



The Moderating Role of Resilience on Loneliness as a Predictor of Suicidal Ideation among Enugu Custodial Centre Inmates

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Abstract

The study investigated the moderating role of resilience on loneliness as a predictor of suicidal ideation among inmates. A sample of 84 male inmates sampled from Nigerian Correctional Centre Enugu, Enugu State Nigeria took part in the study. The age range of the participants is 18-68 with mean age of 36.10 and standard deviation of 11.29. Thirty-three (33) were asylum inmates while the remaining 51 were non-asylum inmates. An available sampling technique was used in sampling the participants. Information was obtained from the participants through the administration of three instruments: Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), revised UCLA Loneliness Scale and Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation. The study adopted a correlational research design while moderated linear regression analysis was applied on the data. The result shows that the predictor variable (loneliness) accounted for 48.22% (R^2 change) variance in suicidal ideation which is significant to F change $(3, 80) = 24.84, p < .01$. Loneliness negatively predicted suicidal ideation $t(-.3.16, p < .001)$. This indicates that lonely inmates are most likely to experience suicidal ideation. Resilience predicted suicidal ideation $t(-1.98)$ at $p < .05$. Finally, resilience moderated the negative prediction of suicidal ideation by loneliness $t(-1.7129)$ at $p < .05$. It was concluded that Inmates who are lonely are most likely to experience suicidal ideation than those who are not lonely, hence, Nigerian correctional centres should intensify effort in the programs that minimizes loneliness in order to forestall suicidal ideation among inmates.

Keywords: Inmates, Enugu Custodial Centre, loneliness, resilience, suicidal Ideation, .

Introduction

Suicidal behaviour is the act of intentionally causing one's own death (Tirfeneh et al., 2018). Being in correctional institution is continues to be associated with an under-recognized risk for suicidal behaviour (Tirfeneh et al., 2018). Some scholars such as Tirfeneh et al., (2018) postulated that increased risk of suicidal behaviour in correctional institution is because of several factors including prison related, psychiatric disorders and substance use related factors are believed to be associated, but fail to consider other factors such as loneliness and the moderating role of resilience. Hence, this study is carried out to investigate the moderating role of resilience on loneliness as a predictor of suicidal ideation among correctional inmates. The International Classification Diseases (ICD-11) describes suicidal ideation as thoughts, ideas, or ruminations about the possibility of ending one's life, ranging from thinking that one would be better off dead to formulation of elaborate plans (World Health Organization, 2020). The DSM-5 defines it as thoughts about self-harm, with deliberate consideration or planning of possible techniques of causing one's own death (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The CDC defines suicidal ideation as thinking about, considering, or planning suicide (Klonsk et al., 2016). The thought of suicide may be dependent on other factors such as loneliness orchestrated by separation from loved ones and other social ties.

Loneliness is a feeling that most of us will experience at some point in our lives. You can feel lonely in a crowd, with colleagues at work, and with your friends and closest family. However, if this loneliness becomes persistent, it can pose a significant risk to our health and wellbeing (Samaritans, 2018). Loneliness is a part of the human condition that affects all ages. It is a subjective negative feeling related to the person's own experience of deficient social relations. A sense of loneliness is associated with an individual's evaluation of their overall level of social interaction and describes as a deficit between the actual and desired quality and quantity of social engagement (Peplau & Perlman, 1982; Bhagchandani, 2017). Loneliness can be a reaction to the lack of social relations one needs or even though one has the social relations but they are not intimate or satisfying according to the needs or they lack sincerity and emotions in them. Human beings are said to actively engage each other and the universe as they communicate, and loneliness is merely the feeling of being cut off from this process (Peplau, & Perlman, 1989; Bhagchandani, 2017).

Cacioppo and Cacioppo, (2018) suggest that loneliness is associated with social isolation, poor social skills, introversion, and depression. Loneliness, according to many experts, is not necessarily about being alone. The following are the types of loneliness (Bhagchandani, 2017): Interpersonal Loneliness: This is the result of losing a significant, or intimate, relationship. When there is a loss of a significant person in one's life, that person starts feeling alone in between a crowd. This may include the loss of a spouse after divorce due to unstable marriage or due to unfortunate circumstances like death. Social Loneliness is where a person is on the fringes of a group, excluded from a group, or actively rejected. This also includes physical absence of meaningful people around a person and withdrawal from social circles. Cultural Loneliness: This is where a person belongs to a different culture and feels that they do not fit, or belong, in the new culture. Intellectual Loneliness: This is where a person intellectually or educationally remains out of synch with their peers, their family or their social group. Psychological loneliness: This is where a person has experienced trauma that separates them from others around. Existential or cosmic Loneliness: This is an isolating loneliness experienced by a person who is facing death.

Contributing factors to loneliness include situational variables, such as physical isolation, moving to a new location, and divorce (Sbarra, 2015; Cherry 2021). At this juncture, it is pertinent to look at some psychological factors (e.g. resilience) in the bid to ameliorate loneliness and suicidal ideation. In a research by Zhang et al., (2021) found out that resilience moderated the relationship between loneliness and suicidal ideation. Yang et al., (2021) in a research also postulated that the protective effect of resilience could alleviate the negative association of loneliness for suicidal ideation.

A common misapprehension is that resilient people are free from negative emotions or thoughts, remaining optimistic in most or all situations, to the contrary, resilience plays an important protective role against psychopathology and its positive and negative coping strategies can affect both resilience and mental health (Chen, et al., 2018). In other words, people who demonstrate resilience are people with optimistic attitude and

positive emotionality and are, by practice, able to effectively balance negative emotions with positive ones (APA, 2014). It is important to note that resilience is not only about overcoming a deeply stressful situation, but also coming out of the said situation with competent functioning. Resilience is the process of being able to adapt well and bounce back quickly in times of stress (Southwick, et al., 2014). Against the above background, the study problems and objectives hereby ensue:

Prisoners constitute a high-risk group for suicide (Favril, et al., 2017). As an early stage in the pathway leading to suicide, suicidal ideation represents an important target for prevention, nearly half of incarcerated individuals report lifetime suicidal ideation or behaviour and one in five report a previous suicide attempt (Sarchiapone et al., 2009; Hayes, 1989). Given the increased risk of suicide among inmates, there is a need to identify modifiable factors that may predict and protect against suicide ideation among inmates (Richie et al., 2021), yet research on this topic is scarce in general prison populations (Favril, et al., 2017). Due to insufficient literature linking resilience, loneliness and suicidal ideation the researchers are motivated to examine the moderating role of resilience on loneliness as a predictor of suicidal ideation; hence the research questions:

- I. Will loneliness significantly predict suicidal ideation among inmates?
- II. Will resilience significantly predict suicidal ideation among inmates?
- III. Will resilience moderate loneliness to predict suicidal ideation among inmates?

Thus, the following purposes motivated this study:

- I. To investigate whether loneliness will significantly predict suicidal ideation among inmates.
- II. To investigate whether resilience will significantly predict suicidal ideation among inmates.
- III. To explore whether resilience will moderate loneliness to predict suicidal ideation among inmates.

Cognitive behavioural theory (Beck, 1976) is adopted as theoretic framework because it postulated that the way people acquire and interpret information impact on their choices and behaviours, especially if the perception is hopeless, also this theory is based on the idea that, how we think (cognition), how we feel (emotion) and how we act (behaviour) all interact together. The negative evaluation an individual give to situation will determine if he or she will be hopeless. The cognitive behavioural theory helps to anchor the three variables together, because our day-to-day activities depend on how we think and react or act. If one chooses to think positive, he/she will likely act positively which will help to reduce suicidal thought, because the individual will learn to navigate through the stressful situation to stay afloat. Loneliness is a thing of the mind, one can be in the mist of persons and still fill lonely, and if the correctional centres inmate perceived his/herself to be lonely then he or she will be lonely. In addition, the type of interpretation the inmates gives to situation around himself or herself will determine if the inmates will be able to stay afloat the current situation.

Past studies revealed that loneliness was associated with suicidal ideation as buttress in the following work: Batterham et al. (2022) investigated longitudinal data on the prevalence of, and risk factors for, suicidal ideation in the Australian national population, during the pandemic, with 1296 selected data, and result shows that recent adversity, loneliness, and being younger were also associated with increased risk of suicidal ideation over time. Rabasco et al. (2021) explored how aspects of social distancing, communication, and online support from October 2020 to December 2020 related to loneliness, depressive symptoms, and suicidal ideation with 216 selected participants, result shows that loneliness was significantly correlated with suicidal ideation. Similarly, McClelland et al. (2020) investigated the systematic review aimed to determine the extent to which loneliness predicts suicidal ideation and/or behaviour over time, with 947 original potential papers selected, and 22 studies meeting the review criteria, result shows that loneliness was a significant predictor of both suicidal ideation and behaviour.

Studies on resilience, loneliness and suicidal ideation were discussed thus: Zhang et al. (2022) valuated the mediating effect of resilience on the association between loneliness and suicidal ideation with 538; Aged ≥ 60 years; 321 female, 217 male) from 37 nursing homes in China were selected as participants, result shows that the correlation between loneliness and suicidal ideation was partially mediated by resilience. In the same vein, Yang et al. (2021) investigated the moderating effect of resilience on the risk factors of suicidal ideation to

attenuate the adverse contribution among nursing home residents with a total of 538 nursing home residents selected as participants, and result shows the moderating effect of resilience interacting loneliness were statistically significant. The findings indicated the protective effect of resilience in alleviating the negative influence of risk factors for suicidal ideation. Also, Jakobsen et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between resilience and loneliness with 422 selected participants, and result shows that the measure of loneliness correlated significantly and negatively with most facets of the resilience. Past studies reviewed in this research revealed that loneliness predicted suicidal ideation while resilience moderate/mediate the relationship, however, none of the studies sampled correctional centre inmates which made this work timely in other to fill this gap.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Loneliness will significantly predict suicidal ideation among inmates.
2. Resilience will significantly predict suicidal ideation among inmates.
3. Resilience will moderate loneliness to predict suicidal ideation among inmates.

Method

Participants

The participants for this study were drawn from inmates in Nigerian Correctional Service, Enugu Custodial Centre with the aid of available sampling technique. Eighty-four (84) inmates whose age ranged from 18 to 68 with mean age of 36.10 and standard deviation of 11.29 took part in this study. Thirty-three (33) participants were sampled from asylum section while the remaining 51 participants were sampled from non-asylum section which includes convicts, lifers, inmates on death row, awaiting trial inmates and lodgers. Three demographic variables were controlled in this study which includes: age, terms of serving and marital status.

Instruments

The Beck et al. (1988) Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation

The Beck et al. (1988) Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation is a 21-items scale assesses various aspects of suicidal ideation. Each statement group consists of three sentences that describe different intensities of suicidal ideation, representing a three-point scale (0 to 2). The total BSS score can range from 0 to 38, with higher values indicating a greater risk of suicide. Beck and The first five items of the BSS serve as a screening device for suicidal ideation during the last week (including the day of assessment) and are summed up to the BSS-Screen score. Two filter questions (the statement groups four and five) assess the presence of active or passive suicidal thoughts. If participants endorse one of them (i.e., chose a sentence rated 1 or 2), they are to complete the subsequent 14 statement groups which allow for an assessment of the severity of existing suicidal ideation. If participants choose the response option rated "0" for both item 4 and item 5 they skip items 6 to 19 and precede to the last two statement groups. These last two items address the frequency and intensity of former suicide attempts and are again to be answered by all participants. One-week retest reliabilities of $r_{tt} = .54$ (Beck & Steer, 1993) has been found. However, in a pilot study conducted with 30 participants from Nsukka Correctional Centres yielded a Cronbach alpha of .83.

Russell et al. (1980). The revised UCLA Loneliness Scale

Russell et al. (1980) revised UCLA Loneliness Scale consisting of 20 items, examined concurrent and discriminate validity. The scale consists of 10 positively and 10 negatively scored items, items 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, 20 are all reverse scored. The measure has high internal Consistency (coefficient alpha = .96) and a test-retest correlation over a two-month period of .73. The researcher carried out a pilot study with thirty (30) participants from Nsukka yielded a cronbach alpha of .815 which shows that the scale is reliable.

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)

Connor and Davidson (2003) Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale; CD-RISC measuring the level of resilience of an individual, the CD-RISC consists of 25 items which are evaluated on a five point Likert form scale ranging from 0-4; not true at all (0), rarely true (1), sometimes true (2), often true (3), and true nearly all of the time (4) – these ratings result in a number between 0-100, and higher scores indicate higher resilience. Cronbach's α for

CD-RISC was 0.97. CD-RISC associated with the depressive symptoms ($r_s = -0.18$), family harmony ($r = 0.20$), family functioning ($r = 0.27$) and was not associated with alcohol consumption ($r = 0.05$). The mean score for the CD-RISC is 59.99 (SD = 13.92). Men, younger individuals, and those with higher education or higher household income reported higher resilience levels. The researcher carried out a pilot study with thirty (30) participants from Nsukka yielded a cronbach alpha of .815 which shows that the scale is reliable.

Procedure

A letter of introduction was obtained from the Head of Psychology Department, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) Agbani and submitted to the Controller of Corrections (CC), Nigerian Correctional Service, Enugu State. With the approval of the CC the researchers partnered with Correctional Officers to assemble the available inmates in the Psychology unit, Enugu Custodial Centre, where their consents were sort by the researchers through adequate rapport. The study took 5 different working days as the inmates were assembled in small batches owing to the capacity of the study venue. One hundred and two copies of the three tests were administered and collected, 18 copies were discarded for improper filling especially on the demographic variables controlled in this study. Thus, the remaining 84 copies of the questionnaires correctly filled were used for data analysis.

Design and Statistics

Correlational design was adopted because relationships were sort among variables. The statistical test that was used for data analysis is moderated linear regression using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 software. The choice of the statistics is because of one predictor variable (loneliness), one criterion variable (suicidal ideation) and one moderator variable (resilience).

Results

Table 1: Inter-correlation among Suicidal Ideation, loneliness, resilience, Age, Marital Status, and terms of serving among inmates.

Factors	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. BSS	34.65	8.14	1	- .618**	-.635**	.019	- .348**	-.046
2. Loneliness	45.36	18.6 2		1	.697**	-.143	.450**	-.008
3. Resilience	44.87	17.6 0			1	-.062	.401**	.096
4. Age	36.10	11.29				1	-.163	-.036
5. Serving Terms	1.61	.49					1	-.229*
6. Marital Status	1.46	.50						1

Correlation is significant at **0.01; * at 0.05 (2 tailed-test)

Note: BSS = Beck Scale for Suicidal Ideation; Age is coded as 1 = (18-21 young inmates), and 2 = (40-68 old inmates); Terms of serving 1 = (Asylum) and 2 = (non-asylum); Marital Status 1 = Single, and 2 = Married.

Table 1 demonstrates the correlation matrix. The table revealed that suicidal ideation correlated negatively with loneliness $r(84) = -.618$, sig. < .001), which means that loneliness increases the chance of experiencing suicidal ideation. The criterion variable (suicidal ideation) also correlated negatively with resilience $r(84) = -.635$, sig. < .001), indicating that inmates who experience suicidal ideation are not resilient. Suicidal ideation equally correlated negatively with terms of serving $r(84) = -.348$, sig. = .001. This means that inmates who

experience suicidal ideation more are those in asylum unit. Loneliness correlated positively with resilience $r(84)$, .697, sig. < .0001, thus, inmates who are resilient had low experience of loneliness. Loneliness equally correlated positively with terms of serving $r(84) = .450$, sig. < .0001, this implies that non-asylum inmates experience low loneliness unlike those in asylum who experience high loneliness. Finally, terms of serving correlated negatively with marital status $r(84) = -.229$, sig. = 0.036, this indicates that there is association between asylum inmates who are married or non-asylum single inmates.

Table 2: A table providing a model summary of the moderated linear regression analysis on loneliness as a predictor of suicidal ideation, the moderating role of resilience among inmates.

Suicidal Ideation

R	R ²	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.6944	.4822	35.5775	24.8359	3.0000	80.0000	.0000
Model	Coeff.	Se	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	25.6021	.8541	29.9766	.0000	23.9025	27.3018
Loneliness	-.1554	.0492	-1.1602	.0022	-.2533	-.0575
Resilience	-.1237	.0625	-1.9806	.0511	-.2480	.006
Int-1	-.0042	.0024	-1.7129	.0906	-.0091	.0007

a. Dependent Variable: suicidal ideation

Note: $R = .6944$ $R^2 = 48.22\%$ $\Delta R^2 = .4822$, sig. < .001

The moderated linear regression revealed that loneliness contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(3,80) = 24.84$, $p < .001$). The relationship between variables yielded ($R = .69$) and accounted for approximately 48.22% ($\Delta R^2 = .4822$) of the variance in suicidal ideation scores. Hence, loneliness negatively predicted suicidal ideation $t(-1.1602)$ sig. = .002, This implies that inmates who experience suicidal ideation are not resilient. The first hypothesis which stated that “loneliness will predict suicidal ideation” was accepted. Resilience did not predict suicidal ideation $t(-1.98)$ sig. = .0511, this means that inmates who are resilient do not differ in the experience of suicidal ideation from those who are not resilient. The second hypothesis which stated that “resilience will predict suicidal ideation” was rejected. Finally, resilience failed to moderate the negative prediction of suicidal ideation by loneliness $t(-1.7129)$ sig. = .09. The third hypothesis which stated that “resilience will moderate the prediction of suicidal ideation by loneliness” was rejected.

Discussion

The present research investigated the prediction of loneliness on suicidal ideation and the moderating role of resilience among inmates. The findings illustrated that loneliness predicted suicidal ideation negatively. This implies that inmates who are lonely also experience suicidal ideation. Hence, the first hypothesis which stated that “loneliness will predict suicidal ideation” was accepted. This finding is consistent with some of the past findings that loneliness has an association with suicidal ideation (Rabasco et al.; McClelland et al., 2020; Batterham et al., 2022) who found in their separate studies that loneliness predicted suicidal ideation. However, none of the studies sampled inmates which made this present study very necessary in order to close this gap in literature about inmates especially in Nigeria.

The second hypothesis which stated that “resilience will significantly predict suicidal ideation” was rejected, indicating that resilience did not predict the experience of suicidal ideation of inmates.

The third hypothesis which stated that “resilience will moderate the prediction of suicidal ideation by loneliness” was rejected. This finding suggests that resilience and loneliness jointly did not increase or decrease the manifestation of suicidal ideation. The outcome of this finding is in line with the past studies reviewed in this work since most of them for instance, (Yang et al., 2021; Jakobson et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022) found that resilience served a buffering effect in the relationship between loneliness and suicidal ideation.

Conducting research in correctional centres are usually stressful due to uncertainty in meeting with the intended participants since they are divided into various quarters. Some of the inmates were not sampled owing to the fact that all the inmates are not released from their quarters at once so only those who were available were sampled.

Since loneliness negatively predicted suicidal ideation, more research should be conducted in order to ascertain the variable(s) that could moderate the negative relationship between loneliness and suicidal ideation. Future research should widen the scope of the study to include many inmates both male and female from other correctional centres in Nigeria in order to enhance generalization.

To conclude, the current study highlighted evidence establishing negative prediction of suicidal ideation by loneliness. Resilience did not predict suicidal ideation. Resilience also failed to moderate the negative prediction of loneliness on suicidal ideation among inmates. Inmates who are lonely are most likely to experience suicidal ideation than those who are not lonely, hence, Nigerian correctional centres should intensify effort in the programs that minimizes loneliness in order to forestall suicidal ideation among inmates.

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