

# The Role of Stress, Depression and Social Support in Students' Suicidal Ideation among University Students in Malaysia

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**Abstract-** In recent years, suicidal ideation has become a global threat among youth and only few researches has been carried out to link suicidal ideation with psychological disorders and the preventative factors that can buffer suicidal ideation. This current research is to investigate the role of stress, depression and social support in students' suicidal ideation in 122 university students from Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), using online computer administration survey. The survey consists of five sections and ethical consideration is taken to avoid any misconduct. The psychological instruments used in this research are Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and Scale for Suicide Ideation (SSI). The collected information were then analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis. The results shows that each variables correlates with one another. The Pearson correlation of PSS and SSI, and BDI and SSI indicated that the variables have a statistically significant linear relationship with  $r = .240$  and  $r = .548$ , respectively. Meanwhile, MSPSS and SSI are negatively correlated with  $r = -.324$ , which indicated that lower support system, higher tendency of suicidal ideation. All hypotheses are accepted and supported from past researches. Therefore, as a conclusion, stress, depression and social support does play a role in students' suicidal ideation among university students.

**Keywords:** - Stress, Depression, Social Support, Correlation, Suicidal Ideation, University Students, Malaysia.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In this twenty-first-century, student life is full of deadlines, requests, struggles and difficulties, and discontentment. Everyone experiences pressure, strain and tension as a natural part of living. Everyone has to face some circumstances and struggles and luckily our body is built with a stress-response mechanism. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2016), over 350 million people with any age are suffering from depression. Depression has become a common mental health issue, characterized by low self-worth, deprivation of sleep or loss of appetite, poor concentration and

lack of attention, loss of pleasure and interest, and persistent sadness.

For the past few years, suicidal ideation has emerged as a controversial issue. Suicidal ideation is one of the strongest predictors of suicidal behaviors in the future (Harris & Lennings, 1993). The National Suicide Registry Malaysia (NSRM) had stated that the youngest case of completed suicides was 12 years old (NSRM, 2008) and among suicide victims who are proclaimed to have history of mental illnesses, depression was the common factor contributing to suicide (NSRM, 2009). Suicidal ideation can be related to a vast number of mental health illnesses.

The statement is greatly supported by a study report by De Choudhury et al (2016) that one out of six patients who are diagnosed with major depressive disorder under the Fourth Edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSMIV) has ended their life through suicide. Besides the issue of mental health disorders, present studies had examined the contributions of social support in relation to suicidal ideation (Miller et al, 2015).

Suicide prevention is everyone's business and anyone can participate in helping to both acknowledge and alert about the warning signs and prevent the irrelevant suicide from happening. Most research stated that the majorities of people who attempt suicide usually give some sort of a warning sign. Numerous study in psychology suggested the required of identifying the mental illnesses' specific allocation in relating to the increased chances of suicidal thoughts (Rubin, 2011, De Choudhury et al, 2016). Individuals may reach for help in terms of advice and support on mental health issue related to identifying the factors of suicidal ideation.

This research is conducted because of the lack of research regarding the attribution of stress, depression and social support in suicidal ideation specifically in Malaysia. Currently, an alerting increase of suicidal behaviors among university students and according to a research conducted by the Malaysian Psychiatric Association an increase of 60% suicide rates in Malaysia since the 1960s should be taken into concern. According to a newspaper article in 2018 (mStar Online) stated that Malaysia has reported that the youth suicide rate is almost doubled the number of national average. Suicide ideation is the most common issues among young attempters who notably have unwavering mental health problems such as depression, substance abuse, and violent suicide attempts (Garcia-Williams, Moffitt & Kaslow, 2014). Youth in risk tends to occupy oneself with higher risk taking behaviors in which to some degree may lead to suicidality.

The author believed that in order to have more effective target prevention resources, it is important to analyze the suicidal ideation among university students vary by stress, depression and social support. Past research have identified perceived social support and its three dimensions as a protective factors for suicidal ideation among youth, however, the findings suggested that it is negatively

correlated with suicidal ideation. The findings are supported by past research by Savitha & Srimathi (2017) that suicidal individuals lack supportive relationship to others. Thus, this research fills the gap of investigating the role of stress, depression and social supports in suicidal ideation among university students in Malaysia.

Therefore, this research is a quantitative research. The research objectives aimed to be accomplished in this research are:

- To investigate the relationship between stress and depression with suicidal ideation among university students;
- To identify if the type of social support received by university students have an effect on suicide ideation;
- To determine which mental health variables (stress or depression) has significance relationship with suicide ideation among university students.
- To determine which type of social support can act as a protective factor against suicide ideation among university students.

A conceptual framework is drawn to give an overview on the relationship of the manipulating variable and the responding variable. Stress and depression are two common factors in psychological distress among students. This psychological distress will lead to suicidal ideation / suicidal thoughts. However, the author believes that social support can be a preventive factor towards suicidal ideation. With using social support as mediator in this study, the author believes that the research can have direct and indirect effect of psychological distress on suicidal ideation. Figure 1.1 shows the conceptual framework of the research.

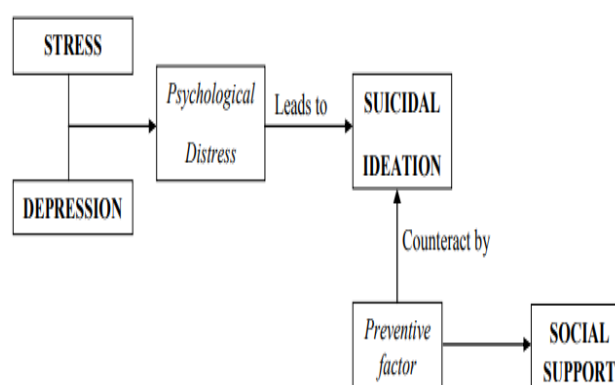


Fig 1. Conceptual Framework of Research Design.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A research conducted by **Anastasiades et al (2017)** about perceived stress, depressive symptoms, and suicidal ideation in undergraduate women with varying levels of mindfulness represented the important of knowing risk factors for suicidal ideation. 928 female undergraduate students from south-eastern university were chosen to complete the survey. Results stipulate that mindfulness moderated the arbitrated effect of depressive symptoms on perceived stress and suicidal ideation. These result indicated that undergraduate women who has lower levels of mindfulness reported higher levels of perceived stress, depressive symptoms, and suicidal ideation and vice versa. This finding concluded that depression was found to conciliate the interconnection between stress and suicidal ideation in the targeted population of this study.

**Bantjes et al (2015)** conducted a research on the predictors of suicidal ideation among South African university students that experiences symptoms of posttraumatic stress, depression and anxiety. Data from a sample of 1 337 students enrolled between May and August 2013 indicated a relationship between suicidal ideation and posttraumatic stress, depression and anxiety using PTSD Symptom Scale: Self Report Version (PSS- SR), the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), and the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI).

The research resulted in 24.46% of the sample reported some form of suicidal ideation in the 2-weeks time of data collection. The researchers result indicated that there is positive correlation between posttraumatic stress, depression and anxiety towards the suicidal ideation in South African students. The researchers concluded their study by stating that if a student reported presence of depressive symptoms, clinicians are advised to ask about suicidal cognition for further 24 treatment and person that presented both PTSD and symptoms of depression are at a higher risk of suicidal ideation among others.

According to a study conducted by **Mustaffa et al (2014)**, they deduced that there is a correlation between depression and suicidal ideation among university students. With a total of 65 respondents from University Technology Malaysia, Johor Bahru, were requested to fill in Adult Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (ASIQ) and Reynolds Adolescent Depression Scale (RADS 2). The research result indicated that the total group score for suicidal

ideation is 10.7 while group score for depression is 50. These number means that a majority of students are not having suicidal ideation at a high level. However, an individual clarification of suicidal ideation should be addressed with high scores on item that shows their ideas and thought to commit suicide. As a conclusion, researchers found that among university students, suicidal ideation is not at a critical level. However, intervention is still needed to reduce risks of having the thoughts or attempting suicide.

**Kleiman, Riskind and Schaefer (2014)** stated that their research provided the evidence that positive events and social support act as barrier against suicidal ideation individually and interactively when they co-occur. A number of 379 students from suburban university needed to complete the given set of questionnaires. Their findings revealed that there is a three-way interaction effect that in-line with their research hypothesis that social support and positive events synergistically buffered the interaction between negative events and suicidal ideation. The researchers finally concluded their research by stating that their findings potentially bear important implications for preventions and interventions.

A study by **Mackin et al (2017)** suggested that social support lessen the effect of stress on suicidal ideation and self-harm among female adolescents. The respondents for this research added up to 550 female adolescent volunteers and their parents that joined the Adolescent Development of Emotions and Personality Traits (ADEPT) Project from Long Island.

The respondents needed to answer the Stressful Life Events Schedule for adolescents (SLES), the Network of Relationship Inventory-Relationship Qualities Version (NRI), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Inventory of Depression and Anxiety Symptoms (IDAS- II).

Their findings suggested that both parental and friends support defend against the effect of stress on suicidal symptoms. The researchers also found that gender is positively associated with suicidal ideation and behaviors during the period of adolescence. Their conclusion of the research is that stress and low support synergistically elevate the risk of suicidal ideation.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted using the quantitative research design. 122 active university students in Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) between the ages of 18 to 38 years old participated in this via self-reported online survey. The survey, compiled in Google Form was pass along through Face book, Instagram and WhatsApp messenger as it is much more convenience and easy to access by the participant at any preferred time. University students were asked to complete a survey packet consisting of four different instruments, which are Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-14), Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI-21), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS-12), and the 19-item Scale for Suicide Ideation (SSI).

The 14-item, self-reported Perceived Stress Scale measures the perception of stress present in an individual. It is designed to assess how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives to be. The scores of the sum are range between 0 -56, in which high scores on the PSS-14 means high level of stress and vice versa. Beck's Depression Inventory is the most commonly used psychological instrument to detect depression. This 21-item, self-report rating inventory is developed to measure the severity, intensity and depth of depression in individuals. The total scores range from 0 until 63, in which the lower the score, the lower the level of depression.

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support is a 12-item, self-report scale that measures the perceptions of support from family, friends, and significant other. Respondents rate each item in the three subscales on a 7-point Likert scale. The Range for possible scores varies from 4 (minimum) to 28 (maximum) for each subscale.

The higher scores are reflecting more support from each subscale. Scale for Suicide Ideation operationally defines suicide ideation through the obtained scores. This 19-item instrument measures the characteristics of individual's pain and ideation to commit or contemplate suicide. There are three items subscales to determine factors related to suicidal risk; active suicidal desire, passive suicidal desire and specific plans. Each of the items consist of three options graded according to the severity and intensity of sociality and rated on a 3-point scale; 0 (no ideation) to 2 (strong ideation). The scale will add

up to a total score of 0 to 38. The higher the score, the greater the tendency to contemplate sociality.

To answer the research objectives, descriptive analysis and inferential statistics are carried out to measure the relationship between the variables. Correlation analysis is conducted to assess the relationship between all the variables. The data collected were tabulated and recorded and then further analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science Version 22 (SPSS 22) software.

## IV. RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive of Demographic Variables.

Variables	Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean (M)
Gender	Male	36	29.5	1.34
	Female	83	68.0	
	Prefer not to say	3	2.5	
Age	18 – 22 years old	72	59.0	1.52
	23 – 27 years old	41	33.6	
	28 – 32 years old	5	4.1	
	33 – 37 years old	3	2.5	
	> 38 years old	1	.8	
Level of Education	Foundation	3	2.5	2.98
	Diploma	11	9.0	
	Bachelor's Degree	96	78.7	
	Master's Degree	10	8.2	
	Doctorate	2	1.6	

Table 1 describes in detailed the demographic variables in this current research. The gender, both male and female participated in this research are not balanced. However, since gender is not the main focus of the study, it can be disregard.

All the respondents involved in this research were in five different level of age groups; 18 until 22 years old, 23 until 27 years old, 28 until 32 years old, 33 until 37 years old and people aged 38 years old and

above. The mean for gender, age and current level of academic indicated that there are no outliers.

### 1. Relationship between stress and depression towards suicidal ideation among university students:

The Pearson correlation coefficient for PSS and SSI is .240, which is significant ( $p < .001$  for a two-tailed test), based on 122 complete observations (i.e., cases with non-missing values for both PSS and SSI) and the Pearson correlation coefficient for BDI and SSI is .548, which is significant ( $p < .001$  for a two-tailed test), based on 122 complete observations (i.e., cases with non-missing values for both BDI and SSI). PSS, BDI and SSI have a statistically significant linear relationship ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 2. Correlation of Perceived Stress Scale, Beck's Depression Inventory and Scale of Suicide Ideation.

		PSS	SSI	BDI
PSS	Pearson Correlation	1	.240**	.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008	.000
	N	122	122	122
SSI	Pearson Correlation	.240**	1	.548**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008		.000
	N	122	122	122
BDI	Pearson Correlation	.341**	.548**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	122	122	122

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The direction of the relationship is positive (i.e., PSS, BDI and SSI are positively correlated), meaning that these variables tend to increase together (i.e., too much stress (PSS) and high depression (BDI) are associated with high suicidal (SSI).

It can be conclude that there is a significant relationship between stress and depression towards suicidal ideation among university students.

### 2. Relationship between stress and suicidal ideation among university students:

The Pearson correlation coefficient for PSS and SSI is .240, which is significant ( $p < .001$  for a two-tailed test), based on 122 complete observations (i.e., cases with non-missing values for both PSS and SSI).

Table 3. Correlation of Perceived Stress Scale and Scale for Suicide Ideation.

		PSS	SSI
PSS	Pearson Correlation	1	.240**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
	N	122	122
SSI	Pearson Correlation	.240**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	
	N	122	122

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The direction of the relationship is positive (i.e., PSS and SSI are positively correlated), meaning that these variables tend to increase together (i.e., too much stress (PSS) can lead to high suicidal ideation (SSI). It can be conclude that there is a significant relationship between stresses towards suicidal ideation among university students.

### 3. Relationship between depression and suicidal ideation among university students:

The Pearson correlation coefficient for BDI and SSI is .548, which is significant ( $p < .001$  for a two-tailed test), based on 122 complete observations (i.e., cases with non-missing values for both BDI and SSI).

Table 4. Correlations of Beck's Depression Inventory and Scale of Suicide Ideation.

		BDI	SSI
BDI	Pearson Correlation	1	.548**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	122	122
SSI	Pearson Correlation	.548**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	122	122

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The direction of the relationship is positive (i.e., BDI and SSI are positively correlated), meaning that these variables tend to increase together (i.e., higher depression (BDI) contributes to high suicidal ideation (SSI). It can be conclude that there is a significant



relationship between depressions towards suicidal ideation among university students.

#### 4. Difference of suicide ideation between different types of social support received among university students:

The Pearson correlation coefficient for MSPSS and SSI is  $-.324$ , which is significant ( $p < .001$  for a two-tailed test), based on 122 complete observations (i.e., cases with non-missing values for both MSPSS and SSI).

Table 5. Correlations between Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support and Scale of Suicide Ideation.

		SSI	MSPSS
SSI	Pearson Correlation	1	$-.324^{**}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	122	122
MSPSS	Pearson Correlation	$-.324^{**}$	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	122	122
$^{**}$ . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Based on the results from Table 5, the researcher can conclude that the MSPSS and SSI have a statistically significant linear relationship ( $p < .001$ ). The direction of the relationship is negative (i.e., MSPSS and SSI are negatively correlated). This indicate that individual with lower social support (MSPSS) have a higher tendency of suicidal ideation (SSI).

Based on Table 6, the Pearson correlation coefficient for Family and SSI is  $-.272$ , which is not significant ( $p < .001$  for a two-tailed test,  $.002 > .000$ ), based on 122 complete observations (i.e., cases with non-missing values for both Family and SSI).

While the Pearson correlation coefficient for Friends and SSI is  $-.331$ , which is significant ( $p < .001$  for a two-tailed test,  $.000 < .001$ ), based on 122 complete observations (i.e., cases with non-missing values for both Friends and SSI).

Lastly, the Pearson correlation coefficient for Significant Other and SSI is  $-.190$ , which is not significant ( $p < .001$  for a two-tailed test,  $.036 >$

$.001$ ), based on 122 complete observations (i.e., cases with non-missing values for both Significant Other and SSI). Therefore, Friends (type of social support) can act as a protective factor against suicide ideation among university students.

Table 6. Correlations of Scale of Suicide Ideation with Different Subscale of Social Support.

		Family	Friends	Significant other	SSI
Family	Pearson Correlation	1	$.450^{**}$	$.391^{**}$	$-.272^{**}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.002
	N	122	122	122	122
Friends	Pearson Correlation	$.450^{**}$	1	$.560^{**}$	$-.331^{**}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	122	122	122	122
Significant other	Pearson Correlation	$.391^{**}$	$.560^{**}$	1	$-.190^{*}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.036
	N	122	122	122	122
SSI	Pearson Correlation	$-.272^{**}$	$-.331^{**}$	$-.190^{*}$	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.036	
	N	122	122	122	122
$^{**}$ . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
$^{*}$ . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

#### 5. Predictions on preventive factor (social support) as a mediator towards suicidal ideation:

Regression analysis is used to predict trends in a given data. Linear regression is the most common and basic tool used type of predictive analysis. A simple linear regression was calculated to predict suicidal ideation based on social support.

Based on Table 7, the R Square is at  $.105$  which indicated that the model can be used to predict social support as an intervention / preventive factor towards suicidal ideation in university students. A significant regression equation was found ( $F(1, 120)$

= 14.104,  $p < .000$ , with  $R^2$  of .105.

Table 7. Regression between Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support and Scale of Suicide Ideation.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.324 <sup>a</sup>	.105	.098	6.386
a. Predictors: (Constant), MSPSS				
b. Dependent Variable: SSI				

Table 8. Summary of Hypotheses Status.

	Hypothesis	Status
H1	Relationship between stress and depression towards suicidal ideation among university students	Supported
H2	Relationship between stress and suicidal ideation among university students	Supported
H3	Relationship between depression and suicidal ideation among university students	Supported
H4	Difference of suicide ideation between different types of social support received among university students	Supported
H5	Predictions on preventive factor (social support) as a mediator towards suicidal ideation	Tested

## V. DISCUSSION

### 1. Research Objective 1: To investigate the relationship between stress and depression with suicidal ideation among university students.

It is found that there is a significant relationship between stress and depression with suicidal ideation. The results showed positive correlation. Most of the recent researches conducted that measures these three variables reported that either one plays a role in suicidal ideation. Mental health problems, such as depression, stress and anxiety are the main

contributors to suicidal ideation among adolescents and young adults (Rosiek et. al, 2016). Based on some past literatures, although data collected had proven that chronic stress and depressive symptoms may be the cause of suicidal ideation, they are not treated seriously (Rosenthal and Okie, 2005; Ko et al, 1999).

This result also supports Buitron et. al (2016) research on life stress and suicidal ideation. Their main population was adolescence within the age range of 12 to 17 years old. The researchers concluded that episodic interpersonal stress had a positive correlation with suicidal ideation, however not a predictor of suicidal ideation in a controlled sample for depressive and anxious symptoms. Thus researcher believes that one possible explanation to why this research observes possible correlation between depressions with suicidal ideation is because of the sample population used. The current research focus on young adults, who had been exposed to the knowledge of depression and anxiety, thus can differentiate between stress, depression and anxiety.

### 2. Research Objective 2: To identify if the type of social support received by university students have an effect on suicide ideation.

Based on the data analysis of social support against suicidal ideation, it can be concluded that social support negatively correlates with suicidal ideation. This means that the lower the social support, the higher the tendency to develop suicidal ideation. This result supports a research conducted by Liu et. al (2016) that stated that perceived social support partially mediated suicidal ideation, in which higher levels of suicidal ideation was associated with lower perceived social support.

Another research that proves social support as mediators of stress and suicidal ideation is by Khan et. al (2015) among Malaysian adolescents. The results of their research indicated that greater suicidal ideation and stress are among Malaysian individuals that is male, non- religious and comes from low-income families. An addition to that, their research also talked about Asian cultural context and expectation that generate higher stress leading to suicidal ideation.

In addition, this result also supports Zadravec et. al (2017) research on social support and its potential

protective factor against suicide. The researchers also stated that social relationships could also act as a barrier if it contributes to the sense of personal belongings to the environment the individual is in. Therefore, it can be said that the community and surrounding environment also plays a role in preventing suicidal ideation.

### **3. Research Objective 3: To determine which mental health variables (stress or depression) has significance relationship with suicide ideation among university students.**

Based on the result, individuals who has depression has a higher tendency to develop suicidal ideation that may lead the individual to follow the Three Step Theory (3ST) in which ideation will lead to action. In order to die by suicide, an individual must first attempt it and this is usually preceded by suicidal ideation; even though some cases do state that suicidal ideation is just a momentary impulse to attempt to take one's life away. A vast number of individual who experience suicidal ideation never actually attempt suicide and those who actually attempted suicide, do not actually die from suicide.

A research supports the outcome is Doshi et. al (2018), in which the researchers stated that suicidal ideation increased among patients who are depressed. The researchers stated that individual who perceived that they are sick (HIV+ patients) are more depressed than those who accepted their disease. These depressed patients reported higher suicidal ideation and cases of suicide attempts has been recorded.

### **4. Research Objective 4: To determine which type of social support can act as a protective factor against suicide ideation among university students.**

In this current research, based on the result from the data analysis it is said that Friends plays a bigger role as social supporter against suicidal ideation. This result contradicts some past researches because these researchers found that Family is the highest social supporter compared to Friends and Significant Other. In contrast to this finding, a research by Plonskonka and Servaty-Seib (2015) stated that family social support was the only domain that acts as a preventive factor for suicidal ideation. This can be explain with technological influences, as family members are increasingly connected to and keep close communication with the individuals. The

researchers also stated that, because of familial involvement in the students' life, that provides the sense of belongingness and support needed by the students to ensure that the emotional well-being and reduces the risk of suicidal ideation.

However, a study by Nguyen et. al (2016) showed almost the same result as the current research. The researchers stated that friends support is linked with a decreased risk of engaging in suicidal behaviors.

The research also concluded that relationship with friends can protect against the effect of negative interactions on suicide attempts, especially for those with history of suicidal ideation.

## **VI. LIMITATION, IMPLICATION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATION**

### **1. Limitations:**

In this research, several limitations can be highlighted. The first limitation is in the demographic of the respondents, which cannot be control by the researcher. There was an unbalanced in terms of gender, ethnicity, level of education and age groups that had participated in this research. The logical explanation for this imbalance is maybe during the period of conducting this research, only female students take the time to answer the online questionnaires while the male students tends to quit in the first half of the section.

Besides that, another limitation is that the sample size is too small to generalize the results to the population. Researcher only managed to obtain 129 responses and had to disregard seven cases due to criteria that had not been met.

Small sample size decreases the statistical power to detect an effect when there is one to be detected. Besides that the sample size only focuses on students that are in university, not those who had graduated.

Current study showed limitation in terms of preventive factors concept that can act against suicidal ideation such as religion, level of education, environment and others. This research missed to consider other possible factors that could be the potential factors. This research also did not emphasize the 3ST theory because it is still a newly



found theory and have not been widely used in researches yet.

## 2. Implications:

The findings from this research contribute in ways to increase awareness among parents, community and friends on their misconception, misunderstanding and cultural expectation regarding young adults with mental health problems (i.e stress and depression) that may lead to suicidal ideation which may cause them to attempt. People might have a general misconception that individuals that with mental health problems are only seeking-attention, however this is partially true.

Some individuals with mental health problems are going through it in silence. Besides that, this research also gives the idea for whole community to not take suicidal ideation as a minor issue in today's society. Based on the current results and results from past researches, stated that suicidal ideation is a major issue to be concern of.

This is because, according to the 3ST, an ideation may lead to action,. This is when an individual proceed with the ideation of taking their own life because of long term ideation. The community should play a role in preventing this as; nowadays social conformity from society is common.

## 3. Future Recommendation:

Researcher would like to recommend to future researchers to choose a population sample wisely. This is because a larger and wider sample population can bring more data, thus creating a more accurate result. The population scope should be extended to other universities, different perception of suicidal ideation, background or history of any mental health issues. If the future researchers want to conduct a research using the same idea as the current research, researcher would like to suggest that population sample should target students who are presented and diagnosed with mental health problems because they would be more genuine in answering the questionnaire as they can relate and understand the question better.

Next, in order to have big sample size, future researchers must consider to recruits respondents from different ethnicity and religion, because every individual has a different perspectives on mental health issues according to their own beliefs. By increasing the sample size, the probability to

encounter type-1 and type-2 errors could be reduced. Bigger sample size allows researcher to increase the significant level of the findings, thus producing better quality results as the confidence level of the result. The researcher also would like to suggest future researchers to utilize and focus on the Three Step Theory since current researcher finds that the theory to be useful to investigate suicidal ideation-to-action. Therefore, the future research should consider the Three Step Theory in relation of suicidal ideation.

## VII. CONCLUSION

All the hypotheses had been tested and discussed further in the article. The role of stress, depression and social support in student's suicidal ideation among university students in Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) had been discussed in this article thoroughly.

The limitations and implications of the current research had also been highlighted by the researcher (s). Therefore, the researcher(s) hope that this current research will help future researcher as a reference paper, especially for those interested to study the same variables.

## VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### 1. Conflict of Interest:

None

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