



RESEARCH PAPER

College Student Suicidal Ideation: Perceived Burden Someness, Thwarted Belongingness, and Hopelessness

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ABSTRACT

Students subjected to academic stress, social isolation, and other mental health problems work together to increase the vulnerability for suicidal ideation. Current research examined the burdensomeness, combined with belongingness and hopelessness, serving as a link between risk factors and suicidal thoughts among students. Using a convenient sampling technique, a sample of 522 college students (n=259 females and n=263 males) was selected from Mansehra, Haripur, and Abbottabad. Data were gathered using the interpersonal need questionnaire with two subscales (i.e., Perceived Burdensomeness and Thwarted Belongingness), Beck Hopelessness scale, and suicidal ideation scale. The study results demonstrated that burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and hopelessness function as critical factors that link risk factors to suicidal ideation. Research results showed that perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and hopelessness displayed positive connections with suicidal thoughts. Research conclusions create critical requirements for developing programs that aim to eliminate suicidal thoughts among students. Education policy makers, along with other mental health professionals, should focus on solving problems with burdensomeness along with issues related to belongingness and feelings of hopelessness to support student mental health and overall well-being.

KEYWORDS Thwarted Belongingness, Hopelessness, Perceived Burdenomeness, Suicidal Ideation

Introduction

It is critical to have a better understanding of the risk factors and protective factors for college student suicide. According to estimates, suicide is the second most common cause of death for college-age teenagers, occurring at a rate of 4.25 to 6.5 per 100,000 students.(Hairston, 2015).

Suicidal ideation, or the desire to act suicidally, is a serious public health concern for college students and is thought to be a prelude to suicide attempts (Awaad et al., 2023).

Suicidal thoughts among college students are also linked to stressful life situations, including relationship breakups and job uncertainties (Ohenewa & Meyer-Weitz, 2024). The perception of being burdensome relates to suicidal thoughts across different age groups of young adults and has been heavily studied. A mixed psychiatric sample of adult outpatients underwent analysis to test perceived burdensomeness as a contributor to suicide ideation. Perceived burdensomeness emerged in 5.5% of the sample population, while this belief demonstrated a specific link to suicidal thinking beyond depression symptoms and hopelessness (Värnik, 2012). The results showed that perceived burdensomeness increased naturally with each year of age (ages ranging from 18 to 62 years). It was discovered that perceived burdensomeness predicted suicide ideation among college students after using demographic variables as well as depression to explain the relationship. A mixed study composed of community volunteers together with older adults, psychiatric patients, and homosexual-oriented adults revealed that individuals who

perceived themselves as burdensome also experienced higher suicide ideation. (Cukrowicz et al., 2011).

Therefore, it's critical to comprehend the link between stressful life events and college-age adolescents' suicide ideation. While many college students may go through one or more difficult life situations, the majority will not want to end their lives by suicide, and it is unclear what variables separate individuals who have suicidal thoughts from those who do not (Franklin et al., 2017). According to Joiner's (2005) interpersonal theory of suicide (ITS), suicidal thought develops in an interpersonal manner. It postulates that perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness function (a) as proximal adequate causes for suicide ideation while (b) exhibiting synergistic interaction so that increased levels of one variable strengthen the effects of the other variable, which we call the synergy hypothesis (Philipp, 2022). People feel pessimistic that these states have become permanent; they may become severely burdened and feel like they don't belong. According to the ITS, suicidal ideation is triggered by two cognitive-affective state-like conditions: perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness. Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between suicide ideation and the co-occurrence of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness (Spangenberg et al., 2019). When physical pain habituation is coupled with feelings of burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, people are deemed to be at a high risk of suicide death because this latter condition indicates that they have developed the capacity to commit deadly self-harm and die by suicide (Witte, 2006).

Perceived burdensomeness in the ITS occurs when individuals feel they can't make sufficient contributions to society, leading others to perceive their passing as a burden. People who are unable to contribute (such as sexual reproduction or resource creation) could feel like a burden to the group and see death as a means of protecting its resources. It is generally accepted that the idea or reality of burdening others is an incorrect assessment of the worth of one's life for significant family and community members (Block, 2018). In the context of the ITS (Joiner, 2005), thwarted belongingness happens when people feel as though they are being cut off from important groups or relationships, such as their families, romantic partners, or communities (Bryant, 2013).

According to Durkheim (1951/1897), belongingness is a fundamental need for both survival and adjustment. Loneliness and mistrust of interpersonal relationships are two ways that a sense of unfulfilled belongingness leads to suicidal thoughts (DARAMOLA, 2018). Additionally, studies indicate that suicidal thoughts are linked to perceived load in susceptible groups, including college students and older persons (Hirsch et al., 2019).

In particular, the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide explains how the interplay between two interpersonal states, perceived burdensomeness (PB) and thwarted belongingness (TB), develops the wish to die by suicide. On the one side, TB describes a person's sense of alienation from friends, family, and other significant social circles as well as their view that they are unimportant to others. TB is linked to both supportive and reciprocating social connections as well as loneliness (Joiner, 2005). The belief that one is a social burden and can create suffering for others, on the other hand, is known as PB. It is linked to sentiments of self-hatred and the idea that one is worth more dead than living. Although these two states are separate, their co-occurrence raises the possibility of passive suicidal ideation, which, when combined with hopelessness, turns into active suicidal thought (Bigger & Vo, 2022).

Furthermore, the idea states that as humans are inherently motivated by the need for self-preservation, individuals must develop the ability to attempt suicide before they may do so. Suicidal tendencies are developed by repeated exposure to traumatic events, which results in increased pain tolerance and decreased fear of dying. They are on a continuum that rises in proportion to the number and intensity of these experiences (Malathesh et al., 2021).

Several investigators have discovered a cross-sectional link between university students' suicidal thoughts and TB and PB. According to several of them, PB was a more significant predictor of the likelihood of suicidal thoughts, and others discovered that hopelessness was a predictor of suicidal thoughts in both TB and PB. According to long-term research with college students, despair, TB, and PB appear to predict future suicidal thoughts(Iweama et al., 2024).

An abrupt increase in suicide rates became noticeable throughout the Western Hemisphere in the last decade, where the United States recorded more than 40,000 deaths in 2012 (Värnik, 2012). Suicide ideation appears more frequently in the population than lethal suicide attempts. Research indicates that suicide attempt behavior across all stages of planning exists in 2 to 10 percent of United States adults per year, which qualifies as a main priority for treatment goals(Have et al., 2009) .

The Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicide IPTS leads to primary suicide risk by separating suicide risk into distinct aspects(Naidoo, 2016). Lethal suicide acts demand pre-existing suicidal tendencies because such attempts require both frightening and painful execution methods. Suicide ideation serves as the primary subject of this study, alongside its intervention forms, including passive thinking of being better off dead and active desires to kill oneself. Suicide ideation follows from perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness because these two factors, combined with hopelessness about resolving them, drive such thoughts. Passive suicide thoughts occur when people experience either burdensomeness feelings or feelings, but detect active suicide ideation when both risk factors arise simultaneously. The perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness function (a) as proximal adequate causes for suicide ideation while (b) exhibiting synergistic interaction so that increased levels of one variable strengthen the effects of the other variable, which we call the synergy hypothesis.

Many researchers have examined the interactions between perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness in various participant groups and research environments, which examine three age groups (young adults and middle-aged adults as well as older adults) and combine diverse ethnic groups (Cero et al., 2015). A research investigation analyzed the relationship between thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness using two separate samples comprising university students and psychiatric patients. The study analyzed neglected second-order model effects of these variables (Brooks et al., 2024).

Previous studies have revealed positive and significant effects between perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, both with and without quadratic effects included, while also expecting clear quadratic patterns for perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness in the observed data range (Cero et al., 2015). The research predicts that enhancing perceived burdensomeness together with thwarted belongingness must inevitably raise suicide ideation risk. Several studies have proved that people may have a general or passive desire for death when they feel like they don't "fit in" with others, feeling lonely, or experiencing perceived burdensomeness—thoughts that their death would be more valuable or better than their continued life (Radelt, 2020).

Hopeless feelings express both despair and a complete absence of belief that life will improve from its current state. Hopelessness drives you to disconnect from personal activities that mean something to you and avoid companionship with people you like. Hopeless situations advance into potentially suicidal abortion when they intensify to dangerous levels (Assavedo & Anestis, 2016). Active suicidal desire and ideation, or thoughts and longing to end one's own life, will result from hopelessness regarding feelings of burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, because it is at the intersection of these three interconnected elements that the impossibility of improvement is perceived (Gill et al., 2023). To the best of my knowledge, no study has assessed and measured

suicidal ideations in relation to perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and hopelessness. The research venture examined suicidal thinking patterns in students while verifying how burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, alongside hopelessness among students. For the first time, this study will investigate the relationship between hopelessness and suicidal risk, in relation to burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness.

Literaturereview

WHO describes suicidal behavior as an assortment of activities ranging from suicidal thoughts (suicidal ideation) through suicide planning to suicide attempts and finally completion of suicide. Suicidal ideation among adolescents develops through multiple origins, which span from academic and job troubles to feelings of loneliness and both physical and emotional abuse, to domestic problems and brain medical and psychological conditions, as well as alcohol dependence and financial hardships. The mental process of considering death by suicide constitutes suicidal ideation, also known as suicidal thoughts (Druss & Pincus, 2000).

Studies have shown that individuals with a history of self-harm, thoughts ranging from just thinking to advanced planning for suicide, are at risk for suicidal attempts. The thoughts that recur in passive suicidal ideation revolve around both the desire to end life and the creation of death scenarios. A person who engages in active suicidal thoughts will either start preparing for a suicide attempt or create an explicit plan (Assavedo & Anestis, 2016). Pursuing suicidal thoughts does not lead most individuals to make suicide attempts, yet these thoughts establish a risk factor for suicide (Franklin et al., 2017).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines suicidal ideation as the act where people think about suicide and consider or create suicide plans (Crosby et al., 2011). According to research on mental health, the healthcare system must deliver treatment services for people who display suicidal thoughts, regardless of their underlying medical diagnosis, since suicidal behaviors and continuous issues resulting from suicidal thoughts exist (Griffin et al., 2025). Suicidal ideation is treated through diverse medical solutions. The description of suicidal ideation includes mental representations about self-harm, which vary from comparing oneself to death to developing fully detailed plans for self-harm. DSM-5 identifies this form of thinking as deliberate self-harm thoughts that involve the planned consideration of death-causing methods (Assavedo & Anestis, 2016).

Between 2008 and 2009, the United States adult population included 8.3 million individuals, or 3.7%, who experienced suicidal thoughts during the previous year (Crosby et al., 2011). During 2019, it was estimated that 12 million U.S. adults seriously considered suicide, while 3.5 million planned their suicide attempt, and 1.4 million attempted suicide, and more than 47,500 U.S. adults died from suicide (Valadka, 2024). The prevalence of suicidal thinking affects teenagers' mental health (Moreno, 2022). Research indicates suicidal ideations function as an essential risk factor for completed suicide as well as attempted suicide (Cero et al., 2015). Every country surveyed through the World Mental Health Survey showed that suicidal behavior always included suicidal ideation (Druss & Pincus, 2000). The Dutch adults survey of 4,848 participants determined that previous suicidal ideation was intensely connected to subsequent suicide attempts, because 7.4% of suicidal ideation respondents tried suicide during the three years of study (Have et al., 2009). A 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing tested 8,841 participants aged 16 to 85 and found that suicidal thoughts were both predictive of self-death behavior and an important public health problem (Joiner, 2005).

Research findings have demonstrated that prediction of suicidal attempts ranked third after prior psychiatric hospitalizations and previous suicide attempts, with Justifiable Ideation as the third factor researched to understand how suicidal ideation severity relates

to suicide outcome predictions (Franklin et al., 2017). Australian adult subjects from a 1352-member study showed that growth in suicidal ideation intensity led to four- or five-times higher suicide attempt frequency. The existence of suicidal thoughts represents a major mental health problem that acts as a fundamental factor leading to attempted and completed suicides (Monteith et al., 2013).

Research indicates that experiencing suicidal ideation remains a prerequisite for attempts, but other factors prove critical for predicting suicide attempts (Ohenewa & Meyer-Weitz, 2024). Since most people who think about suicide do not conduct attempts. Therefore, scientists must understand the contributing elements to suicide-related ideations in the pathway. According to the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (ITS), emotionlessness (Thwarted Belongingness) and feeling as a burden (Robison et al., 2024) have strong connections to suicidal behavior. Research has validated social isolation as a reliable cause of suicide ideation and attempted suicide, along with lethal behaviors that exist throughout all ages (Ohenewa & Meyer-Weitz, 2024). The theory of Implicit-Proxy Theory of Suicides (ITS) defines thwarted belongingness as the failure of human beings to establish fulfilling social connections, in turn giving rise to suicidal ideation. Thwarted belongingness represents a multidimensional construct that includes isolation or loneliness together with the absence of mutually caring relationships (Jacobucci et al., 2023). The cognitive-emotional condition of thwarted belongingness functions as a dynamic state that gets influenced by personal interpersonal environments, such as social network size and strength, and cognitive schemas about perceived rejection and current emotional conditions that lead to distress (Brooks et al., 2024). Research findings demonstrate that perceived burdensomeness serves as a recognized risk factor for suicide attempts (Cero et al., 2015).

An individual who experiences suicidal ideation, constitutes a burden to others and intern is more likely to pursue suicidal behavior since they believe people would be better off without them alive. An individual reaching the dangerous threshold occurs from developing self-hatred after perceiving themselves as a burden to all important people in their life (Pérez et al., 2024). The research analysis revealed that perceived burdensomeness and suicidal ideation, along with hopelessness, and suicidal ideation did not show significant relationships. Also, no important connection existed between thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness or thwarted belongingness and hopelessness and suicidal ideation (Valadka, 2024).

A study arranged three participant groups to either disclose suicidal ideation alone or suicide attempts, or those who reported neither experience nor ideation, nor attempts (Branley-Bell et al., 2019). Another research examined the combined effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) together with psychological distress and perceived burdensomeness /thwarted belongingness on collegiate students by showing significant indirect pathways through thwarted belongingness and psychological distress, which linked ACEs to suicidal ideation and psychological distress and perceived burdensomeness /thwarted belongingness (Bhargav & Swords, 2022). Analysis of 40 research studies about thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness relations with suicide found that interpersonal elements heavily influenced the connection between these constructs (Cukrowicz et al., 2011). Across the studies, researchers observed varying construct strengths based on which variable they were integrated with, but perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness yielded superior significance when examined independently. The research identified that thwarted belongingness displayed stronger results than perceived burdensomeness when studying suicide and insomnia, but perceived burdensomeness outperformed thwarted belongingness in evaluating depression and social constructs, and personality traits.

The research studies established indirect relationships for at least one interpersonal variable despite their different assessment methods (Druss & Pincus, 2000).

The investigation of perceived burdensomeness together with thwarted belongingness as mediators between psychological distress and suicidal ideation revealed significant relationships between psychological distress and thwarted belongingness, and perceived burdensomeness and suicidal ideation. Bhargav and Swords (2022) revealed that perceived burdensomeness stood as the solitary factor capable of bridging psychological distress to suicidal ideation while analyzing the mediator role of the interpersonal variables.

The Interpersonal Theory

Each year, suicide ranks as a main cause of death across the globe, through the loss of approximately 800,000 people (Cukrowicz et al., 2011). Suicide-related death is tragic in its basic essence while producing severe emotional consequences for the survivors of those who died by suicide. The assessment and treatment of suicidal behavior, along with its related causes, represent an essential public health need and international necessity (Druss & Pincus, 2000). Suicide ideation (thinking about killing oneself) and suicide attempts (behavior with death intention but no fatal outcome) act as strong indicators of future suicidal death (Gill et al., 2023). The application of theoretical frameworks during suicide research becomes essential to discover risk and protective factors leading to suicide ideation and attempts, which might result in suicidal death. This type of theoretical organization helps scientists systematically structure various contributing elements, which should also be developed to make them scientifically testable and falsifiable. One of the fundamental ideas within the interpersonal perspective represents a new twist compared to previous suicide theory models regarding why most contemplators of self-harm do not carry out their plans. According to this theory, suicidal desire, along with nonfatal and fatal suicidal actions, develops through separate directional processes. The interpersonal theory represents the original suicide theory, which functions within both the ideation-to-action frameworks (Joiner, 2005).

Thwarted Belongingness

Human beings need to experience belongingness as a natural requirement, which leads to multiple health problems when this fundamental need remains unmet (Bhargav & Swords, 2022). The construct of thwarted belongingness stands as a chief element of interpersonal theory since it indicates a high suicide risk factor. The different elements within thwarted belongingness consist of loneliness as well as a lack of interpersonal care. The dimensions contain self-reported feelings of being alone as well as decreasing numbers of friends and living separate residences, disrupted family units, social avoidance behaviors, and domestic tension (Assavedo & Anestis, 2016).

Perceived Burdensomeness

The construct perceived burdensomeness identifies social disconnection through a personal belief that death would create more value than life does for the ones affected by it. The construct embraces both actual burdensome views and subjective ones, which need special stress. According to the theory, those who experience self-hatred incorrectly interpret it as an extent to which others would experience loss through their death. Perceived burdensomeness consists of two components, which are perceived liabilities along with self-hatred (Jacobucci et al., 2023). Research shows that the aspect of the theory about perceived burdensomeness has produced valuable findings toward the development of an emerging biobehavioral model of suicidal behavior called the eusocial theory of suicide (Joiner, 2005). Suicide acts as an evolutionarily adaptive system gone awry, which typically functions as protective self-sacrifice behavior within eusocial species like naked mole rats and honeybees, and humans with colony survival structures (Malathesh et al., 2021).

Hopelessness

The core foretelling element of this theory emphasizes that poor perception of life-changing possibilities concerning either thwarted belongingness or perceived burdensomeness creates an increased susceptibility to suicide. Tests of the interpersonal theory have failed to address the significance of this prediction despite its importance (Pérez et al., 2024). Neither the construct nor suitable measures of hopelessness regarding perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness have been developed, thus preventing researchers from testing the Hypotheses in the theory. A small number of research studies have added proxy measures for general hopelessness traits to their assessment of the interpersonal theory. The creation of an assessment for this essential component of the theory will help to determine the true value of interpersonal theory for suicide risk prediction.

Snyder and his colleagues created the theory of hope, which states that low-hope persons fail to generate alternate pathways to reach a blocked objective or to formulate new attainable goals, and thus are more likely to consider suicide in the face of stressors. Ten out of eleven eventual suicide completers (91%) in a sample of patients with suicidal ideation received high scores on the Beck Hopelessness Scale, indicating that hopelessness was a powerful predictor of future suicide in a 10-year prospective research by Beck and colleagues.

. Just one participant (9%) had a score lower than the cutoff, which is 9. According to similar later research using samples of psychiatric patients, pessimism can predict suicide by up to 90% to 94.2%. According to Beck et al., there is a series of factors that ultimately cause people who are depressed to try suicide. These people interpret their experiences negatively and expect their difficulties to have disastrous consequences. Suicide appeals to them since it is the only solution to their "unsolvable problems." Snyder's theory of hope states that perceived goal blockage is the cause of suicidal thoughts.

Suicidal thoughts can arise when a person is unable to come up with fresh, achievable goals or alternate approaches to accomplish a goal that has been obstructed. On the other hand, because there is no hope to lessen the detrimental effect of hopelessness on suicidal ideation, people who are experiencing high levels of hopelessness are more prone to experience suicidal thoughts. The current study intends to explore the conceptions of suicidal ideation, perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and hopelessness.

Suicidal ideation can be explained as thoughts about self-directed death, which emerge from numerous personal, social, and environmental factors. Knowledge-based learners experience academic stress, which combines with social isolation and mental health problems to result in suicidal thoughts. Research studies mention how burdensomeness functions as a middle factor between risk elements and suicidal thoughts, alongside belongingness and hopelessness. University students who feel the burden on others, according to their perception, show a higher risk for suicidal thoughts because of this experience (Gill et al., 2023).

A sense of burden can make individuals believe their death would relieve those close to them, which generates thoughts of suicide. The beli Birthday Bulky cylinder type key ef that things will never recover has proved to be closely related to suicidal thoughts among students. A desperate situation without escape makes people consider suicide as their only choice (Joiner, 2005).

The analysis of burdensomeness alongside feelings of belongingness and Hopelessness gives valuable knowledge about factors behind students' suicidal

thoughts(Pérez et al., 2024). The risk of suicidal ideation and the promotion of mental health may be tackled by implementing support systems, including counseling and support groups, in addition to social support networks, which target the root causes (Stone et al., 2017).

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study areas are as follows:

H1: Thwarted belongingness would positively relate to perceived burden sameness to suicidal ideation.

H2: Gender base differences will exist in thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness, and suicidal ideation.

H3: Socioeconomic-based differences will exist in thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness, and suicidal ideation.

H4: Academic qualification-based differences will exist in thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness, and suicidal ideation.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The current study was quantitative. The cross-sectional survey research design was used to analyze the study hypotheses.

Population and Sample

The population of the study was comprised of 522 university students. The convenience sampling method was used for sample recruitment. A total of 259 girls (49.6%) and 263 boys (48.3%) participated in the study. As per demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, academic qualification, the sample was further divided into subcategories(see Table 1).

Table1
Study Participants Demographics Characteristics (N= 522)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
≤ 20	223	42.7
≥ 21	299	57.3
Gender		
Female	259	49.6
Male	263	50.4
Monthly Income		
<Rs.50,000	208	39.8
≥ Rs.50,000	314	60.2
Education Program		
Undergraduate	337	64.6
Graduate	185	35.4

The table illustrates some facts about the study participants' demographic characteristics (N=522). Two age Groups:≥ 21, having 299 frequencies and 57.3%, and ≤ 20. More females participated in the study, having 263 (f) and 50.4 (%) as compared to males who had 259(f)and 49.6(%). Single individuals have participated in the study at have greater frequency, which is 367 (and 70.3%) as compared to married 155 (f) and

29.7. Monthly incomers. 50,000 having greater(314) and 60.2 (%)as compared to ≤ RS.50,000 having 208 (f) and 39.8 (%). Undergraduate students have a greater frequency (337) and percentage (64.6) as compared to Graduate frequency (185) and percentage (35.4).

Instruments

Interpersonal Need Questionnaire

Two subscales, INQ Perceived Burdensomeness and INQ Thwarted Belongingness, make up the 15-item Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ; Van Orden et al., 2012). Participants' perception of their burdensomeness to loved ones is gauged by the 6-item INQ Perceived Burdensomeness subscale. The degree to which people feel excluded from and do not belong to significant social groups is measured by the 9-item INQ hindered belongingness subscale. On a scale of 1 (not at all true for me) to 7 (extremely true for me), participants score each item based on how they have "felt recently." (INQ;Van Orden, 2009).

Beck's Hopelessness Scale

The Beck Hopelessness scale is a 10-item self-report inventory was used to measure three major aspects of hopelessness: feelings about the future, loss of motivation, and expectations. Items are rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Definitely false) to 5 (Completely true)(Beck et al., 1974).

Suicidal Ideation Scale

Suicidal ideation was measured with the 15-item interpersonal need questionnaire. It has two subscales measuring perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness; these two factors are the ultimate cause of suicidal ideation. Items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree) (Ghasemi et al., 2015).

Procedure

For data collection, permission was sought from the heads of different educational institutions. Potential subjects were approached and briefed about the study objectives. A set of questionnaires with an attached informed consent form, ensuring the participants' right to decline to participate, right to withdraw from the research, and confidentiality of the data, was distributed with instructions not to leave any item unchecked.

Results and Discussion

Table2
Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients of Instruments Used in the Study

Measure	Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	Skewness	Kurtosis	Actual	Potential
INQ	15							
BUR	6	17.20	7.38	.78	0.63	0.23	6-42	6-42
BEL	9	34.29	7.83	.54	-0.05	0.34	9-59	9-63
HIS	10	21.00	7.95	.86	0.62	0.14	10-50	10-50
FSII	5	10.34	4.39	.78	0.70	0.07	5-25	5-25

*Note.*INQ=Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire; BUR=Perceived Burdensomeness; BEL=Thwarted Belongingness; IHS = Interpersonal Hopelessness Scale; FSII = Frequency of Suicidal Ideation Inventory.

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients, and instruments in the main study. Reliability coefficient ranged from .78 to .54. Thwarted belonging had the lowest reliability coefficient (.54) among all instruments. Departure from normality is not problematic according to the rule of thumb [Skewness] >3.0 and [Kurtosis] >10.0.

Table 3
Correlations among Scores on Study Variables (N = 522)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1.BUR	--			
2.BEL	.29**	--		
3.IHS	.63**	.38**	--	
4.FSII	.49**	.27**	.61**	--

Note. BUR = Perceived Burdensomeness; BEL = Thwarted Belongingness; IHS = Interpersonal Hopelessness Scale; FSII = Frequency of Suicidal Ideation Inventory.* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 3 shows correlation among scores on study variables according to our Hypothesis the relationship between perceived Burdensomeness and Thwarted Belongingness is positively significant ($r = .29$) $p < .05$, $p < .01$. Similarly, our hypothesis hopelessness and perceived Burdensomeness was positively significant ($r = .63$) $p < .05$, $p < .01$. In our hypothesis the relationship between suicidal ideation and perceived Burdensomeness is positively significant ($r = .49$) $p < .05$, $p < .01$. Similarly, correlation among scores on study variables Hopelessness have significant relationship with perceived Burdensomeness and Thwarted Belongingness ($r = .38$) $p < .05$, $p < .01$. Similarly, correlation on study variable suicidal ideation significant relationship perceived Burdensomeness and Thwarted Belongingness ($r = .27$) $p < .05$, $p < .01$. According to correlation among scores on study variables suicidal ideation have significant relationship with perceived burdensomeness, Thwarted Belongingness and hopelessness ($r = .61$) $p < .05$, $p < .01$. Therefore, correlation among score on study variable (N= 522) have Great relationship with all variables (BUR, BEL, HIS, FSII) because the actual value of $p < .05$, $p < .01$.

Table 4
Comparison of Age on Study Variables (N= 522)

Measure	≤ 20 (n=223)		≥ 21 (n=299)		$t(520)$	P	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
BUR	17.62	6.19	16.86	8.12	1.17	.241	-0.51	2.02	0.10
BEL	35.48	7.19	33.62	8.22	2.66	.008	0.49	3.25	0.24
HIS	21.39	7.39	20.64	8.28	1.05	.294	-0.66	2.16	0.10
FSII	10.52	4.21	10.18	4.50	0.84	.402	-0.46	1.13	0.08

Note. BUR = Perceived Burdensomeness; BEL = Thwarted Belongingness; IHS = Interpersonal Hopelessness Scale; FSII = Frequency of Suicidal Ideation Inventory.

Table 4 shows the result of t-test comparing two age groups (age ≤ 20 ; age ≥ 21) on study variables. There were significant differences in Thwarted Belongingness for age group: ≤ 20 ($M = 35.48$, $SD = 7.19$) and age group ≥ 21 ($M = 33.62$, $SD = 8.22$) $t(453.9) = 2.66$, $p = .008$. The results suggest that age group: ≤ 20 students reported high Thwarted Belongingness, then age group: ≥ 21 students, leading to a small effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.24$).

Table 5
Comparison of Male and Female Students on Study Variables (N= 522)

Measure	Female (n=259)		Male (n=263)		$t(520)$	P	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
BUR	16.45	7.28	17.92	7.46	-2.23	.026	-2.75	-0.17	-0.20

BEL	34.30	8.14	34.37	7.52	-0.10	.923	-1.45	1.31	-0.01
HIS	20.09	7.82	21.93	8.00	-2.59	.010	-3.24	-0.45	-0.23
FSII	10.23	4.35	10.44	4.45	-0.54	.590	-0.99	0.56	-0.05

Note. BUR = Perceived Burdensomeness; BEL = Thwarted Belongingness; IHS = Interpersonal Hopelessness Scale; FSII = Frequency of Suicidal Ideation Inventory.

Table 5 shows the result of a t-test comparing two gender groups (Male & Female) on study variables. There were significant differences in Thwarted Belongingness for gender group: Female (M=34.30, SD=8.14) and Male (M=34.37, SD=7.52). The results suggest that the female group reported higher Thwarted Belongingness than the male group, leading to a small effect size (Cohen's $d=-0.23$)

Table 6
Comparison of Family Monthly Income on Study Variables(N= 522)

Measure	<Rs.50,000 (n=208)		≥ Rs.50,000 (n=314)		t(520)	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
BUR	18.20	7.40	16.66	7.34	2.26	.024	0.20	2.88	0.21
BEL	35.70	7.44	33.55	7.92	2.99	.003	0.74	3.56	0.28
HIS	22.45	7.70	20.22	8.00	3.03	.003	0.78	3.67	0.28
FSII	10.69	4.51	10.12	4.32	1.38	.169	-0.24	1.37	0.13

Note. BUR = Perceived Burdensomeness; BEL = Thwarted Belongingness; IHS = Interpersonal Hopelessness Scale; FSII = Frequency of Suicidal Ideation Inventory.

Table 6 shows the result of a t-test comparing family monthly income (<RS. 50,000: ≥ RS.50,000) on study variables. There were significant differences in Thwarted Belongingness for monthly income. < RS. 50,000 (M= 35.70, SD= 7.44) and monthly income: ≥RS. 50,000 (M= 33.55, SD= 7.92), $t(492.0)$, $p= .003$. The results suggest that monthly income: < RS. 50,000 reported high Thwarted Belongingness than monthly income: ≥ RS. 50,000 leading to a small effect size (Cohen's $d= 0.28$).

Table7
Comparison of Educational Program on Study Variables(N = 522)

Measure	Undergraduate (n = 337)		Graduate (n = 185)		t (520)	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
BUR	17.15	7.55	17.60	6.68	-0.43	.668	-2.52	1.61	-0.06
BEL	34.31	8.01	34.72	6.79	-0.37	.714	-2.59	1.77	-0.05
HIS	21.02	8.10	21.02	7.03	0.00	.999	-2.23	2.23	0.00
FSII	10.31	4.35	10.89	4.59	-0.95	.341	-1.80	0.63	-0.13

Note. BUR = Perceived Burdensomeness; BEL = Thwarted Belongingness; IHS = Interpersonal Hopelessness Scale; FSII = Frequency of Suicidal Ideation Inventory.

Table 7 shows the result of a t-test comparing education programs (undergraduate and graduate) on study variables. There were significant differences in Thwarted Belongingness for the education program. Undergraduate (M= 34.31, SD= 8.01) Graduate (M=34.72, SD= 6.79) $t=485.0$, $p=.714$. The results suggest that education programs reported higher Thwarted Belongingness than graduates, leading to a small effect size (Cohen's $d=-0.05$).

Discussion

This study was designed to examine hopelessness, burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and suicidal ideation among students. The study results proved that a significant relationship exists among study variables. According to the hypothesis, a significant positive relationship will exist among perceived burdensomeness, thwarted

belongingness, and suicidal ideation. Consistent study results were presented by previous research suggesting that individuals experiencing burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness are more inclined to develop suicidal thoughts. The results show that college students who felt like they didn't fit and who thought they were too much of a burden were more likely to have suicidal thoughts (Bhargav & Swords, 2022). Suicidal ideation is prospectively predicted by perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, which is generally consistent with other ITS research findings (LeDuc et al., 2025).

By comparing participants' demographic characteristics, the study results showed that, except for thwarted belongingness, there were no significant differences between participants aged less than 21 and those aged more than 21 on all study variables. Results revealed that there were no Significant Differences between students with an age equal to or more than 21 and equal to or less than 22.

A comparison between male and female students on study variables revealed that females experienced more hopelessness than males. At the same time, males experienced more thwarted belongingness as compared to females. Consistent with the present study results, Donker et al. (2014) reported that the pattern of psychological traits that predict suicidal thoughts and the variables influencing vulnerability are different for men and women. Gender disparities must be considered in suicide prevention measures. While higher thwarted belongingness only enhanced suicidal ideation in females, higher perceived burdensomeness increased suicidal ideation in both genders. Stronger physical health was substantially connected with stronger thwarted belongingness in males but not in females, while thwarted belongingness was uniquely related to perceived burdensomeness in females. According to some tendencies, men were more affected by being single and being seen as onerous, while women were more affected by less supportive friendships and a higher sense of thwarted belongingness. The effect of burdensomeness on suicidal ideation (Amini-Tehrani et al., 2021).

The results of the study showed that women were more likely than men to experience suicidal thoughts and attempts. This result is in line with earlier research. Research indicates that women are more prone than men to engage in suicidal behavior (Bommersbach et al., 2022). For example, a prior study found that discrimination and strict gender norms are the main reasons why women are more likely than men to engage in suicidal behavior (Petroni et al., 2015). It was further claimed that while discrimination and strict gender norms, such as unequal caregiving, chore burdens, sexual abuse, exploitation, and exclusion from education, work, and decision-making, have detrimental effects on both men and women, the effects on women are more severe, limiting their opportunities and goals (Iweama et al., 2024).

Exploring the possible impact of socioeconomic status on study variables. Study results proved that Students with a family monthly income of less than 50,000 were rated high, whereas those with a family monthly income greater than 50,000.

While the relationship between ideation and attempts was strengthened throughout other income groups, it was weaker among the lowest and highest income groups (Kim et al., 2016). The population's attributable risk for suicide was significantly correlated with socioeconomic level (Page et al., 2014).

Undergraduate students rated high hopelessness rather than Graduate students. Students experiencing hopelessness will lead to perceived burdensomeness was supported/ accepted. Similar results were reported by previous research. Depression, hopelessness, desperation, lack of control, and eating disorders are major factors in suicidal conduct among graduate students, who also endure high levels of stress and anxiety. Future research with this demographic should concentrate on measures to

encourage help-seeking, particularly among male students, as well as the creation and assessment of interventions related to mental health and wellness (Garcia-Williams et al., 2014). According to a stepwise multiple regression, 37% of the variance in suicidality was explained by scores on the Hope subscales Agency, Coping Beliefs, and Survival. Suicidality appears to be more closely associated with survival and coping attitudes, and hope than with hopelessness or other motivations for life among unscreened college students. It is implied that encouraging hopefulness in college students may strengthen their coping and survival attitudes and deter the emergence of suicidal ideas or behaviors (Range & Penton, 1994).

Empirical findings have demonstrated a positive association between burdensomeness, belongingness, and suicidal ideation. There is also strong support from international research showing the positive influence of burdensomeness, belongingness, and suicidal ideation (Lockman & Servaty-Seib, 2016).

Conclusion

The present study examined and proved a significant relationship between suicidal ideation with burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and hopelessness among students. Therefore, it can be concluded that the support received by the students from the family can contribute to the hopelessness between the relationship of burdensomeness, belongingness, and suicidal ideation among university students.

Limitations and Suggestions

1. The current study used cross cross-sectional correlational research design. Succeeding research employing prospective designs is highly desirable to obtain exact awareness of the uncertain nature of relations with suicidal ideation.
2. The study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias and may not accurately reflect hopelessness, thwarted belongingness, suicidal ideation, or psychological health outcomes.
3. The sample of our study was moderately small. The problem of small sample size is that it might not detect true but small effects in the population because such small samples do not have enough power. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers should utilize large samples in their studies.

Real-life applications of the research

1. Educational institutions can use the findings to develop interventions aimed at improving student sleep hygiene and overall academic performance.
2. Healthcare providers can use the findings to better understand the impact of thwarted belongingness, hopelessness on suicidal ideation, leading to more targeted treatments and mental health management interventions.
3. Educational psychologists can utilize the current study findings to develop policies and practices aimed at promoting mental health and addressing hopelessness and related issues among students.

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