicidal ideation. Thus, a program on EQ enhancement should be included in school-based interventions. EQ components resonate with practical ways to combat depression and suicidal ideation, such as self-awareness, stress management skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and general mood.

Table 5. Relationship between emotional intelligence, depression, and suicidal ideation

Variables	N	r-ratio	p-value	Interpretation
Emotional Intelligence				
Depression	365	-0.378**	0.000	Significant
Suicidal Ideation		-0.105*	0.044	Significant

Note: $p < 0.05^{**}$ and $p < 0.01^{*}$

Relationship between social factors, depression, and suicidal ideation

As shown in Table 6, data analysis using Point-Biserial Correlation and Pearson’s Chi-square revealed the association between social factors and mental health problems. When the social factor is sex, the result shows that sex is associated with suicidal ideation [$r_{pbi} (365) = 0.147, p = 0.005$] at a 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is, thus, rejected. Furthermore, sex has no association with depression [$r_{pbi} (365) = -0.012, p = 0.815$], and the null hypothesis therefore, is not rejected.

Moreover, when the social factor is family income, Table 6 shows that there was no association between family income and depression [$r_{pbi} (365) = 0.017, p = 0.742$], and suicidal ideation [$r_{pbi} (365) = 0.010, p = 0.896$] at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis, therefore, in these associations, is not rejected.

Utilizing the Chi-square test of association, Table 6 shows the relationship between social factors (family structure and educational attainment) and mental health problems.

On the family structure of the college freshmen, there was a moderate association between family structure and depression ($X^2(365) = 23.83, p = 0.002$). Likewise, family structure and suicidal ideation ($X^2(365) = 15.86, p = 0.000$) have significant but low association. The null hypotheses, therefore, in these associations are rejected.

In terms of the educational attainment of the college freshmen, the educational attainment of parents of the college students has a moderate association with their level of depression ($X^2(365) = 37.79, p = 0.000$). Lastly, educational attainment ($X^2(365) = 10.61, p = 0.005$) and suicidal ideation have a low association. The null hypothesis in these associations is also rejected.

Sex is associated with suicidal ideation. However, the comparative inferential analysis was not made in this current study to prove that significant associations involve female college freshmen’s greater tendency to suicidal ideation. Gender differences in mental health problems among adolescents, however, results indicated gender differences for psychological distress and depression, with girls reporting significantly higher scores than boys (Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, & Keppens, 2018).

The educational attainment of parents/guardians is also associated with depression and suicidal ideation. When it comes to the factors correlated with suicide ideation, significant relationships exist between integration in the family and suicide (Quintos, 2017).

Further, family structure and educational attainment of parents/guardians served as college freshmen’s social milieu. A student surrounded by caring and proactive social supporters can cope better with academic life’s demands. The educational attainment of parents also matter, where parents could be more understanding and more concerned with student’s needs. This is reciprocal determinism at work, where students’ receptive mental state in a conducive environment results in adaptive, more socially acceptable behavior.

Table 6. Relationship between social factors, depression, and suicidal ideation

Variables	N	r_{pbi}-ratio	p-value	Interpretation
Sex				
Depression	365	-0.012	0.815	Not significant
Suicidal Ideation		0.147**	0.005	Significant
Family Income				
Depression	365	0.017	0.742	Not significant
Suicidal Ideation		0.010	0.896	Not significant
Family Structure		X²	p-value	
Depression	365	23.83	0.002	Significant
Suicidal Ideation		15.86	0.000	Significant
Educ. Attainment of Parents/Guardians		X²	p-value	
Depression		37.79	0.000	Significant
Suicidal Ideation		10.61	0.005	Significant

Note: $p < 0.05^{**}$ and $p < 0.01^*$

Predictors of depression of college freshmen from among the psychosocial factors

Table 7 shows that the multiple regression analysis resulted in a moderate level of prediction ($R = 0.403$), approximately 16% ($R^2 = 0.163$) of the variability of the dependent variable. The independent variables statistically and significantly predict the dependent variable [$F(5,359) = 13.953, p = 0.000$]. Hence, the regression model is a good fit for the data.

Moreover, the independent variable coefficients of family structure [$t = 2.668, p = 0.008$] and emotional intelligence [$t = -7.902, p = 0.000$] are statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the independent variables family structure and emotional intelligence can predict students' depression with equation:

$$Depression = 49.299 + 1.918[Family\ structure] - 0.613[Emotional\ Intelligence]$$

Similar studies support this finding. Family support and stress have been correlated with the maintenance and development of depression among college students. In search of the influence of family on depression, Levens, Elrahal, and Sagui-Henson (2016) found that when perceived stress reactivity is low, family emotional support significantly shields against depressive symptoms.

Emotional intelligence also predicts depression, as also found by Lawal, Idemudia, and Senyatsi (2018), whose study showed that EQ influences the mental health indicators among first-year University students who scored high on well-being or that EQ emotionality dimensions tend to be more helpful in social functioning. Meanwhile, students who scored high in self-control or in sociability EQ dimensions tend to show less somatic and depressive symptoms, respectively.

A family structure where college freshmen live alone, away from family and friends, has a greater tendency for depression. Likewise, when their EQ levels are low, where their interpersonal skills are a problem, they are pessimistic and have a negative state of feeling or mood. A low EQ contributes to apathy and negativity, hence a negative view of the world, self, and the future, as demonstrated in Aeron Beck's negative triad (McLeod, 2015).

Table 7. Predictors of depression of college freshmen from among the psychosocial factors

	R	R2	df	F-ratio		p-value
0.403		0.163	5, 359	13.953**		0.000
		B	Std. Error	B	t-ratio	
(Constant)		49.299	4.743		10.393	0.000
Sex		-0.548	0.742	-0.036	-0.738	0.461
Family Income		0.390	0.852	0.024	0.457	0.648
Family Structure		1.918	0.719	0.130	2.668**	0.008
Educ. Attainment of Parents/Guardians		0.236	0.585	0.021	0.404	0.686
Emotional Intelligence		-0.613	0.078	-0.390	-7.902**	0.000

Note: $p < 0.05$ **

Table 8 presents a low level of prediction ($R = 0.264$) and only seven percent ($R^2 = 0.070$) of the variability of the dependent variable. The independent variables statistically and significantly predict the dependent variable [$F(5, 359) = 5.394, p = 0.000$]. Therefore, the regression model is a good fit for the data.

Moreover, the independent variable coefficients of sex [$t = 2.776, p = 0.006$], family structure [$t = 3.550, p = 0.000$] and emotional intelligence [$t = -2.220, p = 0.027$] are statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the independent variables sex, family structure, and emotional intelligence can predict student's suicidal ideation with the equation:

$$Suicidal\ ideation = 2.617 + 0.594 [Sex] + 0.736 [Family\ structure] - 0.050 [Emotional\ Intelligence]$$

The finding that sex predicts suicidal ideation among college students points to female students' greater tendency to think about suicide than male college students. Consistent with the current study

is the investigation of Kosik et al., (2017) on suicidal ideation in medical students, where female medical students have been observed to have considerably advanced rates of suicidal ideation than the general population. Similarly, Nowotny et al., (2015) examined the influence of gender normative attitudes and behaviors on the rates of suicidal ideation in the state and individual suicidal ideation for female and male youth aged 13 to 22. The findings of their study suggest the importance of fatalistic suicide for female youth.

Family structure predicts suicidal ideation in this study. Professionals have associated family support and stress with the maintenance and development of depression among college students (Levens et al., 2016).

Moreover, EQ is an indicator of social skills that emerged as a predictor of wellness maintenance and enhancement in university students (Malinauskas & Dumciene, 2018). Sex, family structure, and EQ are predictors of suicidal ideation. The findings resonate with the psychosocial model in the framework of the current study. Psychologically, college freshmen tend to have suicidal ideation when they have lower EQ scores, an index of low levels of self-awareness, interpersonal relation skills, stress management skills, optimism, and general mood. Socially, suicidal ideation is represented by the sexual difference in female students who tend to harbor suicidal thoughts and family structure where college freshmen living alone are more prone to suicidal thoughts than students living with family or supportive relatives.

Table 8. Predictors of suicidal ideation of college freshmen from among the psychosocial factors

R	R2	df	F-ratio		p-value
0.264	0.070	5, 359	5.394**		0.000
	B	Std. Error	B	t-ratio	
(Constant)	2.617	1.368		1.913	0.056
Sex	0.594	0.214	0.142	2.776**	0.006
Family Income	-0.039	0.246	-0.009	-0.159	0.874
Family Structure	0.736	0.207	0.183	3.550**	0.000
Educ. Attainment of Parents/Guardians	0.179	0.169	0.059	1.063	0.289
Emotional Intelligence	-0.050	0.022	-0.115	-2.220**	0.027

Note: p < 0.05 **

5.0. Conclusion

Depression prevalence in bouts ranging from moderate, severe, and extremely severe, and a high level of suicidal ideation among the minority of college freshmen press for an urgent response and a need to pose follow-up inquiries to obtain additional information as to the actual status of respondents in terms of suicidal thoughts from school-based mental health professionals in the college.

The very low level of emotional intelligence generally calls for holistic psychosocial interventions to enable the students to attain flourishing well-being in terms of training in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

The associations between psychosocial factors and depression and suicidal ideation suggest a need for service integration in guidance and counseling. The prevalent and intense levels of depression and a high level of suicidal ideation for college freshmen living alone, and their underdeveloped EQ, suggest an urgent need for service utilization strategies and school-based workable mental health program.

This mental health program should include enhancing students' EQ with components vital in acquiring students' dynamic interpersonal relations, stress management skills, adaptability with the new environment and situations, and positivity or optimism in the midst of difficulty.

The predictive utility of EQ suggests its robust attribute to prevent college students from the adverse effects of depression and suicide thoughts. Enhancing students' EQ will eventually empower them for successful coping strategies. Being aware of their emotions and that of others, identifying the triggers of sadness or frustrations will make their emotions work for them and not against them.

A sense of belonging while in school, dynamic interpersonal relations that foster genuine friendships, adaptability, and openness to change are all part of EQ skills. These will help them weather the legitimate demands of school work with a sense of purpose and determination.

Moreover, the association of sex and suicidal ideation and the association of family structure, educational attainment of parents, and mental health problems call for psychosocial and family-oriented psychoeducation and counseling interventions among college students. Because of the predictive value of the family structure, there is a need to explore the context of relational and environmental conditions where college students reside.

This is so because the possibility of a passive and negligent parenting attitude and parent-child and sibling discord among students living with nuclear family structure, abusive and discouraging guardians or extended family among students living with relatives, or having no family or relative at all may contribute largely to college students' mental health problem and add more distress to the already burdensome academic concerns. Parents, guardians, or relatives, whomever the students may find themselves living with, should serve as essential social support for productive student life and must be encouraged through collaborative efforts in a student, school, and parent/guardian triad.

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