



Stereotypical Beliefs and Attitudes toward Psychological Disorders in a Rural Community in Nigeria

Abiodun Musbau Lawal^{1,2}, Erhabor Sunday Idemudia¹ and Sharon Adeshewa Akinjeji²

*¹Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, North West University,
Mafikeng Campus, South Africa*

²Department of Psychology, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

KEYWORDS Beliefs About Psychological Disorders. Attitudes. Rural Community. Nigeria

ABSTRACT Findings have shown the importance of beliefs in formation of people's attitudes toward psychological disorders. Also, understanding the extent at which each of the described stereotypical beliefs contributes in explaining people's attitudes is vital for intervention purposes. The study examined the stereotypical beliefs that psychological disorders are dangerous, embarrassing and incurable as predictors of attitudes toward mental illness. This is a cross-sectional survey using ex-post facto research design. Data were collected from 200 ($M = 28.88$, $SD = 10.27$) participants using structured questionnaire that consisted of demographical characteristics, measures of beliefs about psychological disorders and attitudes toward mental illness. Results of a three-model hierarchical regression test show significant independent and joint contributions of beliefs toward people's attitudes to mental illness. Belief that psychological disorder is dangerous ($R^2 = 15\%$) was found to have the largest contribution; followed by the beliefs that it is incurable ($R^2 = 12\%$) and embarrassing ($R^2 = 5\%$) of the explained variance in attitudes toward mental illness. It is concluded that members of the rural community still have some stereotypical beliefs about psychological disorders; and these could affect their attitudes toward mentally ill. It is recommended that intervention programmes made by mental health practitioners and stakeholders should be focused on defusing the minds of people in rural communities of their beliefs and attitudes toward psychological disorders as well as those individuals suffering from them.