



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOPELESSNESS AND SUICIDE IDEA IN ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Suicide is the third leading cause of death in the 15-29 age group. Adolescents with dynamic psychosocial development are highly vulnerable to pressures that can trigger hopelessness and suicidal ideation. Hopelessness is a pessimistic condition about the future, which is related to the emergence of thoughts of ending one's life. This study aims to analyze the relationship between hopelessness and suicidal ideation in adolescents. This quantitative correlational study involved 98 adolescents from SMA Negeri 2 Sukoharjo who were selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using the Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) and Revised-Suicide Ideation Scale (R-SIS) questionnaires, each of which showed high to very high reliability (BHS $\alpha = 0.92$; R-SIS $\alpha = 0.943$) and adequate item and construct validity, then analyzed univariately and bivariate using the Spearman correlation test. Results: Most respondents experienced low hopelessness (52%) and low suicidal ideation (78.6%). The Spearman correlation test results showed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.227 and a p -value of 0.024 ($p < 0.05$). There is a significant but weak positive relationship between hopelessness and suicidal ideation in adolescents. The higher the level of hopelessness, the higher the likelihood of suicidal ideation.

Keywords: adolescents; hopelessness; mental health; suicidal ideation

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are an age group that is in a transition period from childhood to adulthood, marked by very rapid biological, psychological and social changes (Oktaviana & Aprilliana, 2024; Setyantoro & Hanggara, 2023). This period is often marked by emotional turmoil, the search for identity, and pressure from the social and academic environment (Rulmuzu, 2021). This instability makes adolescents a vulnerable group to various mental health disorders, including the emergence of hopelessness and suicidal ideation (Grimmond et al., 2019). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2025) report, suicide is the third leading cause of death worldwide in the 15–29 age group, with more than 727,000 deaths annually. This phenomenon is not only a global problem but also a serious concern in Indonesia. Based on the report, National Health Center (2025), 849 suicide cases were recorded as of August 2024, with Central Java Province ranking first with 281 cases. This data indicates that Indonesian adolescents are in a worrying situation regarding their psychological well-being (Kurniawan et al., 2024).

One of the most influential psychological factors contributing to suicidal ideation is hopelessness. Hopelessness describes the emotional state in which a person loses hope for the future, feels they have failed in achieving their goals, and views their life as meaningless (Permana et al., 2021). According to Kwong (2024) individuals experiencing hopelessness tend to view themselves as powerless to change their circumstances and feel they have no control over their lives. This condition is often a major trigger for suicidal thoughts (Choi & Shin, 2023). Several studies have shown that high levels of hopelessness are a strong predictor of suicidal ideation and attempts in adolescents. Carballo et al., (2020) explained that adolescents with high levels of hopelessness had a three times greater risk of developing suicidal ideation than those with low levels of hopelessness.

Similar results were found by Grimmond et al., (2019), which highlighted that adolescents with feelings of hopelessness were more likely to engage in self-harm and have suicidal thoughts.

In addition to psychological factors, the social environment also plays a significant role in shaping hopelessness in adolescents. Lack of family support, experiences of social rejection, academic pressure, and stigma surrounding mental health can worsen adolescents psychological well-being (Baiden & Tadeo, 2020; Sundawati & Oktaviana, 2024). Adolescents who feel they lack emotional support from family and peers are more likely to experience feelings of emptiness and a loss of meaning in life (Atmojo & Octavia, 2022). Conversely, strong social support is known to increase psychological resilience and reduce the risk of hopelessness (Roziqi et al., 2023).

The role of health workers, particularly nurses, is crucial in recognizing early signs of hopelessness and suicidal ideation in adolescents. Nurses have a responsibility to provide education, counseling, and preventive interventions to prevent suicidal behavior (Kaess, 2022). Collaborative efforts between nurses, schools, and families are also needed to build a safe and supportive environment for adolescents experiencing psychological distress (Fadilah & Wu, 2019). Based on the phenomena and data presented, this study was conducted to determine the relationship between levels of hopelessness and suicidal ideation in adolescents. The results are expected to provide a basis for nurses, educators, and mental health teams in creating a safer and more supportive environment for adolescent mental health and developing suicide prevention strategies by increasing psychological resilience and social support for adolescents.

METHOD

Data were collected using two questionnaires: 1) The Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS), consisting of 20 items to measure feelings about the future, loss of motivation, and future hope. Scores were categorized as low hopelessness (≤ 40), moderate hopelessness (40-60), and high hopelessness (≥ 60) (Khairiyah & Ningsih, 2025). Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha showed high overall internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.92$), with the reliability of each dimension in the moderate to high category ($\alpha = 0.79$ to 0.97). Analysis of item discrimination power through corrected item-total correlation showed values in the range of $0.39 - 0.78$, which indicates good to excellent item quality. 2) Revised-Suicide Ideation Scale (R-SIS), consisting of 10 items to assess overt and covert suicidal thoughts. Scores are categorized into low (<25), moderate (25-34), and high (>34) suicidal ideation (Artissy & Pratama, 2022). The Indonesian version of the Revised-Suicide Ideation Scale (R-SIS) instrument was declared reliable with a very high Cronbach's Alpha value both overall ($\alpha = 0.943$) and in each dimension, and was valid in terms of constructs and items, as evidenced by the corrected item-total correlation value > 0.40 , factor loading > 0.55 , and the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) which showed a good fit model.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 25. Univariate analysis described the frequency distribution of respondent characteristics, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation. Bivariate analysis, normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov showed non-normal data distribution ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, to test the hypothesis using the non-parametric Spearman rank correlation test to determine the relationship and its strength between hopelessness (independent variable) and suicidal ideation (dependent variable). The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Ethical considerations with ethics number No. 5688/B.1/KEPK-FKUMS/V/2025, informed consent, confidentiality (respondent anonymity), and the principle of non-maleficence.

RESULT

A total of 98 students participated, with a balanced gender distribution (50% male, 50% female). Most respondents were 17 years old (45.9%), followed by 16 years old (37.8%), 15 years old (10.2%), and 18 years old (6.1%).

Table 1.
Respondent characteristics (n= 98)

Characteristics	f	%
Gender		
Female	49	50
Male	49	50
Age		
15 years	10	10,2
16 years	37	37,8
17 years	45	45,9
18 years	6	6,1

Table 2.
Destribusi of variabel (n= 98)

Variabel	Levels	f	%
Hopelessness	Low	51	52
	moderate	47	48
	High	0	0
Suicidal Idea	Low	76	77,6
	moderate	20	20,4
	High	2	2

The majority of respondents experienced low levels of hopelessness (52%) and low levels of suicidal ideation (77.6%), with no respondents falling into the high hopelessness category. The rest showed moderate levels for both measures (48%) for moderate hopelessness and (20.4%) for moderate suicidal ideation. Only a small number (2%) had high suicidal ideation.

Table 3.
Cross tab (n= 98)

Keputusasaan	Suicidal Idea				Total		
	Low	%	Moderat	%	High	N	%
Low	50	51	1	1	0	51	52
Moderat	26	26,5	19	19,3	2	47	48
Total	76	77,5	20	20,3	2	98	100
Spearman Rho test		p= 0,024			r=0,227		

Table 3 shows that 51 (52%) respondents with mild hopelessness had low levels of suicidal ideation. Meanwhile, 47 (48%) respondents with moderate hopelessness showed a higher tendency to suicidal ideation. The results of the Spearman correlation test showed a significant positive relationship between hopelessness and suicidal ideation with a correlation coefficient (r) = 0.227 and a p-value = 0.024 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that the higher the level of hopelessness, the higher the tendency to suicidal ideation, although the strength of the relationship is relatively weak.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that most respondents were at low to moderate levels of hopelessness and low levels of suicidal ideation, but a significant proportion were in the vulnerable category, and a positive relationship was found between the two variables. The results showed that all respondents in this study were in the mid-adolescent age range, with the majority aged 15–18 years. This phase is characterized by increased cognitive complexity, intense academic and social pressures, and the process of identity formation that is vulnerable to psychological distress (Trisnawati et al., 2025). Therefore, the age characteristics of the respondents in this study are relevant to the focus of the study on the psychological conditions of adolescents. The balanced gender distribution between males and females is a methodological strength, as it allows data analysis to be conducted without gender dominance bias. This is important considering the differences in distress expression tendencies between the two. Female adolescents tend to be more susceptible to internalizing psychological distress, such as anxiety, feelings of depression, and hopelessness, while male adolescents more often exhibit externalizing responses, such as impulsive or aggressive behavior (Xu et al., 2023). These differences in expression patterns can influence how adolescents cope with psychological stress and the risk of developing more serious mental health problems. Therefore, proportional representation of both genders in this study allows for a more comprehensive picture of adolescents psychological well-being.

The results of the study showed a low level of hopelessness (52%), while the remaining 48%) were at a moderate level of hopelessness, and no respondents were found with high levels of hopelessness. These findings indicate that the majority of adolescents still have hope for the future, although nearly half of the respondents have indicated negative thought patterns that have the potential to develop into more serious psychological problems. The large proportion of respondents with moderate hopelessness in this study needs to be considered, as moderate levels of hopelessness have been associated with an increased risk of suicidal ideation. Another study in the Indonesian adolescent population found that increasing levels of hopelessness correlated with a tendency to develop thoughts of suicide, although not yet reaching a severe level of hopelessness (Ida et al., 2025). The absence of respondents with high levels of hopelessness may be influenced by the characteristics of respondents who are still in a formal school environment and have a relatively supportive social structure. Karisma & Fridari (2021) emphasize that moderate levels of hopelessness are sufficient, especially when combined with other psychological factors such as low self-esteem, emotional stress, and adolescent developmental pressures. The distribution of moderate hopelessness, which is almost equal to low hopelessness in this study, indicates a group of adolescents who are in a vulnerable phase, where pessimistic mindsets about the future begin to form and potentially increase the risk of suicidal ideation. Therefore, this condition requires serious attention in the context of adolescent mental health.

The results of the study showed that most respondents were in the low category. Based on measurements using the Revised Suicide Ideation Scale (R-SIS) questionnaire, it was found that 77 respondents (78.6%) had low levels of suicidal ideation, 19 respondents (19.4%) were in the moderate category, and 2 respondents (2%) were in the severe suicidal ideation category. Most respondents were in the low suicidal ideation category, indicating that in general, most adolescents in this study did not experience recurrent or profound suicidal thoughts. This finding is in line with research Sallim et al., (2025) which states that although adolescents are in a developmental phase that is vulnerable to psychological stress, not all adolescents exhibit suicidal ideation if they have adequate protective factors, such as family support, positive social relationships, and a supportive school environment. However, 19.4% of adolescents were found to have moderate suicidal ideation and 2% to have severe suicidal ideation. These findings were reported to the school counselor for immediate treatment. Overall, the distribution of suicidal ideation among adolescents at SMAN 2 Sukoharjo shows that the majority of adolescents are in the low category, but there is still a proportion of adolescents with moderate to severe suicidal ideation that cannot be ignored. These findings emphasize the importance of mental health promotion and prevention efforts in the school environment, such as regular psychological screening, strengthening counseling services, and the involvement of teachers and parents in early detection of signs of psychological distress in adolescents.

The results of the correlation test indicate a positive relationship between hopelessness and suicidal ideation in adolescents. This suggests that the higher the level of hopelessness, the greater the likelihood of suicidal ideation. However, the correlation coefficient is considered weak, so the effect of hopelessness on suicidal ideation is small, but still statistically significant. This finding is consistent with research Pradipta & Valentina (2024), Rezki & Bastian (2024) which states that hopelessness is a risk factor for suicidal ideation in adolescents. High levels of hopelessness can trigger negative thoughts, feelings of hopelessness, and a tendency to avoid problems, which in some cases can develop into suicidal ideation (Khairiyah & Ningsih, 2025). The weak association between hopelessness and suicidal ideation in this study offers important implications hopelessness may be one entry point, but the journey from thought to action is heavily influenced by other variables. This is where the role of protective factors becomes crucial, as these findings suggest. Factors such as strong social support, as demonstrated in this study, are crucial Azizah & Daud (2025) a study found a very strong negative relationship between social support and loneliness in migrant students, suggesting that this may serve as an effective buffer. Therefore, despite the weak

strength of the relationship, the results of this study provide important evidence and clear direction for early detection efforts, strengthening counseling services, and mental health interventions in school settings. Screening for symptoms of hopelessness, particularly those characterized by loss of motivation and extremely pessimistic views about the future, should be a routine component of guidance and counseling programs, given that hopelessness is a consistent cognitive predictor of suicidal ideation in both the Indonesian and cross-cultural contexts (Siau et.al., 2024; Sukma & Puspitasari, 2023). Effective preventive interventions must be dual in nature, incorporating cognitive therapy to build hope in the individual (Klonsky et al., 2021). With strategies to strengthen peer and family support as protective factors, in accordance with the multisectoral approach recommended by WHO (2025).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of 98 respondents showed that most adolescents were at a moderate level of hopelessness, characterized by feelings of pessimism and the belief that their efforts would not produce change. Suicidal ideation was generally passive, involving the desire to disappear or stop living without a concrete plan of action. Statistical tests showed a weak to moderate positive relationship between hopelessness and suicidal ideation. This means that higher levels of hopelessness were associated with an increased likelihood of suicidal thoughts in adolescents. In addition to the direct influence of hopelessness, other factors such as social support, coping skills, and family circumstances can strengthen or weaken this relationship. Overall, hopelessness has been shown to be a significant factor influencing the emergence of suicidal ideation in adolescents.

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