Teenage Suicide

Student’s Name

Institution
Abstract

This paper is a research proposal, the topic of which is a teenage suicide. The research explores 21 content areas, which namely are: an introduction, problem statement, rationale for the research, statement of the research objectives, hypothesis, definition of terms, summary, literature review, methodology, participants, research design, instrumentation and data collection plans, proposed analysis of the data, implications and limitations, time schedule, personnel, budget, resources, needed assurance/clearances, questions for questionnaires and references to show challenges within the problem of teenage suicide.

*Keywords:* teenage, suicide
Teenage Suicide

Introduction

Sigmund Freud once introduced the concept of "death instinct", otherwise he could not explain much of what man can do with himself. The desire for self-destruction is clearly inherent in his nature. If all living creatures struggle for existence, the human person, on the contrary, puts energy into something that completely ruins his life and sometimes even forces to kill himself. According to official statistics, 1000000 people commit suicide every year. Among them are 30 thousand of Americans, 25 thousands Japanese, 20 thousand French, 280 thousands Chinese people, and 60 thousand Russian people. According to sociologists, the official statistics of suicides is considerably different from the real numbers (which, according to various estimates, is 2-4 times higher) since it accounts only the declared cases. According to legal experts, the cause of most so-called "accidental death" (an overdose of drugs, car crashes, falls from heights), in fact, is suicide. Furthermore, noone can record cases of unsuccessful attempts of suicide, the number of which is 10-20 times higher than the completed suicides.

More than 2,000 teenagers (or 11 per every 100,000) commit suicide in the U.S. Each year, 250,000 teenagers make a suicide attempt. The young people rarely suffer from deadly diseases; therefore, suicide was the third leading cause of death in this age group, after accidents and homicides. Moreover, according to the survey, half of all teenagers have admitted that they had thoughts of suicide (Erbacher & Salvatore, 2009).

Over two million people in the world are making unsuccessful attempts to kill themselves, and teenagers constitute about one million of thisumber. Thus, research proposal topic will be Teenage Suicide. The topic is very important because of the situation that exists in the world, and in the U.S., at the moment.
Problem Statement

At the moment, a growing number of children and teenagers demonstrate the trend toward individualism. At this age, a lot of problems can happen, which, at first sight do seem not serious; however, they present a “global problem” for adolescents, which they often cannot solve. Therefore, some of the teenagers commit suicide rather than try to solve the problem in any other way. All teenagers have reasons that contribute to suicidal intentions. It is possible to help them only knowing well the reasons leading to the neglect of life. Therefore, within the topic of teenage suicide there is the problem, which is important enough to study: it pertains to the analysis of the reasons that lead to teen suicide.

Rationale for the Research

Suicide is a perennial problem of humanity because this phenomenon exists almost throughout all human history on earth. However, children are the future of Earth, the future of the entire human nation. Therefore, the fact that many of them do not experience adolescence is a real disaster. This study further relates to the larger issues, such as the future of the humanity. This is the main concern behind the teenage suicide research, the study of which is important for all humanity. People are responsible for their teens, and humankind must understand the reasons, which force the teenagers to commit suicide; otherwise, they will lose their future.

Statement of the Research Objectives

Suicide is often a consequence of the impact of current events on a teenager or the circumstances of his life. Although the influence of these factors cannot fully explain the suicide causes, they may contribute to adolescent suicidal intentions. In countries around the world youth suicide rate is high, and it also increases. Overall, since 1955, the suicide rate of young people has doubled. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the problem of a suicide among teenagers. The task is to analyze and understand the theoretical material
about the problem of suicidal behavior of adolescents, determine and assess suicide attempts and their causes among teenagers, give recommendations for the prevention of suicide among children and adolescents (Erbacher & Salvatore, 2009).

**Hypothesis**

According social reasons, interrelation of parents and children at present is much weaker than 10-20 years old ago. The majority of parents are building a successful career, in order to provide for the family’s prosperity; thus, paying little time to their children and, in such a way, disrupting the educational function of the family. Adolescence is a big enough state of crisis, but many psychologists say that the causes of most suicides are rooted in family relations. Many families do not seek, as a rule, the expert psychological help in difficult situations. The implication is a kind of suicide algorithm: the emotional coldness of parents or peers → the absence of understanding of surrounding people → the emergence of the inner conflict → the emergence of a crisis → solution of the situation, either constructive (resolution of the situation), or destructive (alcoholism, drug addiction, suicide). According to statistics, the peak of suicide is among young people of 15 to 24 years old, with one teenager with the completed suicide per 100 suicidal attempts (Erbacher & Salvatore, 2009).

The family is a historically evolved system of relationships between spouses, parents and children, due to a shared life, and mutual moral responsibility. The need of the family in social terms can be explained by society's need for physical reproduction of the population. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is that the suicidal behavior of children, in most cases, is forced by conflicts within the family.

**Definition of Terms**

Some of the terms within the topic should be determined.

All teen suicide can be divided into two classes - real and demonstrative (called parasuicide). Typically, parasuicide commits in the heat of passion. It is not an attempt to kill
oneself, it is a "cry to get help", an attempt to get attention to teen’s own problems. These actions are a demonstrative attempt of suicide. In contrast to a parasuicide, a true suicide is usually a well-planned event, the purpose of which, at any price, is to kill oneself (regardless of the opinions and reactions of relatives and friends). The behavior, which usually does not result in immediate death but which is dangerous in life-limiting terms, is called a self-destructive behavior. Such behaviors pertain to drinking, smoking, refusal of medical treatment without serious conditions, deliberate disregard of traffic regulations or safety precautions, extreme sports without proper training and equipment. Some researchers put such behavior out as the third grade of suicide, termed as hidden suicide. The attempt to kill himself, which failed, is called a suicide attempt. Obstacle to commit suicide may be antisuicide personality factors that devalue suicide as a way of solving problems and form antisuicide barrier. Typically, such factors include unrealized creative plans, awareness of senselessness of suicide, anxiety to cause mental anguish to the families and lovers, lack of confidence in the reliability of the chosen method of suicide, as well as religious and social taboos associated with the problem of death and suicide.

**Summary**

Thus, the problem of teenage suicide is truly one of the most important problems of modern society. It is well-known for the world renowned philosophical essay, "The Myth of Sisyphus"; by Camus, who begins with a significant entry: "There is only one truly philosophical problem - the problem of suicide". The society will not have a future if it does not take care of children and their surviving, throughout and after teenage years. Therefore, the restatement of the problem should be reflecting on the following: the lack of study, unknown causes that force teens to suicide are the main problems in this topic. The identification of the causes and underlying motives of adolescent suicide are the main proposals to develop the topic of teen suicide, in general.
Review of the Relevant Literature

About 100 years ago, A. Baer, the German psychiatrist, wrote: "What a terrible contradiction in the fact that the child, who was born and destined directly for a joyful and innocent enjoyment of life, makes a suicide". Till nowadays the public does not stop to be worried about the problem of teenage suicides, the number of which is steadily increasing.

According to the American Assosiation of Suicidology (Prevention of Youth Suicides and Suicidal Behavior), only 10% of adolescents have a true desire to commit suicide (attempted suicide), 90% of adolescent suicidal behavior are a "cry to get a help" (Cutler, Glaeser & Norberg, 2007). No coincidence, around 80% of attempts are performed at home, moreover, in the daytime or evening, and this cry is addressed to the relatives foremost.

Cutler, Glaeser, and Norberg in their research "Explaining the Rise in Youth Suicide" give an estimate of a form of suicidal behavior of adolescents: it is an additive behavior (2007). According to them, in most cases, suicidal behavior is a kind of a "cry to get a help", which reveals itself under the situations of the chronic stress, negative emotional climate in the family and the absence of the positive experience of dealing with stressful situations. All these factors can attribute to suicidal behavior as a way of resolution of family and personal problems, at least temporarily. Both children and adolescents have an affective response, especially if it becomes pathological (characterized by stereotyped repetition of the reactions "cliche"); then in the future, in case of having any problems, a teenager reacts as usual. He or she becomes addicted to the usual form of response (Cutler, Glaeser & Norberg, 2007).

The most common in suicidology is the concept of Lieberman and Cowan, according to which "suicidal behavior is a consequence of social and psychological maladjustment experienced by the individual in case of a conflict (2011). According to Cowan and her work "Bullying and Youth Suicide: Breaking the Connection" (Lieberman & Cowan, 2011), the characteristics of suicidal behavior in the young age include a number of factors.
1. Inadequate estimation of the consequences of auto-aggressive actions. The concept of "death" at this age is generally perceived as something abstract or temporary, like a dream. It is not always associated with a teenager’s own personality. In contrast to adults, teens do not have clear boundaries between the true suicide attempt and demonstrative blackmailing into an auto-aggressive act. It makes, in practical cases, determine all kinds of self-aggression of adolescents as a form of a suicidal behavior.

2. Lightness, transience and insignificance (from the point of view of adults) of the motives that children account for a suicide attempt. These difficulties arise due to the early recognition of suicidal tendencies and a significant frequency of unexpected cases.

3. The presence of the interrelation between suicide attempts and deviating behaviors of teenagers: the runaways from home, truancy of school, early smoking, minor offenses, conflicts with parents, alcohol and drug addiction, sexual excesses. In the childhood and adolescences, a depression can contribute to the emergence of the suicidal behavior.

According to studies of Erbacher and Salvatore in their "Suicide Loss: What Teens Need to Know", the following features are typical for teenage suicides: susceptibility, vulnerability, decreased tolerance to emotional stress, low self-esteem, rejection of the social environment, sense of abandonment, the physical gap, avoiding "stress" situations, and passivity in resolving situations (Erbacher & Salvatore, 2007).

According to Jonathan Gruber, in the adolescent population, the following comorbid combinations are particularly important: schizophrenia, depression and substance abuse, conduct disorders and depression, mood disorders, eating disorders, and anxiety disorders. This list further comprises of such factors as mood disorders, personality disorders (paranoid and schizoid personality disorder), and dissociative disorders (manifested by disintegration of the functions of consciousness, memory, identity or perception of the world). These aspects require a combination of vigorous and mental health intervention (Gruber, 2001).
Otsuki, Kim & Peterson, in their research "Fact Sheet, youth suicide", noticed that an adolescent often experiences problems: the insuperability of difficulties, unending of misery, intolerance of boredom and loneliness. He or she has to struggle with the helplessness, impotence, and hopelessness (Otsuki, Kim & Peterson, 2010).

**Methodology of the Research**

This study uses a variety of methods to achieve its goal. The main ones are quantitative (statistics summarizing) and qualitative (making an assumption about the causes of such data) researches. Other methods include induction (going from practical data to the assumptions about the motives and causes of suicide), deduction (making the assumption that the main causes of suicide are the conflicts within the family and affirming it on practice), and abduction (choosing the most possible causes of suicide based on the available data).

**Participants**

Representative sample of the study or participants are the sample families, who are bringing up a teenager. Representative sample will be drawn from the population according to two main criteria: the level of income in the family, and the teen’s performance in school. These factors are chosen since these two issues were often the reason for the family conflicts. Thus, it is important to examine 10% of families with teens, who have made suicide attempts; 15% of families with low income, 15% of families with an average income whereas 15% of the studied families should have a high level of income. A further three groups of families (each should comprise 15% of all studied families) should be separated, according to criterion of the performance of a teenager in school: highest, the average and the low. Thus, the overall representative sample will total 100%.

**Research Design**

As far as the data collection is concerned, the organizational preparation of the statistical observation consists of the following aspects: the definition of place and time of
observation; choice of the forms and methods of observation; choice of the carrier of the primary information (this was described above); the development or a choice of software, the calculation of costs of monitoring; training of personnel to conduct the survey; preparatory work with the respondents.

Proposed analysis should begin with the formation of a series of distribution, which is the first step in the synthesis of the data obtained from each individual respondent. Series of distribution is a record of the results counting the number of the respondents, who indicated every of the variants of the responses (delivered in the questionnaire).

**Instrumentation and Data Collection Plans**

If we talk about the sources and instruments proposed to be used, then the principal instruments of this study is the survey in the dual format: multiple-choice questionnaire, which is to be delivered in person, and a questionnaire using popular online social networks. Both types of questionnaires will contain questions that will determine the respondent-teenager within the studied category. If the number of representatives of a particular category is greater than the others, its weight in the total sum of respondents will be defined in percentage terms, which will allow obtaining a high response rate. Advantages of questionnaires, in this case, will allow the contact of the investigator with the respondent while questionnaire will be minimized. Questionnaire survey allows following the plan of the study rigidly.

**Proposed Analysis of the Data**

In most cases, the processing of data should begin with making a pivot table.

Data analysis will be conducted according to the following stages: analysis of the primary statistics (summation of causes of suicide, according to the respondents’ answers); normalization of the data. The latter involves conversion of information into a spreadsheet,
and it should combine all interesting features; they should not be in the form of quantitative, but rather the qualitative data, or the numbers converted into the percentage rates. Further analysis involves the factor analysis of the variance data (the construction of the factor model).

Selection of the statistical test in this study will be accompanied with identification of types of variables (factors that prompt teenagers to suicide), and the measurement scale that was used in the measurement of performance (the level of income and the level of academic achievement in the family).

Building a dispersion model of study will be based on the fact that the researcher assumes that some variables can be considered as a cause while others as a consequence. The variables of the first kind are considered as factors, and variables of the second kind as-productive traits. In this case, the factor model must be constructed, so as to depict the level of a conflict in the family: income and performance are variable factors (independent variables), and a suicide rate is a dependent variable.

At the same time, in order to put the hypothesis of this study in terms of numbers, the probability P (S) that the event S (teenage suicides can accelerate conflict in the family) exceeds the critical alpha level of 70% set by statistical studies of the World Health Organization last year, is very significant. In such a way, the hypothesis will display the statement that the main cause of teenage suicides is in the sphere of conflicts in the families.

**Implications and Limitations:**

Two implications are the following: the sample will not be representative, and the investigated data will not be authentic because of the lack of candor of the respondents. Characteristics of general sample, the methods, and criteria of formation of samples testify about 90-95% degree of the reliability that negates the first implication. The method of questioning eliminates the second implication (the questionnaire does not contain a name and
surname; online surveys will be anonymous, as well). Two limitations are limited population for the study (in one region, the required number of families may not be found), and the limited access to young persons (the limited number of teens will be available on the streets for inquiries).

**Time Schedule, Resources Needed, Personnel and Budget**

The research process could take possibly one or two months. This time includes the hiring of personnel, direct data collection and statistical processing of data, as well as the formulation of conclusions. The research needs resources such as the survey stationary (paper, pens etc); resources for the processing of data (one personal computer with a connection to the World Wide Web and the Microsoft Office software package, including Microsoft Excel). Furthermore, assistance is needed from the others. Two categories will be required: staff for the collection of data (two people), and staff for the data processing and data analysis (one person will be enough). If we talk about the budget, it will include a salary for the staff, which will be counted according to the average monthly salary in the research region.

**Needed Assurances / Clearances**

The main problems of the modern science research that require additional assurances and/ clearances are: violation of the ethical principles of a research, concealed conflicts of interest in a scientific research, fraud and falsification of research materials, the quality of planning a study, distribution of an authors’ contributions to the research, and the quality of the statistical analysis of the results of a study. Attention is drawn to the priority of the ethical principles of the research and expertise of the investigator. The application of the above said to the present study can only be foreseen in the sphere of a violation of the ethical principles of the research since the study can touch on the empathetic psychology of teenager (the
questions in the questionnaire relating to suicide can force the thought about it). Therefore, the questionnaire should be shown to a psychologist, before direct application in practice.

The list of questions proposed to be asked within the research is specified in the appendix to this research study.

Conclusion

Thus, suicide is one of the perennial problems of humanity. Teenage suicide is a problem that is even more global and crucial. Thus, the study of teenage suicide is both important and necessary as it will be able to open the reasons, which force teens to suicide, which would pave the way to help them.
References


