

Perception of Factors Associated with Borderline Personality Disorder among Undergraduate Students in Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu.

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ABSTRACT

Mental health is the strength to withstand stress inherent in living in today's society without undue physical or psychological discomfort. It is an imperative part of health that influences ones daily living and perceptible to life. That is why the United Nations includes good health and well being as the third sustainable development goal aimed at achieving fair and sustainable health at all levels. Nevertheless, mental health disorder such as Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is one aspect of health that its orientation is downplayed and underrated. BPD is a mental health disorder that negatively affects the behaviour or mind-set of an individual. It is distinguished by perceptible irritability, difficulty controlling anger, chronic feelings of emptiness, extreme mood swings, intense interpersonal relationships, identity disturbance, self-mutilating behaviour and suicidal behaviour. This study examines the factors associated with borderline personality disorder (BPD) as perceived by students in Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Three research questions guided the study. The study population comprised of 2,624 undergraduate students in faculty of Education of ESUT, Enugu. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select one hundred and thirty one (131) respondents used for the study. The main instrument used for data collection was a researchers' made structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study revealed among other things that the students agreed that family history is a factor associated with BPD while they disagreed with sociological and psychological factors as being linked to BPD. Based on the finding, the researchers recommend that Parents/guardian should try as much as possible to create a lovable environment for their children growth and as well strive to balance discipline and warmth whilst parenting.

Keyword: Perception, Borderline Personality Disorder, Family history factors, Sociological factors, Psychological factors.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is an imperative part of health that influences ones daily living and perceptible to life. That is why the United Nations includes good health and well being as the third sustainable development goal aimed at achieving fair and sustainable health at all levels. Nevertheless, mental health disorder such as Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is one aspect of health that its orientation is downplayed and

underrated. BPD is a mental health disorder that negatively affects the behaviour or mind-set of an individual. It is distinguished by perceptible irritability, difficulty controlling anger, chronic feelings of emptiness extreme mood swing, intense interpersonal relationships, identity disturbance, self-mutilating behaviour and suicidal behaviour (Paris, 2015). Borderline personality disorder constitutes consistent



character traits that can make medical care difficult. Hence, American Psychiatric Association, (2013), reveals that borderline personality disorder is a maladaptive personality characteristics beginning early in life that have consistent and serious effects on functioning. The Association further, notes that BPD is characterized by emotional turmoil and chronic suicidality (suicide ideation and attempts), and presents some of the most difficult and troubling problems in all of psychiatry. Elliott, Stohl and Wall (2016), notes that early biological and neurological stressors lead to Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) methylation, which impairs usual brain functioning, interfering with emotional regulation and stability, impulse control, coping skills, interpersonal skills, cognition, and other core skills, as seen in BPD. Korn, La Rosée, Heekeren and Roepke (2016), in affirmation reveal that BPD individual show negative and unstable self- and other evaluations compared to healthy individuals.

Borderline personality disorder has been attributed to a lot factors such as environmental factors, biological factors, psychological factors, social factors and family background factor. However, for this study, family history factor, sociological factor and psychological factor were considered. Family history as a contributing factor most likely is based on inherited trait from the parents, family dysfunction and crisis in family (Paris, 2015). ten Have, Verheul, Kaasenbrood, van Dorsselaer, Tuithof, Kleinjan and de Graaf (2016), define inherited borderline personality disorder as a mental health problems of parents. Hence, at least one biological parent have been treated by a psychiatrist, or hospitalized in a mental institution, or ever having exhibited one or more of the following problems: severe depression, delusions or hallucinations, severe anxiety or phobias, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, regular problems with the police, and

suicidal behaviour). In terms of family crisis, it occurs when there is twist in family relationship which might not be handled effectively thus causing internal and external stress on the children. The result could lead to low self esteem, trauma, and binge eating and drinking which could lead to obesity and if not properly monitored and addressed, the individual might develop BPD.

Sociological factors refer to how an individual views and accept what the society label him or her which can result to low self esteem. Livingston and Boyd (2016), define sociological factors as self-stigma associated with the lower quality of life, levels of hope, self-esteem, self-efficacy, empowerment, social support, and higher severity of psychiatric symptomatology. For this study, the sociological factors involves stigma and discrimination, peer pressure, bullying, isolation, academic problem, stress, solitary lifestyle and other related social factors. Earlier, White, Gunderson, Zanarini and Hudson (2013), report that family history studies have found that impulsive disorders such as antisocial personality, substance abuse and depression are particularly common among first degree relatives of patients with BPD. Psychological factor is another aspect that contributes to development of BPD.

Psychological factors entail the psychosomatic or constant emotional state of an individual which may be detrimental to one's health. Paris, (2015), noted that psychological factors in BPD can be striking but are not consistent. However, the psychological features could be depression, feeling of emptiness, anxiety, identity disturbance, substance abuse, hallucination and self harm could be a pointer that an individual is having borderline personality disorder. The World Health Organization (WHO 2021), reports that more than 700 000 people die due to suicide every year and

suicide is the fourth leading cause of death in 15-19-year-olds.

Regrettably, in Nigeria presently, there have been reports of students' in the tertiary institution attempting suicide or committing suicide due to poor academic performance, problematic relationships and other various reasons. Consequently, on May 13th 2021, PUNCH newspaper reported the death of a 200 level student of Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko, Onodo State, Feranmi Fasule who committed suicide (Akure, 2021). In the same dimension, a 400- level Mathematics student of the Federal University, Dutse, Jigawa State, Bashir Abdulalhi reportedly committed suicide because his girlfriend jilted him (Odogwu, 2021). These sad tales about students' bizarre behaviours warranted the need for the study.

Purpose of the Study

This study was embarked upon to ascertain perception of factors associated with borderline personality disorder among undergraduate students in Faculty of Education, ESUT.

Specifically the study sought to:

1. determine the perception of family history as a factor associated with BPD among undergraduate students in Faculty of Education, ESUT
2. investigate the perception of sociological factors as a factor associated with BPD among undergraduate students in Faculty of Education, ESUT
3. ascertain the perception of psychological factors as a factor associated with BPD among undergraduate students in Faculty of Education, ESUT

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the perception of family history as a factor associated with BPD among undergraduate students in faculty of Education, ESUT?
2. What is the perception of sociological factors as a factor associated with BPD among of undergraduate students in faculty of Education, ESUT?
3. What is the perception of psychological factors as a factor associated with BPD among undergraduate students in faculty of Education, ESUT?

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised of eight thousand, one hundred and forty one (8141) undergraduate students in Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). The target population for the study was made up of eight (8) Departments in the Faculty of Education which comprised of two thousand six hundred and twenty four students (2,624) students consisting of one thousand and forty nine males (1049) and one thousand, five hundred and seventy five females (1575) (Faculty Office, Faculty of Education, ESUT 2021). A multi stage sampling procedure that comprised of purposive and proportionate sampling technique was used for the study. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select (5%) of the population which is one hundred and thirty one (131) respondents. Also, proportionate sampling technique was used to select (5%) of male and (5%) of female from the sample which gave rise to fifty two (52) males and seventy nine (79) females. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents from each of the department.

The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire with two sections A and B. Section A was concerned with information on personal data of the respondents such as gender while section B

was made up of three parts containing questionnaire items that generated data used in testing the hypotheses. The questionnaire was validated by three experts and the reliability coefficient of 0.78 obtained showed that the instrument was reliable and considered good for the study. The questionnaires were in form of Likert scale design such Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree

(D). The data obtained were analyzed using mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD). The baseline mean below 2.5 was regarded as disagree and mean responses from 2.5 and above was tagged agreed.

Research Question 1: What is the perception of family history as a factor associated with BPD among undergraduate students in faculty of Education, ESUT?

Table 1: Mean Responses of the Respondents on Perception of Family History Factors Associated with BPD

SN	Family history factors associated with BPD	SA	A	A	SD	\bar{X}	SD	DEC
1	Individual from divorced homes may have BPD	31	39	36	25	2.58	1.05	A
2	Individual from separated homes have chances of developing BPD	29	29	32	41	2.35	1.14	D
3	Imagined abandonment from parent increases one's propensity to BPD	44	27	27	33	2.63	1.19	A
4	Impulsive systems that goes back to childhood may lead to BPD	46	32	31	22	2.78	1.10	A
5	Family dysfunction may lead to BPD	25	28	35	43	2.27	1.12	D
6	Low self esteem arising from child upbringing might cause BPD	31	36	27	37	2.47	1.14	D
7	BPD could be as a result of hereditary	51	28	29	23	2.82	1.14	A
8	Binge eating could be a sign of BPD	40	36	27	28	2.67	1.13	A
9	Individual that witness violence may develop BPD	30	32	26	43	2.37	1.17	D
10	Resilience following abuse could result to BPD	33	36	30	32	2.53	1.12	A
Average						2.55	1.14	A

Key: A — Agree, D — Disagree

Table 1 shows that the mean of positive responses by the students in Faculty of education ESUT to items 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 10 indicates that the student perceived family history to be one of the factors that increases chances of an individual suffering from borderline personality disorder. However, the respondents disagree with items 2, 5, 6 and 9 as not being the highlight aspect of family history. Also, the STD value for the aggregate rating of (1.12) is

small indicating that there were little or no extreme values, hence the mean values represent the actual optimal of the undergraduates students' perception of family history factors to BPD

Research Question 2: What is the perception of sociological factors as a factor associated with BPD among of undergraduate students in faculty of Education, ESUT?

Table 2: Mean Responses of the Respondents on Perception of Sociological Factors Associated with BPD

SN	Sociological factors associated with BPD	SA	A	A	SD	\bar{x}	SD	DEC
11	Stigma and discrimination may lead to BPD	25	40	33	33	2.44	1.07	D
12	Peer pressure may have an effect on developing BPD	31	45	28	27	2.61	1.06	A
13	Long term bully may lead to BPD	22	36	38	35	2.34	1.05	D
14	Academic problems may cause BPD	23	41	31	36	2.39	1.07	D
15	Sexually abused individual may develop BPD	47	29	25	30	2.71	1.18	A
16	Physically abused Individual may develop BPD	40	34	25	32	2.63	1.16	A
17	Stress related to paranoid ideation may lead to BPD	26	32	35	38	2.35	1.10	D
18	Stress related to living accommodation may lead to BPD	28	41	22	40	2.44	1.14	D
19	Problematic relationship may lead to BPD	20	30	37	44	2.20	1.07	D
20	Isolation may lead to BPD	17	47	19	48	2.25	1.09	D
Average						2.44	1.11	D

Key: A – Agree, D – Disagree

Table 2 shows the respondents agree that peer pressure, sexually abused individuals and physically abused individuals may develop borderline personality disorder. However, the general responses from the respondents on sociological factors as an aspect that causes individual developing borderline personality disorder has the average negative mean responses of (2.44). This implies that students in Faculty of Education ESUT disagree that listed sociological factors is associated with borderline personality disorder. In addition,

the standard deviation of (1.11) shows that the values are closely related to the average signifying that the mean value represent the best possible undergraduate students' perception of sociological factors associated with BPD.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of psychological factors as a factor associated with BPD among undergraduate students in faculty of Education, ESUT?

Table 3: Mean Responses of the Respondents on Perception of Psychological Factors Associated with BPD

SN	Psychological factors associated with BPD	SA	A	A	SD	\bar{x}	SD	DEC
21	Constant feeling of anxiety might be an indication of BPD	18	29	23	61	2.03	1.12	D
22	Chronic feeling of emptiness might result to BPD	15	43	35	38	2.27	1.01	D
23	Depression may be a hint of BPD	31	36	34	30	2.52	1.09	A

24	Gender identity disturbance might be a sign of BPD	29	28	36	38	2.37	1.12	D
25	Recurrent physical fight may be clue to BPD	27	31	39	34	2.39	1.09	D
26	Substance abuse may be trace to BPD	25	33	25	48	2.27	1.15	D
27	Auditory hallucination without loss of insight might be a symptom of BPD	31	39	29	32	2.53	1.10	A
28	Gestures or threats may be a mark of BPD	25	25	38	43	2.24	1.11	D
29	Child abuse might trigger BPD latter in life	29	30	33	39	2.37	1.13	D
30	Self harm (attempt suicide) may be a pointer to BPD	34	37	30	30	2.57	1.11	A
Average						2.36	1.11	D

Key: A – Agree, D – Disagree

Table 3 shows the overall mean of negative responses of 2.36 by students in Faculty of Education, ESUT. This implies that students in Faculty of Education, ESUT perceive psychological factors as not being a determining factor to an individual having borderline personality disorder. The table further revealed that although larger part of the respondents disagrees with most of the items in psychological factors, some however agreed that depression, auditory hallucination and self harm as being psychological factors associated with borderline personality disorder. The standard deviation of (1.11) also shows that the values are closely related. Hence, the mean values represent the valid responses of the undergraduates students' perception on psychological factors to BPD

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed as follows.

The finding of the study as presented in Table 1 on perception of family history as a factor to borderline personality disorder shows that the undergraduate students perceived family factors as a feature that contributes to an individual having the chances of suffering from mental issue like BPD. This agrees with Zanarini, Frankenburg, Khera and Bleichmar (2013),

emphasis that many patients describe adversities such as family dysfunction as well as mood and impulsive symptoms that go back to childhood as root cause of developing BPD. The authors' further revealed that most careful studies have shown that a quarter of patients with BPD describe sexual abuse from a caretaker and that about a third report severe forms of abuse.

Although, the respondents agreed generally that family history contributes to BPD however, they disagree that children from separated homes, family dysfunction, imagined abandonment, witnessing violence and low self esteem could result to one suffering BPD. This is a salient points that needs to be addressed as this is the core family issues that builds up in the children's mind before even evolving through adulthood and build up their character, the way they see the society and their personality at large and eventually how they associate with others and handles situation in life. Consequently, American Psychiatric Association (2013), notes that persistent problems in social interactions, as well as intense and unstable interpersonal relations, and exaggerated efforts to avoid abandonment describe core features of BPD.

The finding of the study as presented in Table 2 on perception of sociological factors as a factor to borderline personality disorder shows that the respondents disagree that such factors such as stigma and discrimination, long term bullying, academic problem, stress related to paranoid ideation, stress related to living accommodation, problematic relationship and isolation could result to a person having BPD. Nevertheless, Grambal, Prasko, Kamaradova, Latalova, Holubova, Marackova, Ociskova and Slepecky (2016) revealed that BPD patients are more self-stigmatized and also have difficulties with starting and maintaining the close relationship and the absence of a relationship then contributes to self-stigma. Also, Dhaliwal, Danzig and Fineberg (2020) revealed that BPD patient often struggled with depression and anxiety and had difficulty in maintaining employment and good interpersonal relationships. Hence, need for more sensitization and awareness in this area.

Findings from the respondents on Table 3 on psychological factor associated with borderline personality order shows that the respondents disagree generally that psychological factors can possibly aid individuals' manifesting with BPD. This disagree with John, Gunderson, Mary, Zanarini, Lois, Choi-Kain, Karen, Mitchell, Kerry, Jang, James and Hudson (2011), that Borderline personality disorder is associated with high levels of mental health service use and often serious psychosocial impairment rendering it a major public health problem. The authors further concluded in their studies that Borderline personality disorder may arise from a unitary liability that finds expression in its sectors of psychopathology.

The result also revealed that the respondents agreed that some psychological factors such as depression, auditory hallucination

without loss of insight and self harm might be a symptom of BPD. This is in line with Paris (2015) assertion that the most common disorder associated with BPD is depression, but in BPD, symptoms are usually associated with mood instability rather than with the extended and continuous periods of lower mood seen in classic mood disorders.

Conclusion

The study shows that students perceived BPD as an unclear subject, meaning they lack knowledge of traits of BPD as a mental health disorder. Nevertheless, mental health is as important as physical health and should be prioritized in the course of engaging with children and youth. It is believed that many psychological problems are traceable to what happened to individual during their childhood. Hence, family as the basis for nurturing an individual personality and shape how one interact with the society needs to be a place of serenity. As a stressful home environment or neighborhood, poverty and violence can lead to depression as well to borderline personality disorder.

Recommendations

1. Parents need to brace up with their parenting skills since there is a lot of information and trends influencing lifestyle and affecting emotional health of the youth negatively hence, there is need for them to learn how to balance discipline and warmth whilst parenting.
2. There is need for parents and the society to balance the attention given to physical, mental and social health as all the fraction of health is very crucial to form a whole well being of an individual
3. Government should use appropriate public health organizations to create more awareness on borderline personality disorder and other mental health issues. It is also important for government to make accessibility of

mental health services effortless and affordable to the general populace.

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