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

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Abstract

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 two cases of suicide notes shared on Facebook platforms. Participants were observed within relevant Facebook groups, and data were collected through direct participation and field 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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Background

Globally, a staggering 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, and often a combination of

these factors (WHO, 2012). Studies have widely acknowledged that suicidal behavior is influenced by a complex interplay of biological, genetic, psychological, social, contextual, and situational factors (Olaseni et al., 2021; Oguntayo, 2023). While existing qualitative studies predominantly adopt an epidemiological or ethnographic approach (Noibi et al., 2020; Staples & Widger, 2012; Shoib et al., 2022) there is a recognized need for research that encompasses diverse perspectives and sources, particularly a netnographic approach.

According to Mental Health UK (2024), suicide is the act of ending one's own life, while 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. In a recent study, the tragic nature of suicide was emphasized, though it is preventable and not necessarily indicative of a mental illness; still, there is a correlation between mental health issues and such behaviors (Oguntayo & Gutierrez, 2024). The complexity and multifaceted nature of suicidal behaviors make it challenging to address, with social, psychological, and cultural factors playing a role in increasing an individual's risk (Olaseni et al., 2021; Oguntayo et al., 2024).

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). This 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). Notably, a recent phenomenon has surfaced wherein individuals publicly announce their intentions to commit suicide on Facebook (Islam et al., 2021).

Research indicates a growing trend among young individuals who engage in self-harm to utilize the Internet, particularly social media platforms, as avenues for expressing distress, with a notable increase in instances of suicide following public posts on such platforms (Cero & Witte, 2020). Some users 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).

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. 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). Moreover, employing artificial intelligence-driven methods for suicide prediction holds promise for enhancing the capacity to identify individuals at risk of self-harm or suicide, potentially leading to life-saving interventions (D'Hotman & Loh, 2020; Oguntayo et al., 2024).

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. Currently, there is a dearth of data regarding the percentage of suicides associated with Facebook announcements and the extent of social media's detrimental effects in this context. Consequently, controversies persist regarding the role of social media in predicting and preventing suicidal behaviors.

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, 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 investigate 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 hypotheses, 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.

In conclusion, Joiner's 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.

Suicide remains a global issue that warrants further exploration, particularly concerning the comprehension of individuals who discuss suicidal behaviors. Researchers have identified the phenomenon of suicide notes shared on Facebook as a potential avenue for gaining insight (Cero et al., 2020; Chou et al., 2012; D'Hotman & Loh, 2020). However, some scholars argue that delving deeper into the associated dynamics, motivations, and impacts through quantitative analyses could offer valuable insights, particularly within the online community, for mental health experts (Cero et al., 2020; Shoib et al., 2022; Westerlund, 2013; WHO, 2012; Olaseni et al., 2021). This entails examining the content, patterns, and interactions surrounding suicide notes posted on the social media platform especially Facebook, as well as exploring social support networks and the potential for intervention. 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:

Content Analysis: There is a lack of research utilizing content analysis to understand how individuals explore the nature of suicide notes shared on Facebook, including examining the language used, emotional expressions, and topics discussed. This type of analysis aims to reveal the underlying reasons, triggers, and emotions expressed within these notes.

Pattern and Theme Observation: Similarly, there is a dearth of studies observing patterns and recurring themes within suicide notes to gain insight into common experiences, challenges, or circumstances faced by individuals contemplating suicide. This analysis could illuminate factors contributing to suicidal ideation or the influence of social and personal pressures.

Social Dynamics Description: Research on the interactions, responses, and support networks within the online community discussing suicide notes on Facebook is lacking. This includes understanding how community members engage and support distressed individuals, as well as identifying instances of potential normalization or contagion.

Intervention Opportunities: Evaluating potential intervention or prevention strategies within the online space is also lacking. This involves identifying existing support systems or crisis response mechanisms and assessing their effectiveness, as well as exploring opportunities for targeted interventions to provide assistance to those at risk.

Platform Analysis: There is a need to examine the role of Facebook as a platform in the visibility, dissemination, and response to suicide notes. This analysis should explore design elements, algorithms, or policies that may inadvertently contribute to the proliferation or normalization of self-harm content, with recommendations for platform improvements or user interventions. By employing a netnographic approach to address the issue of suicide notes on Facebook, this study aimed to gain a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, including its cultural, social, and psychological implications. It is believed that this understanding could inform the development of effective preventive strategies, support systems, and policy interventions to address the problem of suicidality effectively. Therefore, this research question was used to gauge out a netnographic regarding suicidal issues on Facebook platforms thus:

What are the contents, patterns, and social dynamic factors surrounding suicide notes shared on Facebook, and how can this knowledge inform interventions and support systems for individuals at risk?

Aims of the Study

The aims of this research are to examine the nature of suicide notes and identify recurring patterns, stressors, and ways of seeking help among members. Also, understand the psychosocial dynamic factors within the online community and how these factors become interventions and support mechanisms for individual participants.

Methods

Netnography is a research method that involves the systematic study of online communities and interactions (Kulavuz-Onal et al., 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 used to analyze the content and communication patterns within the platform to gain theoretical understanding. Netnography is participant observation research, and data can take three forms (Kulavuz-Onal et al., 2013): (a) The researcher collects data directly; (b) Data is generated through capturing and recording online community events and interactions; and (c) The researcher outlines field notes as data (Kozinets, 2010). Similar to ethnography, in a netnographic study, data comes primarily from four sources: archival data, extracted data, interviews, and field notes (Kozinets, 2010). Using a netnography approach, this study was carried out in six overlapping steps, similar to the stages of ethnographic research: (i) develop a research plan; (ii) establish an entry; (iii) data collection and triangulation; (iv) analyze and interpret data; (v) ensure ethical standards; and (vi) report research results and associated knowledge.

Observation as Measure in this study, and ethical considerations

Though certain biases may affect social media research as they do any other type of investigation, Kozinets (2010) asserts that "these social groups have a 'real' existence for their participants and therefore have consequential effects on many aspects of behavior, including consumer behavior." Social media communities provide members with numerous opportunities to share information and influence one another regarding their lives and experiences (Kozinets, 2010).

Similar to numerous qualitative investigations, the objective of netnography is to examine social and psychological information, especially, symbolic and perceived meanings, consumption of information and reaction patterns, and other relevant aspects within the social milieu of digital environments (Kozinets, 2010). Additionally, netnography is employed to investigate social and psychological phenomena that occur online, including cyberbullying, suicidal behavior prior to and subsequent to the occurrence of survivors, and other scenarios involving the exchange of information (Lamy & Zourou, 2013).

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 from members and protecting their privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality with free participation and exit, as well as targeting populations of vulnerable groups.

Participants, sampling and procedure

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, the researchers fulfilled the platform's rules and they were accepted as members. This allowed the researchers to used '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 must take a survey of allegiance to the group rules, and the admin will accept the person upon meeting the criteria of the platform. It comprises males and females, with about 2,800 thousand members from all races of the world who wish to open up or express themselves in 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 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.

By participating in the group platform and adhering to the group rules, the author 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, or direct observations.

Through a poll, the members approved the use of the data gathered and the two cases used in these two groups; authors in SN received 1803 and ASP received 890 approvals out of 2800 and 943 group members, respectively. The identity and privacy of the members were protected. Having gotten the consent of members and adhered to ethical issues, the researchers gathered available and useful data and decided to content analyze them.

This involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and categories within suicide notes. This analysis includes aspects such as emotional tone, reasons or triggers mentioned, expressions of despair or hopelessness, and any references to external factors such as relationships, mental health, or social pressures.

This netnographic study is guided by past study guides by paying attention to social dynamics and interactions within the online community (Kulavuz-Onal et al., 2013; Islam et al., 2021). Therefore, the researchers explored the responses and support provided by other members, as well as expert counseling given by member clinicians to prevent self-harm and offer help. This analysis involved shedding light on the role of social support networks, the impact of online communities on suicidal ideation, and the potential for intervention or prevention strategies using expert guides. Additionally, the

researcher examined the structural features of Facebook itself, including design, layout, and features that make it easier or more difficult to communicate suicide notes.

Study Setting

This study used two Facebook posts and two cases to explain the forms of people's content, expressions, social supports, and social suicide prevention methods. The language used as mode of interaction in ASP and SN was English therefore those platforms accommodate English speakers alone.

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 with keeping society members healthy and alive using psychosocial help and support networks to mitigate the increasing rate of mental health, especially suicidal behaviours.

Two cases were analysed: in Case 1, a young male member (age and race unknown) posted on the Facebook platform to share his pain with the community (his name, specific month, and day this information was posted were withheld for ethical reasons): "I do a lot of stupid things that I regret, and only a few of my actions are not regretted." This individual participant said, "I have no feelings anymore, and I cannot love any woman anymore," after talking about not expressing his emotions and experiencing emotional hurt from those around him. This individual who posted a suicide note stated that the so-called lady of his heart, whom he trusts so much, has broken his heart, and he believes that life is no longer worth living and that there are people who have made this individual feel that way (particularly his partner and family).

This member participant blamed himself for the current situation; while he said, I do not want to blame them because it was really my fault, he said, 'I was too weak to control my situation; therefore, I am a failure'. The young man also expressed his desire to be understood and helped by the group's experts while he said, I hope someone reads this and tries to help me because I am in a lot of pain, 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.

The individual who posted a suicide note further said, "I simply want someone to listen to me, or then I will go to rest; after all, failing does not exist in another world. Thank you for accepting me into this group," said the young man.

In case 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, said the individual who posted a suicide note.

This individual who posted a suicide note said, Dream more! I thought I had these thoughts! I loved this individual with all my heart, and I will always love and miss this individual. 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 this individual, said the individual who posted the suicide note.

This study, through content analysis, addressed the research question formulated based on the two cases studied and generated 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 details are provided as follows:

Theme 1: Emotional Expressions: Both case studies exhibit intense emotional expressions, such as feelings of regret, emotional pain, hurt, guilt, and sadness.

These are extracts from the respondents that depict this theme: (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."

Theme 2: Triggers and Contributing factors: Case study 1 highlights a broken heart, feeling unloved, and blaming oneself for the current situation. Case study 2 reveals the shock and guilt of not acknowledging the pain the individual was suffering. The following are extracts from the respondents that depict this theme: (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."

Theme 3: Desire for Help and Support: In both 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. Case Study 1 explicitly requests assistance and expressed his pains, so also the individual victim in Case Study 2 sought members platform by expressing her guilt and pain and she received words of strength, empathy and encouragement to see meaning to life.

These statements 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 reveals patterns such as emotional vulnerability, expression of suffering, and attribution of blame: a. Emotional vulnerability: Both cases depict emotional vulnerability, showcasing the struggles individuals face in managing their emotions and circumstances. Expressions like "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 "He had become more withdrawn the year before" suggests a pattern of emotional withdrawal, further highlighting emotional vulnerability.

- *Communication of pain and need*: Both individuals who posted notes communicate their pain and emotional needs for understanding, support, and validation measures to other members. Statements like "I hope someone reads this and tries to help me" and "I simply want someone to listen to me" demonstrate a clear expression of emotional distress and the need for support. Furthermore, the statement "Please hold it and do not kill yourself; the wound will heal gradually" reflects a plea for emotional support and reassurance.

- *Attribution of Blame and Responsibility:* Case Study 1 attributes blame to oneself, while Case Study 2 expresses guilt for not recognizing signs of distress. The statement "This member participant blamed himself 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 "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.

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

- *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.

- *Community acceptance:* The 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." Statements like "Thank you for accepting me into this group" and "It breaks my heart that more and more young people are dying" 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, despair, guilt, sorrow, and emotional anguish, as demonstrated in the provided case studies. 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).

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).

The significance of supportive reactions revealed the importance of supportive responses from members of online communities in addressing suicidal behavior is emphasized in the third theme. Both case studies involved peers providing individuals with words of encouragement, practical advice, and words of empathy. These actions significantly mitigated the distress of the participants and fostered a sense of support and belonging (Lamy et al., 2013; Pan et al., 2018).

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). 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. This study contributes to the ongoing efforts to prevent suicide and promote mental well-being in online communities.

Conclusion, recommendation, Limitations and Suggestions for further study

This study used a content analysis approach to interprets the two case studies provided. It offers valuable insights into the patterns and dynamics surrounding suicide notes shared on Facebook. Common 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).

Research focusing on social networks has revealed how users, including peers within Facebook groups, demonstrate

social empathy, offer attitudinal suggestions, and discuss intervention strategies aimed at preventing suicide (Pan et al., 2018). This body of work underscores the potential of social media as a platform for psychosocial interventions targeting mental health issues like suicide (Behera et al., 2020; Kolavuz-Onal & Vasque, 2013; Kozinets, 2010). However, it is important to note that the existing literature in this area remains limited, indicating the need for further inquiry and exploration.

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, acknowledging the contributions of methodologies such as netnographic observation could enhance the understanding of suicide-related discourse on social media platforms therefore future research should explore and give more robust longitudinal study in this direction.

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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