

# **BELIEFS ABOUT PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS AS PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD MENTAL ILLNESS IN EKITI STATE**

**AKINJEJI SHARON**

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***DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY  
OYE-EKITI, EKITI STATE***

**DR. ABIODUN M. LAWAL**

*SUPERVISOR*

## **ABSTRACT**

People's attitudes towards mental illness are precursors to their stigmatizing behaviors towards those who suffer from the disease. Individuals' beliefs about the illness may have significant contribution in explaining their attitudes towards those with mental illness in our society. This study investigated dimensions of beliefs as predictors of attitudes towards mental illness in Ekiti State. Survey research design was used in the study where 200 participants were purposively selected in both Oye and Ikole local governments in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. Three hypotheses were tested with multiple regression, t-test and One-way ANOVA. Results showed that dangerousness, incurability and untrustworthiness beliefs about mental disorders independently and jointly predicted attitudes towards mental illness ( $F(3,196) = 30.72; p < .05$ ) with  $Adj. R^2 = 0.31$ . However, gender did not have any significant influence on attitude towards mental illness ( $t(198) = -0.22; p > .05$ ). Religious affiliation did not have significant influence on attitudes towards mental illness ( $F(2,197) = 1.04; p > .05$ ). It is therefore concluded that people's beliefs about mental disorders are vital in predicting how they feel about the illness and those who are suffering from it.

***Keywords: Untrustworthiness, Incurability, Dangerousness, Gender, Religiosity, attitudes towards mental illness, Ekiti, Nigeria.***

***Word Count: 196***