

Exploring Suicidal Ideation Among High School Students in Central Java: A Comprehensive Analysis

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ABSTRACT

There has been an increase in suicides in Indonesia in recent years. Suicide is the leading cause of death in the 15-29 age group. Suicide attempts begin with suicidal ideation. Suicidal ideation arises because the pain or suffering experienced by individuals occurs continuously. This study aims to analyze suicidal ideation that arises due to hopelessness and the desire to be free from pain in adolescents. Data were collected using a questionnaire adapted from the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS). The study was conducted on 1154 students at one of the high schools in Central Java. The results showed that 12% of students had the idea to make a suicide attempt. Further results showed that 86% of respondents did not have a specific plan to commit suicide, 58% of respondents thought about suicide less than once a week, 41% of respondents were able to control suicidal ideation easily, 40% of respondents thought family, religion, and the pain of death could stop suicidal thoughts, and 35% of respondents made suicidal ideation as an attempt to end the pain. This shows that suicidal ideation in adolescents is a problem that needs attention from various parties, one of which is the Guidance and Counseling teacher.

Keywords: Suicidal ideation, adolescents

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INTRODUCTION

Reporting from dataindonesia.id suicides in Indonesia have increased in recent years. From January to July 2023, the Indonesian National Police recorded 640 cases, and the number increased by 31.7% from the previous year in the same period. The WHO reports that suicide is the fourth largest number of deaths in the 15 - 29 age group. One of the groups from this age range is adolescents, which is known to be a phase where individuals are vulnerable to stress. The stage of adolescent development, according to Erikson is a social latent stage where they are likely to encounter various conflicts, including conflicts with themselves, peers, self-beliefs, and philosophy of life.

According to the stages of psychosocial development initiated by Erikson, adolescence is the stage of identity versus identity confusion. Adolescents who fail to find their identity during this period tend to encounter identity confusion. Moreover, adolescents grappling with identity chaos may resort to engaging in negative behavior in pursuit of identity, even if it leads to adopting an unfavorable one (Nadiyah et al., 2021). In addition, at this stage, adolescents also begin to face psychological problems, including depression, anxiety, suicide, self-harm, eating disorders, substance abuse, and other forms of disruptive behavior problems (Lovell & White, 2019). The results of the Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS) showed that 1 in 3 Indonesian adolescents aged 10-17 years had mental health problems. At the same time, 1 in 20 Indonesian adolescents had a mental disorder in the last 12 months. These figures are equivalent to 15.5 million and 2.45 million adolescents. Based on the research above, it can also be seen that mental disorders experienced by adolescents in Indonesia are anxiety disorders, social phobia, major depressive disorders, behavioral disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders, and ADHD (Gloriobarus, 2022).

Suicidal ideation is the thought of ending one's life that usually arises from hopelessness and the desire to be free from pain. Suicidal ideation is the thought of killing oneself in the form of making plans for when, where, and how suicide will be carried out and thoughts about the effects of suicide on others (Zulaikha, 2018). Suicidal ideation arises because the pain experienced by individuals occurs continuously or individuals who are accustomed to painful and frightening experiences such as self-harming behavior, violence, or jobs related to these things, such as soldiers or doctors. This causes suicidal behavior that should be scary and painful to feel easy to do (Calisty, et al., 2021).

Suicidal ideation has the potential to shape suicidal behavior, such as suicide attempts. Previous research (Forkman, et al., 2020) states that the factors that lead to suicidal ideation to suicide attempts are perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness. Perceived burdensomeness leads to a person's point of view who feels that he is a burden to family, friends, and the surrounding community. Meanwhile, thwarted belongingness refers to individuals who feel alienated or ostracized from people around them and feel they are not an important part of their family, friends, or other groups. If individuals feel these two things, it is very possible that their suicidal ideation strengthens, which has the potential to lead to suicide attempts.

Suicidal behavior in individuals tends not to look so obvious because usually, the individual covers up the feelings and problems faced with expressions that look happy (Mulyani, 2018). This happens because of the social stigma that develops in a society that still considers it taboo to talk about suicide and is considered less religious or less sane, so individuals are not open to their feelings to others for help. Individuals who have suicidal ideation will not necessarily attempt suicide.

The strength of suicidal ideation in a person is influenced by the level of suicide risk with the stress experienced by the individual (Calistyo, et al., 2021). The level of suicide risk consists of low, medium, and severe. A person with a low level of suicide risk has suicidal ideation but no detailed plan and still has sufficient protective factors. A moderate suicide risk level signifies someone who has suicidal ideation accompanied by a suicide attempt plan but no details and may not be aware of the protective factors around them. Finally, a very potential risk level for suicide attempts is the severe suicide risk level, where a person has suicidal ideation accompanied by a detailed suicide plan, and it is difficult to realize their protective factors.

METHOD

This research used a descriptive quantitative approach. Descriptive quantitative research describes the content of a variable in the study and is not intended to test specific hypotheses (Marlina, 2020). Sampling was done using an incidental sampling technique. Incidental sampling is a technique for determining samples based on coincidence, where anyone who happens to meet the researcher can be used as a sample if they are considered appropriate as a data source (Sugiyono, 2020). The respondents gathered were 1154 students from one high school in Central Java. In this study, data collection was done through the completion of a questionnaire adapted from the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS). The instrument was translated using the back-to-back translation method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 1. Specific plans for suicidal ideation

No	Classification	Amount	percentage
1	Specific Plan and Intention	28	14%
2	No Specific Plan but a Strong Intention	60	43%
3	No Specific Plan & May Not to Do	61	43%
	Amount	139	100%

Based on research conducted on 1154 students at a high school in Central Java, it was found that 12% of them, namely 139 students, had the idea of attempting suicide.

Based on the results of the study, it was found that 43% of respondents, or 61 students, did not have a specific plan for

committing suicide and were unlikely to actually do so. However, an Amount of 43% or 60 students did not have a specific plan to commit suicide but had a strong desire to do so (Table 1).

Table 2. Frequency of respondents thinking about suicidal ideas

No	Frequency of suicidal thoughts	Amount	percentage
1	Less than once a week	80	58%
2	Once in a week	20	14%
3	2-5 times a week	17	12%
4	Almost everyday	12	9%
5.	Several times every day	10	7%
	Amount	139	100%

Based on the research results, it was found that 58% of respondents, or 80 students, thought about suicidal thoughts

less than once a week. Then, there were 12 students who thought about suicidal ideas almost every day, and 10 students

thought about suicidal ideas several times a day. The results of research regarding the duration of thinking about the idea of suicide show that the majority of respondents thought about

the idea of suicide briefly - a few seconds or minutes, namely 37% or 51 students.

Table 3. Respondent's ability to control suicidal ideation

No	Ability to control suicidal ideation	Amount	percentage
1.	Able to control these ideas easily	57	41%
2.	Can control these ideas with little difficulty	42	30%
3.	Can control the idea with some difficulty	22	16%
4.	Can control the idea with much difficulty	13	9%
5.	Can't control the idea	4	3%
6.	Never try to control the idea	1	1%
	Amount	139	100%

The results of research regarding the ability to control suicidal ideation show that some respondents were able to control suicidal ideation easily, namely 41% or 57 students.

Meanwhile, another 59% experienced difficulty in controlling their suicidal thoughts.

Table 4. Factors preventing suicidal ideation

No	Factors preventing suicidal thoughts include family, religion, and pain from death	Amount	percentage
1.	This can actually stop suicide attempts	55	40%
2.	This may stop suicide attempts	55	40%
3.	Not sure that would stop a suicide attempt	19	14%
4.	This most likely cannot stop suicide attempts	1	1%
5.	It really doesn't stop suicide attempts.	-	0%
6.	Not happening	9	6%
	Amount	139	100%

Based on the research results, it was found that as many as 40% of respondents, or 55 students, felt that family, religion, and the pain of death could stop suicidal thoughts.

Furthermore, another 40% of responses felt there was a possibility that the things above could stop suicidal thoughts.

Table 5. Reasons for having suicidal ideas

No	Frequency of suicidal thoughts	Amount	percentage
1.	Really to get attention, revenge, or a reaction from other people	7	5%
2.	Almost to get attention, revenge, or a reaction from others	11	8%
3.	Same for getting attention, revenge, or a reaction from others and ending hurt feelings	23	17%
4.	Almost to end the feeling of pain	38	27%
5.	Really to end the hurt feelings	48	35%
6.	Not happening	12	9%
	Amount	139	100%

The results of research regarding the reasons for having suicidal ideas are dominated by reasons to end the pain they feel. That is, 35% of respondents really want to end feelings of pain, and 27% of respondents almost want to end feelings of pain.

Discussion

This research was conducted on students aged 15-18 years old, indicating that the respondents were in the adolescent

developmental stage. Adolescence is marked by significant changes, both physical and psychological. Physical changes tend to occur more rapidly than psychological maturation, leading adolescents to experience turmoil that can result in behavioral disturbances, including suicidal tendencies (Aulia, 2016).

Numerous studies have revealed a prevalent occurrence of suicidal ideation among students, especially those in high school (Pajarsari, 2020). The findings of this research also

indicate a considerable number of respondents having suicidal ideation, accounting for 12% of the Amount population. This aligns with a study conducted on adolescents in Indragiri Hulu Regency, which found that the majority of respondents had high suicidal ideation, Amounting to 66.3% (Aulia, 2020). Furthermore, a study by Kusumayanti (2020) in several high schools/vocational schools in Bangli and Klungkung showed that most students experienced a low level of suicide risk.

There are several factors that trigger suicidal ideation among adolescents, including family issues, romantic relationships, psychological pressure, faced problems, lack of attention, school-related issues, friendships, low self-esteem, social and economic pressure, boredom, despair, health issues, the death of someone, fear of the future, and failure (Pratiwi, 2014). These issues, if prolonged, can lead to suicidal ideation, starting from mere thoughts of suicide and eventually leading to suicide attempts (Sari, 2019).

In this study, the majority of respondents were found not to have specific plans for suicide (**Table 1**). According to Klonsky & May (2015), passive suicidal ideation tends not to evolve into active desires, which can be influenced by a strong connection between individuals and their social lives, such as relationships with loved ones, jobs, roles, and interests. Conversely, 14% of respondents had specific plans and intentions for suicide. Based on the research findings, it can be observed that the plans and intensity of suicidal ideation vary among adolescents. This difference can be attributed to various factors, one of which is gender. Previous studies have shown that adolescent girls are more likely to have suicidal ideation than boys. In most countries (n=41 [71%]), the prevalence of suicide plans in girls is higher than in boys (Udin, 2019). Mental health issues also indicate that females tend to have poorer mental health than males (Rozario, 2020). This is explained by gender differences affecting vulnerability to psychosocial stress; adolescent girls are more likely to show internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety. On the other hand, girls are more likely than boys to seek professional help, while boys are often reluctant to seek mental health care from professionals (Rozario, 2020; Cleary, 2017).

The results of the study show that most respondents thought about suicide ideation less than once a week (**Table 2**). According to Woelandari (2017), there is a gap between thoughts or ideation of suicide and actual suicidal behavior. Suicide ideation is usually premeditated for some time, but for some individuals, it may have never been considered before. This indicates that suicidal thoughts often occur impulsively. However, the frequency and duration of respondents' suicidal ideation still need attention to prevent it from escalating into suicide attempts. Given that suicidal ideation often occurs impulsively, it is not surprising that suicidal behavior can also occur with just a slight push from these thoughts (Idham, 2019). Consistent with the above opinions, research conducted by Uddin (2019) on adolescents in 59 countries showed that suicide does not always occur continuously

between ideation, planning, and attempts. Some people directly involved in suicidal behavior do not go through the phases initiated by suicidal ideation. This indicates that persistently maintained suicidal ideation can increase the risk of attempts or actual suicide and can also adversely affect mental health and overall life satisfaction (Febriana, 2021).

According to Tangney (2004), self-control is an individual's ability to replace, change responses, or restrain oneself from undesirable actions. It can be concluded that 59% of respondents had difficulty changing and altering responses to suicidal ideation and difficulty restraining themselves from contemplating suicide (**Table 3**). Meanwhile, self-control can be a preventive factor against the development of suicidal ideation into suicide attempts. According to Martin (2023), an individual's self-control ability can be conceptualized as the opposite of impulsive behavior, a construct often applied as a risk factor for suicide and suicidal behavior. Research conducted by Chen, Liu, and Zhao (2022) explains that adolescents who put themselves in danger (attempting suicide) do so because of impaired self-control. The results of the study show that self-control can reduce the desire for suicide by suppressing inappropriate emotions, desires, and actions. Self-control ability has been proven to reduce suicidal ideation (El Salamony et al., 2023). Self-control helps individuals turn negative thoughts into positive ones and find strengths within themselves.

The results of the study show that almost all respondents believe that thinking about family, religion, and the pain of death can stop them from contemplating suicide (**Table 4**). When an individual's connection to others is stronger than their pain and despair, they tend to only have passive ideation and do not progress to active desires (Karisma, 2021). This indicates that support from the surrounding environment can influence the passivity of suicidal ideation among adolescents. This is consistent with Pajarsari's (2020) opinion that social support provided in verbal or non-verbal forms, tangible forms, and actions can effectively help individuals cope with psychological pressure. Conversely, a lack of social support can lead to a weak sense of meaning in life for adolescents, which impacts the emergence of suicidal ideation. Furthermore, in the Three-Step Theory (3ST) of Suicide by Klonsky & May (2015), biologically, individuals can avoid injury, pain, and death due to the human instinct of fear of death. Therefore, individuals may find it difficult to commit to suicide attempts. In this study, respondents with suicidal ideation were predominantly motivated by the desire to end their perceived pain (**Table 5**). Consistent with the above research findings, adolescents confronted with a problem may unknowingly entertain suicidal ideation to end their pain and suffering. Starting from the ideation of suicide, they begin to contemplate how to attempt suicide, ultimately resulting in their suffering being relieved by suicide (Sari, 2019). Karisma (2021) also explains that suicidal ideation often originates from pain, regardless of its source, whether psychological or physical.

When individuals experience life with pain and have low hopes for their future, it becomes a strong driving force for the development of suicidal ideation. Suicidal behavior often occurs due to a desire to escape from unbearable feelings, such as resentment, social isolation, or hatred (Zulaikha, 2018)

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the majority of students have suicidal thoughts without specific plans or intentions to carry them out. However, some students experience suicidal ideation almost daily and struggle to control it. Furthermore, the suicidal ideation experienced by students is a manifestation of a desire to be free from pain. The research results also indicate that factors such as family, religion, and the pain of death can deter them from suicidal ideation.

SUGGESTION

Recommendations that can be provided from this study include:

- Suicidal thoughts among students should not be taken lightly. Attention from various parties is needed to help students cope with suicidal thoughts or ideation. One of the parties that can provide assistance is guidance and counseling teachers. Guidance and counseling teachers can perform early detection to identify students who have suicidal thoughts.
- Guidance and counseling teachers can provide guidance to train self-control skills and positive coping mechanisms to reduce suicidal thoughts among students.

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