Suicide prevention in the Algeria region

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Abstract:

   This academic research paper delves into the intricate phenomenon of suicide, encompassing its various types, It sheds light on the global concern surrounding suicide and offers an in-depth understanding of its prevalence, growth rates, and dissemination worldwide, with a specific focus on the Algerian region, Additionally, the paper underscores Algeria's dedicated efforts in suicide prevention, as evaluated by the World Health Organization, and elucidates the national and international objectives aimed at curbing this critical issue.

Keywords: Suicide; Prevention; Types of Suicide; WHO; Algeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

   The world is experiencing a continuous surge in suicide rates, and this escalation in suicides can be attributed to various factors. These include the intricacies of modern life, heightened conflicts, and a surge in societal issues. Suicide, as a behavior, is an age-old problem with roots dating back to the emergence of humanity on Earth. It is a phenomenon that impacts individuals across society, irrespective of their age, gender, social standing, or economic status. Throughout history, suicide has been observed in diverse societies and is well-documented in criminal statistics worldwide. However, it appears that this complex self-destructive behavior has become more pronounced in our contemporary era **(Azaq and Lemouche, 2018, p. 80).**

   Moreover, Suicide is defined as a deliberate act leading to the voluntary termination of an individual's life. It is an intricate form of self-destructive behavior involving a conscious desire to end one's life. To classify an act as suicidal, it must ultimately result in death. Even the most rational and balanced individuals may go through moments of ambivalence between "existence" and "nothingness," pondering

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suicide briefly, A suicide attempt offers a glimpse into human nature and raises the question of whether a suicide bomber genuinely intends to die. Some may believe life is futile but abstain from suicide, while others share the same belief and take the fatal step, Evaluating complex behaviors, our moral compass and emotions intersect to form judgments. As a result, interpretations and evaluations of the suicide phenomenon vary **(Tarawneh, 2010, p. 8; Ibrahim, 2020, p. 10).**

Hence, this research paper does not aim to define suicide as a social phenomenon, Rather, its objective is to shed light on the problem that has recently surfaced on the global, African, and national scales, specifically in Algeria, Suicide poses a threat to social structures and the continuity of the human species, According to the World Health Organization and its reports on suicide, this phenomenon has witnessed a rapid surge from 2000 to the present day, It is considered a sudden occurrence in which an individual turns criminal against themselves, Moreover, it is a complex phenomenon intertwined with numerous factors and motives. Thus, the idea for this research paper emerged, with its primary question focusing on the current status of the suicide phenomenon and strategies for reducing it at national and global levels.

2. The Concept of Suicide

Suicide is a global problem that poses a threat to public health, The 2017 World Health Organization report states that there are about 703,000 documented cases of suicide reported annually worldwide, Numerous studies have emphasized that suicide prevention necessitates the implementation of a range of proactive measures, commencing with the family as the primary social institution, This entails creating the right conditions for children to grow up well, accurately evaluating mental health disorders, and offering effective treatment to minimize their impact while increasing public awareness to prevent them. **(WHO, 2017, p. 5)**

We base our definitions on a lot of research in scholarly literature, Dr. Hamoud bin Nahar Al-Namir **(2015, p. 7)** posits that suicide encompasses an individual's deliberation to terminate their existence or endeavor to do so, driven by circumstances they perceive as rendering their lives insufferable, prompting a desire for an escape, irrespective of whether they have articulated their concerns.

According to, researcher Zeinab Sayehri **(2013, p. 5),** suicide is a

complex phenomenon with voluntary and involuntary actions, it can be caused by emotions or other factors and can happen with or without outside influences.

Furthermore, according to the research by Nadia Hayasat and Abdullah Gazan **(2018, page 104),** suicide can be defined as the act of an individual taking their own life, these people may show traits like low self-esteem, aggression, impulsiveness, mood swings, and social difficulties.

In their study, Al-Abadi and Al-Adwan **(2021, p. 113)** argue that suicide involves a series of actions that ultimately lead to a person's death, The individual is typically conscious of their actions and is not driven by sacrifice for social or religious ideals, nor influenced by external coercion.

Drawing upon the various perspectives offered by researchers regarding the concept of suicide, it is possible to formulate a procedural definition, Suicide can be understood as an individual's deliberate behavior directed towards self-harm, and it may result from either intentional or unintentional actions, these actions driven by a multitude of familial, social, and psychological factors that push the individual towards viewing suicide as a potential resolution to their challenges.

3. Types of Suicide

Psychological factors, including mental illness and the pressures of life. One of the most significant consequences of this phenomenon is the breakdown of families and the weakening of social bonds, To effectively combat this perilous issue, government bodies and organizations must provide social services and mental health support.

In light of previous scientific literature and, particularly, the research study conducted by Khaled Adel Naji Abu Al-Hajj **(2022, p. 267)** titled "The Problem of Suicide in Arab Societies, Causes, and Means of Prevention," various types of suicide have been identified and categorized into five distinct classifications**:**

3.1. Selfish Suicide: Selfish suicide is characterized by a low level of societal integration, it occurs when an individual's connection to society is weak, this type of suicide is often triggered by feelings of

isolation, economic hardship, or personal problems, such as divorce or various, social issues It results in a misalignment between an individual's reality and their true circumstances and aspirations.

For instance, when someone experiences intense social isolation and exclusion due to various challenges and lacks social support, they may decide to take their own life because they no longer feel a strong connection to society.

3.2. Escape Suicide: Escape suicide is an attempt to evade multifaceted problems, it represents an individual's weakness and surrender to difficulties and challenges rather than confronting them courageously, True courage lies in confronting adversity rather than succumbing to it.

For example, when an individual faces significant psychological and social pressures that they cannot handle, instead of addressing these challenges properly, they opt to escape them by resorting to suicide.

3.3. Anomic Suicide: Anomic suicide occurs in societies that have lost their distinct social characteristics and undergone disruptions in their social fabric, This type of suicide emerges due to abrupt disturbances in social and moral equilibrium, such as elevated suicide rates during times of economic and national crises.

For instance, during an economic collapse, suicides stemming from severe financial difficulties increase as individuals lose their jobs and income sources, leading to social and moral disarray.

3.4. Fatalistic suicide: Fatalistic suicide is a relatively rare phenomenon committed by individuals who perceive themselves as worthless and inconsequential, akin to slaves, this type of suicide is considered irrelevant in modern societies.

Historically, slaves who saw no prospects for improving their circumstances or achieving personal success resorted to suicide due to their attachment to the societal values of that era.

3.5. Altruistic Suicide: Altruistic suicide occurs when an individual is exceptionally integrated within their community, where

social bonds are exceptionally strong, it involves self-sacrifice for the greater good, driven by the complete merging of an individual's identity with society.

For example, some individuals choose to sacrifice their lives to save others, such as someone jumping into the water to rescue a drowning person, prioritizing the well-being of others over their own safety, this type of suicide is rare and typically associated with exceptional circumstances.

4. Understanding the Global Suicide Phenomenon

Suicide includes two categories, lethal and non-lethal behavior, both considered forms of self-harm, It presents significant global health challenges, around 793,000 people die by suicide each year, as per the World Health Organization.

In 2014, there were about 117 suicides per day in the US, leading to 42,773 deaths, Suicide ranks as the 10th main cause of death, often occurring in individuals with diagnosed mental health disorders. **(Arensman et al., 2020, p. 3)**

Furthermore, Different groups of people have shown a tendency for suicide or suicide attempts, These include individuals who have lost loved ones to suicide, those involved in legal and child welfare systems, people who engage in non-suicidal self-injury, those with a history of suicide attempts, individuals dealing with medical conditions, people facing mental health disorders and addictions, military personnel and veterans, middle-aged men aged 35-64, and older men aged 75 and above

On a continental scale, Africa ranks fourth in terms of suicide cases, following low- and middle-income countries in the Western Pacific region. Mozambique emerges as the country most affected, with a rate of 8%, making it the third-highest contributor to global suicide rates, after low- and middle-income countries in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific, A significant contributing factor to the rising prevalence of suicide in Africa is the dearth of government funding allocated for mental health annually, despite the existence of official mental health policies, This gap between policy and implementation underscores the urgency of addressing the issue.

5. World Health Organization's Evaluation of Algeria's Suicide Prevention Initiatives:

On a national scale, Algeria has been subject to evaluation by the World Health Organization concerning its initiatives aimed at mitigating the issue of suicide, as overseen by the Algerian authorities, considering various criteria. This assessment has yielded several key observations, as reported by **(Osafo et al. in 2020)**:

5.1. Problem Significance: The Algerian government recognizes suicide as a severe public health concern, However, it is worth noting that there is no existing national program dedicated to the prevention of suicide.

5.2. Therapeutic Programs: Algeria has implemented comprehensive programs designed to address and prevent suicide, these efforts are complemented by the adoption of a national strategy aimed at reducing suicide rates, Moreover, the nation boasts the presence of medical and legal authorities specializing in this area.

5.3. National-Level Statistics and Evaluation: The government routinely publishes official national statistics about suicide and suicide attempts, these statistics can be accessed through the Ministry of Health, Population, and Hospital Reform.

Notwithstanding these efforts, there are several notable areas where Algerian authorities can further enhance their approach to suicide prevention:

a. Training Initiatives: It is imperative to provide accessible training programs for the evaluation and intervention in cases of suicide, This training should target a broad spectrum of professionals, including general practitioners, mental health practitioners, and public healthcare workers such as teachers, journalists, and police officers.

b. Research and Prevention Institute: Establishing a national center, institute, or non-governmental organization dedicated specifically to suicide research and prevention can significantly bolster these efforts.

c. Support Groups: The provision of self-support groups for individuals impacted by suicide can serve as a vital resource for those in need of emotional and psychological assistance.

d. Death Certificates: Consideration should be given to the inclusion of a designated option for suicide on death certificates for all fatalities, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

6. International and Domestic Goals in Addressing Suicide Trends:

Efforts to curb the suicide phenomenon are among the global goals that the World Health Organization is actively pursuing. During the 29th World Conference, titled "Preventing Suicide" and convened in Malaysia, a special interest group for suicide prevention was established. This initiative is focused on supporting the development and implementation of both global and national suicide prevention programs. Its objectives include **(WHO, 2017, p. 15)**:

Establishing an active platform that comprises international experts who will collaborate with relevant organizations, governmental ministries, and non-governmental entities to devise suicide prevention strategies in countries, particularly low- and middle-income nations where suicide prevention activities have historically been limited or absent.

Developing guidelines for the creation, implementation, and assessment of community-level suicide prevention initiatives within various countries.

Organizing numerous workshops and seminars aimed at assisting professionals and volunteers involved in suicide prevention in the development and execution of national suicide prevention programs.

At the national level, addressing the suicide phenomenon, which poses a threat to Algerian society, as stated by researcher Cheikh Rachid **(2014, p.117)**, necessitates a multifaceted approach to treatment, encompassing various dimensions:

6.1. Religious Aspect: By adhering to the principles, values, teachings, and guidance of Islamic education and applying them to the societal context. This approach involves enhancing faith and highlighting the sanctity and dangers of suicide, along with its adverse consequences for individuals and society.

6.2. Cognitive Aspect: Raising awareness and understanding about

suicide through awareness campaigns directed at individuals and society, employing various media platforms, national seminars, and social psychologists to aid individuals in overcoming suicidal thoughts.

6.3. Behavioral Aspect: Viewing suicide as a behavioral issue and delving into the different circumstances and reasons that drive individuals to consider suicide as a solution to their social problems, this approach assists in formulating programs that address individuals and their families, helping them confront negative thoughts and intervening before they take root.

6.4. Scientific Aspect: Subjecting all social phenomena to scientific scrutiny through studies and research to comprehend their underlying causes and motivations, Subsequently, measures can be taken to prevent these phenomena and introduce viable solutions.

7. CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of suicide is an ancient issue that has been observed throughout human history, particularly in Algerian society, suicide rates have been on the rise at both the national and global levels due to societal changes encompassing economic, technological, political, and cultural shifts, These changes have led to alterations in social interactions and the emergence of numerous problems, diverse orientations, and goals Consequently, a growing number of individuals have developed suicidal thoughts and behaviors, resorting to violent means against themselves, Several factors contribute to this, including:

- ✓ **Psychiatric disorders:** Conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, and other mental health issues can elevate the risk of suicide.
- ✓ **Social factors**: Family, social, and economic problems, as well as inequalities, play a role in increasing suicide rates.
- ✓ **Substance dependence:** The misuse of drugs and alcohol can further escalate the risk of suicide.
- ✓ **Stress and tension:** Chronic stress and psychological strain can act as contributing factors to suicidal tendencies.

Preventing suicide necessitates a multi-faceted approach:

A. Awareness and education: There is a need to raise awareness about the issue of suicide and educate the public on how to address it.

B. Psychological guidance and support: People suffering from mental disorders should have access to psychological support and treatment.

C. Encouraging help-seeking: Individuals should be encouraged to seek assistance when they experience feelings of depression or distress.

D. Control access to suicide means: Reducing access to methods of suicide, such as firearms and toxic substances, which can save lives.

E. Developing social support networks: Cultivating strong relationships with friends and family can provide emotional support that serves as a buffer against suicidal tendencies.

F. Professional help: When individuals are in dire need, they should seek professional assistance from psychiatrists or social workers.

Addressing the issue of suicide requires a comprehensive, compassionate, and proactive approach that involves both the individual and the community, by addressing the root causes and offering support and treatment, the rates of suicide can be effectively reduced.

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