

Research Article

Patterns of Psychosocial Dynamic Factors Surrounding Suicide Notes on Facebook Platforms: A Netnographic Approach

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Studies have shown that suicide-related discourse on social media is increasing. This study explored the patterns of psychosocial impact of Facebook communities in mitigating suicidal behaviors. This netnographic study content analyzed five cases of suicide notes shared on Facebook platforms. Participants were observed within relevant Facebook groups, and data were collected through direct participation and mining of messages and suicide notes. Findings revealed five themes: (i). emotional expression; (ii). triggers and contributing factors; (iii) desire for help and support; (iv). patterns of suicidal expression; and (v) patterns and dynamics of intervention. The role of empathy and the alleviation of grief in suicide prevention were shown. The study emphasized the integration of e-intervention programs with supportive online communities, with more research on the netnography approach to suicidal notes and behaviors on social media.

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Introduction

Globally, about annual death toll of approximately 800,000 individuals has been a reoccurring phenomenon since 2019 due to suicide. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies several key risk factors associated with suicide, including mental or physical illness (especially chronic conditions), substance abuse, a history of violence, acute emotional distress, significant life changes such as unemployment or relationship breakdowns, low academic performance, lifetime stress and often a combination of these factors (WHO, 2012). Recent studies have highlighted the complex nature of suicide, emphasizing that it is preventable and does not necessarily indicate the presence of a mental illness in an individual (Alabi, 2022; Olaseni et al., 2021)

Suicidal ideation, completed suicide, and suicide attempts have been distinguished in research. Completed suicide refers to the successful termination of one's own existence while suicidal attempts are endeavors to terminate one's life that prove unsuccessful (Mental Health UK, 2024). Conversely, suicidal ideation, also known as suicidal thoughts, involves the deliberate contemplation of one's own suicide (Klonsky et al., 2021; Oguntayo, 2023). It entails engaging in the cognitive process of contemplating the potentiality of self-inflicted death. Hence, the culmination of suicidal behavior is completed suicide, whereas suicidal ideation and suicide attempts occur beforehand, serving as potential precursors that signify psychological anguish or mental health concerns (Alabi, 2022; Klonsky et al., 2021; Oguntayo, 2023; Olaseni et al., 2021). More so, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2024) defines a suicide note as a message explaining the reasons behind one's action to decide to kill oneself or have killed oneself. This study focused on how suicidal ideations are expressed through suicidal notes on Facebook platforms and how members reactions influences either the attempt or completion of suicide.

Suicidal behavior is a complicated and multifaceted health challenge, as a result previous research has suggested using a variety of research methods such as quantitative, qualitative or both to fully understand and deal with this issue (Alabi, 2022; Klonsky et al., 2021; Oguntayo, 2023), taking into account the social, psychological, and cultural factors that could predispose an individual to contemplating or attempting suicide. In response to this, most existing studies predominantly adopt an epidemiological or ethnographic approach, while some use quantitative or a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Alabi, 2022; Noibi et al., 2020; Oguntayo, 2023; Oguntayo & Gutierrez, 2024; Olaseni et al., 2021; Staples & Widger, 2012; Shoib et al., 2022).

Notably in recent studies, trend have been shown wherein individuals publicly announce their intentions to commit suicide on social media especially Facebook (Cero & Witte, 2020; Islam et al., 2021). It is becoming common for some persons to openly declare their suicidal intentions on social media before proceeding to take their own lives, a pattern that has been documented in multiple cases (Behera et al., 2020; Cero & Witte, 2020; Islam et al., 2021).

Scholarly investigations suggest that expressing suicidal thoughts on social media may serve as an unconventional plea for assistance, prompting researchers to explore the potential of social media in suicide prevention efforts (Seward & Harris, 2016). However, despite users' willingness to offer support, there is a recognized lack of knowledge and expertise among them (Cero et al., 2020). Initiatives aimed at empowering social media users, such as establishing rescue or support groups, could cultivate a supportive and inclusive online environment (Shoib et al., 2022; Westerlund, 2013). Studies have

suggested that employing technological, internet or artificial intelligence-driven methods for suicide prediction holds promise for enhancing the capacity to identify individuals at risk of self-harm or suicide, either in natural environs or online settings which could potentially leading to life-saving interventions (D'Hotman & Loh, 2020; Oguntayo et al., 2024).

Research on virtual community is necessary due to the growing trend of people using social media as a space to communicate their suicidal intentions through posts and notes (Islam et al., 2021; Shoib et al., 2022; Westerland, 2013), but research on a qualitative methodology especially using netnography that fits in for online investigation is not adequate. Social media as an expansive digital landscape facilitates diverse forms of human interaction, allowing individuals to freely express themselves and selectively present behaviors, including those considered undesirable (Venegas-Vera et al., 2020). In contemporary society, social media has become an integral aspect of communication, with Facebook emerging as the predominant platform, boasting nearly three billion users (Behera et al., 2020).

Considering the new trends in literature, the netnographic approach is considered to be more suitable for addressing the problem of suicide on Facebook because it allows researchers to access real-time data and interactions within the platform. Unlike traditional research methods that rely on retrospective data or self-reported information, netnography enables researchers to observe naturalistic behaviors and responses in real-time. This can lead to more accurate and timely insights into the prevalence, patterns, and dynamics of suicide-related discussions on Facebook (Dutta & Sharma, 2023; Jong, 2019; Kozinets & Gretzel, 2023).

Despite the multifaceted psychosocial dimensions linking suicidal behavior and social media, empirical research on this topic remains scarce, lacking a comprehensive synthesis of the available evidence in the literature. In fact, controversies persist regarding the role of social media in predicting and preventing suicidal behaviors (Dutta et al., 2023; Jong, 2019). Observably studies examining factors related to suicide announcements, live-streamed suicidal behavior, grief in response to suicide, and suicide prevention on Facebook is still insufficient. Through an exploration of socio-cultural implications, audience dynamics, and preventive strategies with theories-driven concept, this study seek to elucidate the complex interplay between social media platforms interaction and suicidal acts. Given Facebook's extensive reach and distinct online culture, the focus on Facebook platform promises valuable insights into this pressing issue of suicide acts and its preventive measures (Chou & Edge, 2012).

Theories of suicide

This research utilized two well-known theoretical frameworks to explain and comprehend suicidal behaviors: Joiner's (2005) 'Interpersonal Theory'; Klonsky and May's (2015) 'Three-Step Theory (3ST)'. These theories offer both contrasting and complimentary perspectives on the understanding of suicidal behaviors, providing unique conceptualizations and frameworks to aid in the comprehension of the intricate phenomenon of suicide. According to Joiner's IPT of suicidal behavior, individuals who have both the intent and the capability to execute suicidal actions are capable of developing suicidal ideation and engaging in suicidal behavior. As posited by Joiner (2005), suicidal ideation emerges when two interpersonal conditions converge—perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness. Difficult circumstances in an individual's life are referred to as perceived burdensomeness, whereas thwarted belongingness concerns a lack of a sense of belonging. Nevertheless, mere desire does not guarantee suicide; Joiner (2005) underscores the significance of an additional component: the ability to acquire the capability to commit suicide through exposure to distressing situations and protracted exposure to lethal materials.

On the contrary, Klonsky et al. (2015) offer an alternative viewpoint regarding the progression towards suicidal behavior by expanding upon Joiner's ideology. The 'ideation-to-action process,' as proposed by them, comprises three essential and suitable components. Klonsky et al. (2015) posited that suicidal ideation is primarily motivated by psychological anguish and despair; however, the presence of social connections renders this pain inadequate to stimulate suicidal ideation. Feelings of estrangement or alienation from social networks have the potential to intensify suicidal ideation. The fundamental tenets of the 3ST are as follows: the simultaneous intensity of feelings of hopelessness and pain can provide a more accurate prognosis of present suicidal ideation; connectedness can mitigate or halt the progression of suicidal ideation; and practical factors, acquired skills, and personality traits can distinguish individuals who have attempted suicide from those who have merely contemplated it.

By integrating these theorists' perspectives, suicide is better explained. According to Klonsky et al. (2015), the significance of Joiner's framework is equivalent to that of his theory's specifics. This framework places significant emphasis on the notion that the progression from suicidal ideation to actual attempts should be regarded as separate processes that warrant separate explanations. The IPT emphasizes interpersonal factors such as a sense of belongingness, burdensomeness and nearness to lethal materials and capacity in an effort to comprehend suicidal behavior. On the contrary, the 3ST developed by Klonsky et al. (2015), examined the sequential progression of individuals from contemplating suicide to attempting it using pain as triggers but not sufficient until hopelessness occurred and perceived connectedness of individual could moderate the thoughts. Both of these frameworks appear to be essential for a comprehensive comprehension of suicide.

While suicide remains a global challenge, some scholars have argued that delving deeper into the associated dynamics, motivations, and impacts through a suitable qualitative analysis like netnography could offer valuable insights, particularly within the online community, for mental health experts (Cero et al., 2020; Chou et al., 2012). Therefore, studies should examine the content, patterns, and interactions surrounding suicide notes posted on social media platforms, especially Facebook, as well as explore social support networks and the potential for intervention. (D'Hotman et al., 2020; Shoib et al., 2022; Westerlund, 2013; WHO, 2012). As a result, this study has decided to identify a significant gap in the existing literature concerning crucial aspects related to the pressing issue of suicide notes shared on Facebook.

The current study fills crucial literature gaps by utilizing content analysis to investigate suicide notes shared on Facebook platforms, shedding light on language, emotions, and intervention implications. Furthermore, it aims to scrutinize Facebook's role in suicide note visibility, dissemination, and response, examining design elements and policies contributing to self-harm content proliferation. Employing a netnographic approach, the study seeks a nuanced understanding of the social, and psychological factors surrounding Facebook platforms interactions. This study strives to inform the development of effective preventive strategies, support systems, and policy interventions to combat suicidality. In the end, this research stands ready to offer practical solutions for enhancing mental health outcomes and creating a safer online environment for susceptible individuals, highlighting its importance in tackling a critical public health issue. Therefore, this study used the following research question:

What are the contents, patterns, and social dynamics surrounding suicide notes shared on Facebook, and how can this knowledge inform interventions and support systems to help individuals at risk of suicide?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are to examine the contents, patterns, and psychosocial factor dynamics surrounding suicide notes shared on Facebook and how this knowledge could inform interventions and support systems to help individuals at risk of suicide.

Methods

Netnography is a research method that involves the systematic study of online communities and interactions (Kulavuz-Onal & Vásquez, 2013). Its goal is to understand the culture, behaviors, and motivations of individuals within these communities. In the context of studying suicide notes on Facebook, a netnographic approach was considered the best choice because suicidal notes as a behavior via online cannot be studied in a conventional or traditional setting, therefore, the study considered netnography to be able to analyze the content and communication patterns within the platform and gain the understanding of social media's impacts on suicidality especially those related to suicide notes. Using a netnography approach, this study was carried out in 12 steps as shown in Figure 1. This netnographic design method has been used in past studies (Salzmann-Erikson & Eriksson, 2023; Kulavuz-Onal et al., 2013; Kozinets, 2010).

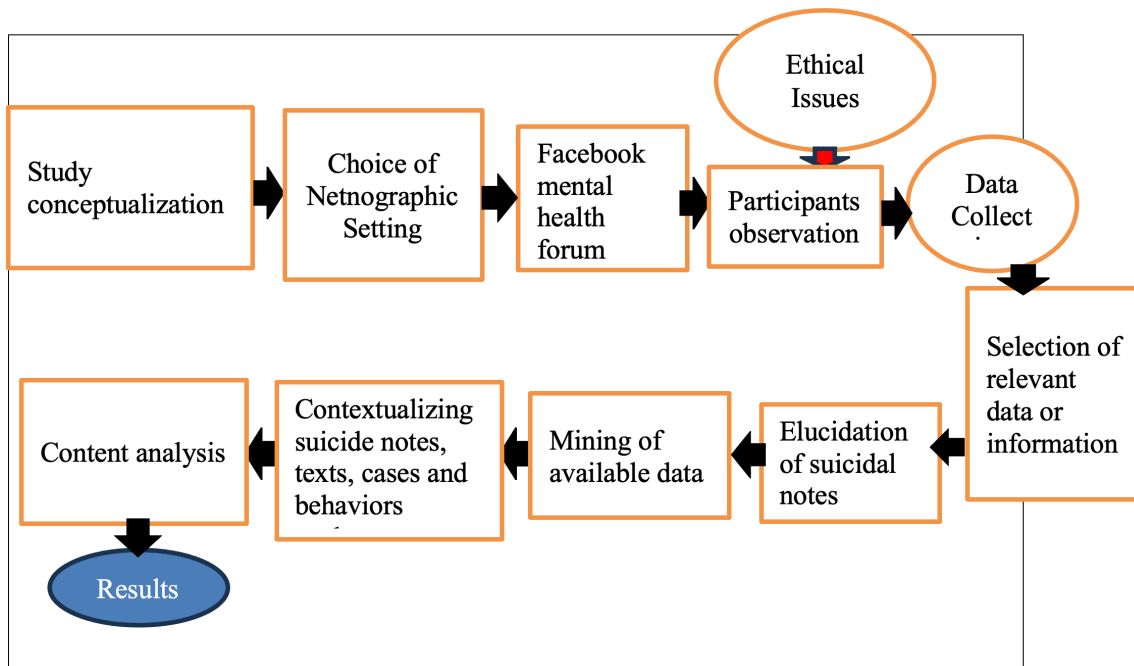


Figure 1. Showing the netnographic methods and design in this study

Note: This Figure shows the Netnographic methodological process in the selected online Community

Study Setting

This study used two Facebook platforms; "Suicide Notes" (SN) and "Ask and Share with Psychologists" (ASP), the essence of these platforms is to help members who are battling with mental health such suicidal behavior. The language used as mode of interaction in both groups was English therefore those platforms accommodate English speakers alone.

Participants, sampling technique, procedure and ethical consideration

The researchers identified relevant Facebook groups, such as those called "Suicide Notes" (SN) and "Ask and Share with Psychologist" (ASP), with the alias 'Survivor Warriors.' These two platforms accommodate members all over the world, one of the researchers fulfilled the platform's rules and they were accepted as members while one of the researchers is an admin of one the groups. This allowed this researcher to use 'participant observation method'. Participants were observed for 2 hours every day for three months, which was between November 2023 and January 2024.

The SN platform's privacy setting is public; people who want to join were mandated to take a survey of allegiance to the group rules, and the admin will accept the person upon meeting the criteria of the platform. SN comprises males and females, with about 2,800 thousand members from all races of the world who wish to open up or express themselves when in psychological distress, especially suicidal ideation.

The ASP platform 's privacy setting is public; members comprised of about 943 as of January 2024. They are from different countries of the world, irrespective of sex, gender orientation, race or color, and age, with one of the researchers being members of the admin and more than 10 practicing and academic psychologists as active members. The aim is to alleviate mental health challenges among members, especially those who have no one or experts to speak to about their distressing situations.

It is important to note that studying suicide notes on social media platforms requires ethical considerations and sensitivity. Therefore, authors prioritize the well-being of at-risk individuals and adhere to research ethical guidelines by seeking informed consent. Those who declined to participate opted out of the platforms, and new members are constantly informed that the essential purpose of the platforms is to help members mitigate suicidal behavior and for research purposes, while members' privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality are protected with free participation and exit of member participants, as well as targeting populations of vulnerable groups. The authors observed and recorded the conversations, posts, and comments made by people in these platforms. This process involves qualitative data collection methods such as screenshots, text mining, and direct observations.

Despite informing members about the research purpose of these selected platforms, the researchers proceeded to conduct a poll among group members to obtain consent for the use of the gathered information or data. Researchers received 1803 and 890 votes of approval from SN and ASP, respectively, to use the data. The identity and privacy of the members were protected, and other ethical issues were adhered to.

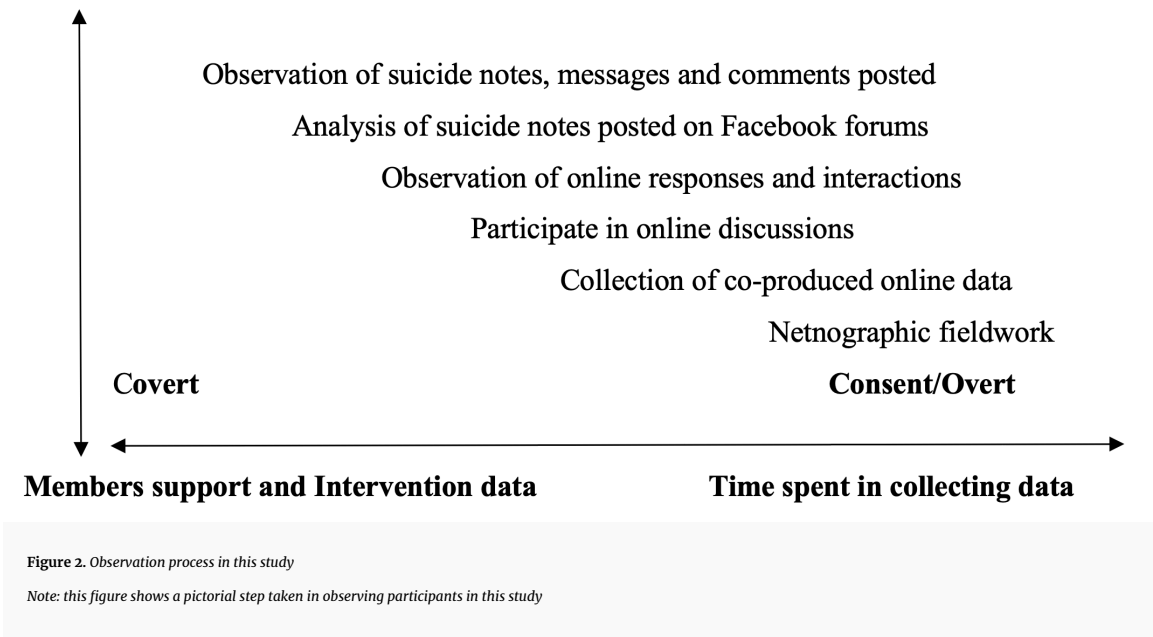
Observation as a Tool in this study

According to past studies, using observation as an assessment method to study people on social media groups has a 'real' existence for the participants and therefore has consequential positive effects on many aspects of behavioral investigations (Kozinets, 2010; Lamy & Zourou, 2013). Borrowing from this concept (as shown in Figure 2), the researchers identified specific online communities on Facebook platforms aligned with the study's purpose, considering factors such as community size, activity level, and cultural context.

Adopting participant observation as the primary assessment tool, one of the researchers engaged with the selected online communities while maintaining a covert identity to respect individuals' rights and preserve the real-life authenticity of interactions reaction but covert identity was maintained during the unstructured intervention to mitigate suicidal attempt in individuals who posted suicidal notes. Also, this researcher maintained active participation as a member of the mental health team in the forums.

As shown in Figure 2, member participants were made to get involved in community discussions and observer was able study how member participants interact and how individuals' behavior who contemplated suicide change over time. The participant observer took crucial the ethical issues and cultural rules associated with the selected platforms, which included respecting one's own and others' rights, maintaining privacy, obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, allowing for free participation, and ensuring individuals can leave these communities without facing any consequences.

This Netnography study, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, utilized participant observation to assess respondents' online community. This involves observing suicide notes, messages, and comments online, analyzing posts on the selected forums on Facebook, observing interactions, participating in discussions, and collecting co-produced data. This method blends covert and overt approaches, balancing member support with professional unstructured intervention to mitigate suicidal behavior. The duration of 2 hours per day for 3 months were used as a significant amount of time for data collection.



Data analysis

The data underwent content analysis using a thematic approach while categorizing the analyzed data. Drawing from past studies (Kulavuz-Onal et al., 2013; Islam et al., 2021), this netnographic study focused on examining and describing psychological and social dynamics as well as interactions within the online community. Consequently, the researchers scrutinized the responses and supports that community members provided, as well as the expert counseling that community clinicians offered to prevent self-harm and provide assistance. The analysis aimed to illuminate the role of social support networks, the influence of online communities on suicidal ideation, and the potential for intervention or prevention strategies guided by experts.

Results

The study generated information using Facebook platform communities while netnographically observing the suicide notes posted and members reactions to them. This innovative, strategic, and dynamic helping culture has recently been trending on Facebook by survivors of suicide or experts and clinicians who are concerned to keep society members healthy and alive with psychosocial help, build support networks, and mitigate the increasing rate of mental health, especially suicidal behaviors.

Five cases were analysed, in Case 1 involved a male individual who, for ethical reasons, had his identity and demographics withheld. He posted a suicide note: “I do a lot of stupid things that I regret, and only a few of my actions are not regretted. I have no feelings anymore, and I cannot love any woman anymore after not expressing my emotions and experiencing emotional hurt from people around me. The so-called lady of my heart, whom I trusted so much, has broken my heart, and I believe that life is no longer worth living and that the people around me have made this individual feel that I am worthless (particularly his partner and family)’. The urgency underscores the need for social support and counseling. This young man posted on Facebook and shared deep emotional distress, expressing regret for past actions and an inability to feel emotions or love. He emphasized instances where others inflicted emotional harm, specifically focusing on his trusted romantic partner and family. This portrayal of heartbreak led him to believe life lacked purpose. The individual sought help on a Facebook platform, emphasizing the importance of community support, empathy, and expert intervention in addressing underlying emotional turmoil and suicidal ideation.

In case study 2, A female member posted on the Facebook platform to share her grief with the community group: “This is my son ‘xxx’ (name withheld); he died on ‘xxxx’, 2022 (specific month and day withheld for ethical reason), and my life has never been the same since. I feel so much guilt for not acknowledging the pain he was feeling—he never talked about it, but he had become more withdrawn the year before, which I attributed to this individual simply being a moody teenager adjusting to the start of high school. Dream more! I thought I had these thoughts! I loved this him with all my heart, and I will always love and miss him. Part of my heart is missing, and the only things keeping me alive are his two older brothers and his father. Thank you for allowing me to express my pain; however, I can leave soon to join him”.

In case study 3, a 20-year-old female undergraduate, burdened by parental pressure and feeling unsupported, posted a suicide note on a Facebook platform. She reported that, despite parental indifference, she acknowledged her struggles with suicide attempts and seeks solace on an online platform. After her interactions with psychologists and other members of the platforms on Facebook, she underscored the importance of listening without passing judgment but emphatic and connective encouragement. She was able to mitigate her suicidal thoughts and resolve to face her situation in terms of familial and relationship challenges after having interactions with both members and experts on the platform. She appreciated the members of the platform and emphasized the importance of virtual psychological interventions in addressing suicidal tendencies, stressing the need for compassionate support and understanding. Through the channel, she claimed to be able to build resilience, problem-solving skills, self-awareness, acceptance, and help-seeking behavior, ultimately finding strength in sharing her story and overcoming the barriers to mental health care.

Case study 4 involved a 23-year-old male graduate who faced parental pressure to pursue a course he did not desire, leading to a sense of wasted time and meaninglessness post-graduation. Feeling unsupported, he contemplated suicide but opted to post a suicide note on a Facebook platform. Through online interactions, he received empathy and virtual psychoeducation, learning to find meaning in self-development rather than ending his life. Despite initial struggles, he found solace in a sense of belonging and support, fostering resilience and problem-solving skills. Encouraged by compassionate listening and understanding, he was able to address his familial and career challenges, appreciating the positive impact of members encouragement, advice, and virtual psychological interventions. Through these interactions, he was able to build self-acceptance, ultimately finding strength in sharing his story and overcoming his concerns and mental health experiences through social involvement, which emphasized the importance of compassionate support in mitigating suicidal tendencies and fostering recovery.

Case study 5, was a male individual, for ethical reasons, we withheld his age and other demographics. He posted a suicide note; “I do not want to blame them because it was really my fault; I was too weak to control my situation; therefore, I am a failure. Before I leave, I want to express my desire for understanding sake, but can the group's experts help me avoid these pains? I hope someone reads this and tries to help me because I am in a lot of pains, I feel worthless, and I do not know how to heal myself except to end everything soon and allow the lovers, the relatives, and the friends who said they loved but did not love to be. I desire for them to enjoy themselves after my demise and to grant them a respite. I simply want someone to listen to me, and then I will go to rest; after all, failing does not exist in another world. Thank you for accepting me into this group”. The need for psychosocial help and support was expressed by this man, who posted on a Facebook platform while sharing deep emotional distress, expressing regret for past actions with self-blame and an inability to feel emotions or love. He emphasized instances where others inflicted emotional harm and believed they were there for him probably when he needs help. The individual sought help on a Facebook platform, this showcasing and emphasizing the importance of community support, empathy, and expert intervention in addressing underlying emotional turmoil and suicidal ideation that is waying this individual down.

This study, through content analysis with a blend of phenomenological approaches, addressed the research question formulated based on the five cases and responses from members and experts on the Facebook platforms studied. Consequentially, these five themes were generated: i. emotional expression; ii. triggers and contributing factors; iii. desire for help and support; iv. patterns of suicidal expression; and v. patterns and dynamics of intervention. The details are provided as follows:

Theme 1: Emotional Expressions: The selected case studies exhibit intense emotional expressions, such as feelings of regret, emotional pain, hurt, guilt, and sadness. These extracts from the participants who posted suicide notes: (a). "I do a lot of stupid things that I regret, and only a few of my actions are not regretted." (b). "I have no feelings anymore, and I cannot love any woman anymore." (c). "I believe that life is no longer worth living." (e). "I am in a lot of pain, I feel worthless, and I do not know how to heal myself." (f). "I simply want someone to listen to me." (g). "I feel so much guilt for not acknowledging the pain he was feeling." and (h). "Part of my heart is missing, and the only things keeping me alive are his two older brothers and his father." depict the feeling of intense emotional expressions such as; regret, emotional pain, hurt, guilt, and sadness.

Theme 2: Triggers and Contributing factors: Case study 1 highlights a broken heart, feeling unloved, and blaming oneself for the current situation. Case studies 2 and 5 revealed the shock and guilt of not acknowledging the pain the individual was suffering. Additionally, the following extracts from the participants who posted suicide notes: (a). "The so-called lady of his heart, whom I trust so much, has broken his heart." (b). I blamed myself for the current situation." (c). I feel so much guilt for not acknowledging the pain my son was feeling." (e). "I had become more withdrawn than the year before" and (f). "I attributed it to this individual simply being a moody teenager adjusting to the start of high school." Revealed stressors and cognitive distortions such as; low belongingness, guilt, worthlessness, heartbroken, feeling of pain, blaming self and others.

Theme 3: Desire for Help and Support: In these cases, there is a clear desire for understanding, support and help from the Facebook community using both lay counselling, experience of survivors and experts' services. The the participants who posted suicide notes in case Studies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 explicitly requested assistance and expressed their pains, expressed guilt, pain and sought members platform helps. The individual participants who posted suicide notes received words of encouragements and strength through empathic responses by members of the platforms there rejuvenating the meaning to life of these distressed survivors. **These statements from participants who posted suicide notes depict the 'desire for help and support' thus:** (a). "I hope someone reads this and tries to help me because I am in a lot of pain." (b). "I desire for them to enjoy themselves after my demise and to grant them a respite." (c). "I simply want someone to listen to me, or then I will go to rest." (d). "Thank you for accepting me into this group." (e). "Thank you for allowing me to express my pain." (f). Please hold it and do not kill yourself; the wound will heal gradually." (g). "Please take your time and do not let anyone tell you how to cry." (h). "Please lift yourself up from the pain and do not be depressed." (i). "Flexibly adjust and drop your phone contact to have a talk with me." (k). "Please take heart and be a strong survivor." (l) "I know it in my head, but my heart sees at a loss that I need to let go and face the present," and (m) "Thanks for the members' love and encouragement. I am a survivor."

Theme 4: Patterns of Suicidal Expression: The analysis revealed patterns such as emotional vulnerability, expression of suffering, and attribution of blame as detailed:

- a. **Emotional vulnerability:** the extracts from cases depicted emotional vulnerability, showcasing the struggles individuals face in managing their emotions and circumstances. For instance, participants who posted suicide notes expressed themselves thus: "I have no feelings anymore" and "I am in a lot of pain" highlight the severity of the people's emotional turmoil. Additionally, the statement from a participant who posted suicide notes; "He had become more withdrawn the year before" suggests a pattern of emotional withdrawal, further highlighting emotional vulnerability to suicidal behavior.
- b. **Communication of pains and needs:** the individuals who posted suicidal notes communicate their pains and emotional needs for understanding, support, and validation measures to other members in the platforms. Some extracted statements from participants who posted suicide notes; "I hope someone reads this and tries to help me" and "I simply want someone to listen to me" demonstrated a clear expression of emotional distress and the need for support. Furthermore, the statement such as; "Please hold it and do not kill yourself; the wound will heal gradually" from a participant who posted suicide notes reflects a plea for emotional support and reassurance.
- c. **Attribution of Blame and Responsibility:** The Individuals in these cases attributed blame to either themselves or others. One participant who posted suicide notes also expressed guilt for not recognize signs of distress in her demised son thus; "I blamed myself for the current situation" illustrates self-blame and a sense of responsibility for the individual's circumstances; however, it turned out to a distortive manner of blaming oneself, which triggered a feeling of failure in one's responsibility. Additionally, the statement such as; "I feel so much guilt for not acknowledging the pain he was feeling" highlights a sense of remorse and guilt for failing to recognize the signs of distress in a loved one.

Them 5: Patterns and Dynamics of Intervention: The analysis reveals the following patterns: supportive responses, therapeutic support, and community acceptance:

- a. *Supportive Responses*: The statements of both experts and lay members reflect supportive responses aimed at providing empathy, understanding, and encouragement to the individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts. Expressions like "I understand how you feel" and "Please never blame yourself" demonstrate empathy and reassurance, while the statement "I was once like this, but I survived it also" offers hope and encouragement based on personal experience.
- b. *Community acceptance*: The following expressions provided depict a sense of acceptance within the Facebook community; for instance, a poster of suicide notes said, "Thanks for accepting me, and I will appreciate it if I could gain the help and support, I desire." Other participants who posted suicide notes stated, "Thank you for accepting me into this group" and another respondent said, "It breaks my heart that more and more young people are dying". All these statements reflect a sense of belonging and solidarity within the community, contributing to the individuals' sense of acceptance and support.

In summary, the themes of emotional vulnerability, communication of pain and need, attribution of responsibility, supportive responses, and community acceptance collectively illustrate the complex dynamics of emotional distress, support-seeking behavior, and community response in individuals experiencing suicidal ideation.

Discussion and implications

The study's themes—emotional vulnerability, expression of suffering and necessity, and the significance of encouraging reactions from virtual communities—illuminate crucial elements of suicidal conduct as they pertain to social media platforms such as Facebook. The implications of these themes for suicide prevention initiatives and the development of support systems for at-risk individuals are substantial. Feelings of vulnerability underscores the profound emotional susceptibility demonstrated by users who publicly declare suicidal ideation or intentions on Facebook. This vulnerability is characterized by a range of emotions, including hopelessness, pain, guilt, sorrow, and emotional anguish, as demonstrated in the provided case studies. This is in line with Joiner (2005)'s concept that described circumstances in an individual's life that was perceived as burdensome and thwarted belongingness as factors associated with suicidal thoughts. Also, this study just like past showed that simultaneous intensity of feelings of pains and hopelessness are associated with suicidal ideation however, connectedness can mitigate the progression to completed suicidality (Klonsky et al., 2015).

The identification and resolution of emotional vulnerability is of paramount importance in the realm of suicide prevention, given that it denotes the fundamental anguish that individuals who are suicidal are experiencing (Chou et al., 2012; Pan et al., 2018). Efforts to prevent suicide ought to prioritize the identification and resolution of emotional vulnerability by means of targeted interventions that foster resilience, emotional well-being, and coping mechanisms. It is imperative that individuals undergoing emotional distress have easy access to mental health support services, including therapy and counseling, in both physical and digital environments (Oguntayo et al., 2024; Shoib et al., 2022). This finding depicts intense emotional expressions, such as regret, pain, guilt, and sadness as associated factors of suicidal behavior.

The second theme underscores the significance of individuals openly expressing their suffering and requiring assistance within virtual communities such as Facebook. By means of their online discourse and remarks, individuals articulate their challenges, beseech comprehension, and solicit assistance from their fellow members of the community. Communication in times of crisis is an essential means of expressing distress and requesting assistance (Kolavuz-Onal & Vasque, 2013). Online communities should be conducive to open and supportive communication regarding suicide prevention, allowing members to freely express their emotions and seek assistance without apprehension of criticism or social disapproval. By providing resources for mental health support, instituting guidelines for supportive interactions, and training moderators to effectively assist individuals in distress, platforms such as Facebook can facilitate this (D'Hotman et al., 2020; Fernández -Cabana et al., 2015; Westerlund, 2013).

Also, the findings showed triggers such as heartbreak and guilt as factors contributing to suicidal ideation and implicated the importance of recognizing and addressing stressors of suicide and the significance of supportive reactions. The findings, as shown in the case studies, revealed that peers providing individuals with words of encouragement as well as experts providing practical unstructured counseling and words of empathy could reduce the intensity of suicidal stressors. These actions significantly mitigated the perceived burdens of the suicide survivor participants and fostered a sense of support and belonging (Lamy et al., 2013; Pan et al., 2018). This implies that, suicide prevention initiatives ought to prioritize the establishment and maintenance of online communities that offer practical assistance, validation, and empathy to those who are suicidal at risk. Peer support groups, crisis helplines, and online forums provide individuals in distress with a sense of community and connection, which are all valuable resources (Kozinets, 2010; Oguntayo et al., 2024; Seward et al., 2016).

In the context of suicide prevention, the themes identified in this study underscore the intricate dynamics between emotional vulnerability, the expression of suffering and necessity, and the significance of encouraging reactions within virtual communities (Kolavuz-Onal et al., 2013; Seward et al., 2016). Also, this finding implies that supportive responses and community acceptance have a vital role to play through social support networks in providing hope,

understanding, and acceptance to individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts. Through a comprehensive examination of these themes and their ramifications, stakeholders can formulate enhanced approaches to assisting those who are susceptible to suicidal ideation and advancing psychological welfare in digital environments.

The three-step theory complements these findings by emphasizing emotional vulnerability, communication of pain and need, and attribution of responsibility in the progression from suicidal ideation to attempts. The study also found that emotional distress, help seeking, and self-blame were all expressed in ways that were consistent with Klonsky et al. (2015)'s theory. This shows how important it is to work on emotional regulation, encourage open communication about mental health, and challenge distortive thoughts of blaming in order to help prevent suicide.

Synthesizing the IPT and 3ST, suicide prevention strategies on social media should focus on fostering supportive communities, targeting emotional distress and interpersonal conflicts, promoting open communication about mental health issues, and challenging distorted attributions of responsibility underlying suicidal behaviors among social media users, ultimately fostering a supportive and safe online environment for individuals in distress (Oguntayo et al., 2024; Robinson et al., 2016; Venegas-Vera et al., 2020).

Overall, this research contributes to advancing the understanding of suicide-related discourse on social media platforms, particularly Facebook, and underscores the importance of qualitative methodologies, such as netnography, in exploring complex psychosocial phenomena in digital environments. The generated themes collectively contribute to the literature on netnography and suicidal prevention by elucidating the nuanced dynamics of emotional distress, support-seeking behavior, and community response in individuals at risk of suicide.

These findings have clinical implications: for instance, the Joiner (2005) and Klonsky et al. (2015) suggest that many individuals who wish to harm or kill themselves may still engage in help-seeking behavior, but may lack a support system to express their feelings and foster a sense of belonging. These findings inform targeted interventions for awareness by integrating online communities with users to seek support strategies to mitigate the risk of suicide and promote mental well-being.

Conclusion, recommendation, Limitations and Suggestions for further study

This study used a content analysis approach to interpret the five case studies provided. It offers valuable insights into the patterns and dynamics surrounding suicide notes shared on Facebook. Certain themes such as emotional vulnerability, communication of pain and need, and the importance of supportive responses from the online community emerged from the analysis. These findings underscore the significance of targeted support, awareness, education, and the pivotal role of online support communities, particularly Facebook groups, in interventions and support systems for individuals at risk of suicidal behavior.

This analysis helped identify how the platform may inadvertently contribute to the visibility or normalization of self-harm content and inform recommendations for platform policies or user interventions. It is pertinent to acknowledge the learnings and discoveries gained from employing techniques such as content analysis, network exploration, and netnographic observation in studying the phenomenon of suicide notes on Facebook (Behera et al., 2020; Costello et al., 2017). One promising avenue for qualitative exploration is netnography, which involves the observation of social networks to study phenomena. This methodology leverages online platforms, including social media networks, as channels for understanding various aspects of suicide-related discourse (Costell et al., 2017; Pan et al., 2018). Notably, netnography has emerged as a valuable tool for examining the opinions and experiences shared by individuals online, offering insights distinct from those obtained through analyses of suicidal acts (Kozinets, 2010; Pan et al., 2018).

Based on the findings, it is recommended that integrating targeted e-intervention programs with social media communities and fostering supportive online communities be encouraged to mitigate suicidal behaviors. Also, stakeholders should work towards creating more supportive online environments for individuals at risk of suicidal behavior. Additionally, a future study could test artificial intelligence-driven suicide prediction methods via social media to see if they can improve the capacity to identify those at risk of self-harm and suicide and, hopefully, save more lives in the future.

Despite offering valuable insights into online communities and mitigating suicidal behaviors, this netnographic study has limitations when considering ecological validity. These include sample bias by relying on existing online communities, privacy settings limiting data access, and voluntary participation introducing bias. Additionally, netnography's snapshot approach may not capture other behaviors of participants which make it lack a broader context, and face platform-specific challenges. Therefore, future research should use a longitudinal approach with more time to enhance the rigor and validity of a study like this. In incorporating these with other approach, researchers can gain deeper insights into the cultural, social, and psychological factors influencing suicidal behavior in online communities, ultimately informing more effective strategies for prevention and intervention.

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