A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS ON CHILDHOOD MENTAL ILLNESS BY NORTHERN SOTHO-SPEAKING ELDERLY PEOPLE IN MANKWENG COMMUNITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS ON CHILDHOOD MENTAL ILLNESS BY NORTHERN SOTHO-SPEAKING ELDERLY PEOPLE IN MANKWENG COMMUNITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE (mini-dissertation) hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my own work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

.............................. ..............................
Makgabo CJ (Mr.) Date
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to explore the notions of childhood mental illness by Sepedi-speaking elderly people in the Mankweng community of Limpopo Province (South Africa). Using the phenomenological method, the researcher sought to understand these elderly people’s notions with a view to: i) describing their conceptualizations of childhood mental illness; ii) determining their notions of the types and causes of mental illness; and iii) describing their views regarding the management of childhood mental illnesses. A total of 8 participants who were selected through snowball sampling were interviewed using unstructured interviews. The results of this study suggest that; i) childhood mental illness is better understood if described than defined, ii) childhood mental illness is manifested through behavioural and physical features, iii) there are many causal factors attributed to childhood mental illness, and iv) both Western and African traditional methods are recognized in the treatment of childhood mental illness in this rural community. The results are discussed in the context of the psychological literature on multicultural counseling and psychotherapy.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content(s)                                          Page(s)

DECLARATION                                          ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS                                    iii

ABSTRACT                                            iv

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction                                     1
1.2 Background for the study                        2
1.3 Aim of the study                                3
1.4 Objectives of the study                         4
1.5 Main research questions                        4
1.6 Definition of key concepts                      4
1.7 Chapter outline                                 6
1.8 Conclusion                                      7

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introductions                                   8
2.2 International perspectives on mental illness    8
2.3 South African cultural perspectives on mental illness 13
2.4 Theoretical perspectives on childhood mental illness 14
2.4.1 The Psychodynamic perspective                14
2.4.2 The Behavioural perspective                  15
2.4.3 The Humanistic / Existential perspective      15
2.4.4 The socio-cultural perspective               16
2.4.5 Biological perspective                       16
2.4.6 Poverty and mental illness                   18
2.5 Theoretical framework for the present study: The biopsychosocial perspective

2.6 Conclusion

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Research design
3.3 The setting: Mamotintane village
3.4 Sampling
3.5 Data collection
3.6 Data analysis
  3.6.1 Interpretative phenomenological analysis
  3.6.2 IPA data analysis steps
3.7 Discussion and conclusion
3.8 Ethical considerations
  3.8.1 Informed consent
  3.8.2 Permission to conduct the study
  3.8.3 Anonymity and confidentiality
  3.8.4 Respect for participants’ rights and dignity
3.9 Conclusion

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Demographic characteristics of the participants
4.3 Phenomenological explication
  4.3.1 Childhood mental illness is better understood if described than defined
  4.3.2 Childhood mental illness is manifested through behavioural and physical features

vi
4.3.2.1. Behavioural features 33
4.3.2.2. Physical features 36
4.3.3. There are many causal factors attributed to childhood mental illness 37
  4.3.3.1. Hereditary/Biological factors 37
  4.3.3.2. Witchcraft 37
  4.3.3.3. Prenatal complications and maternal stress 38
  4.3.3.4. Maternal substance use during pregnancy 39
  4.3.3.5. Taboos and contravention of prohibited acts 39
  4.3.3.6. Evil spirits 40
  4.3.3.7. Punishment by God 40
4.3.4. Both Western and African traditional methods are recognized in the treatment of childhood mental illness 41
  4.3.4.1. Western healing methods 41
  4.3.4.2. African traditional healing methods 42
4.4. Summary of findings 44

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction 46
5.2 The ‘bio-psychosocial’ perspective on mental illness 46
5.3 Phenomenological explications 47
  5.3.1 Description of childhood mental illness 47
  5.3.2 Manifestations of childhood mental illness 47
  5.3.3 Causal factors for childhood mental illness 48
    5.3.3.1 Hereditary and genetic factors 48
    5.3.3.2 Supernatural factors 48
    5.3.3.3 Taboos and contravention of prohibited acts 49
    5.3.3.4 Prenatal complications and maternal stress 49
    5.3.3.5 Maternal substance use during pregnancy 49
    5.3.3.6 Evil spirits 50
  5.3.4 The role played by both Western and African traditional methods in treating childhood mental illness 50
5.3.4.1 Western-based treatment methods 50
5.3.4.2 African traditional treatment methods 50
5.4 Conclusion 51

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 A brief summary of findings 52
6.2 Theoretical framework for this study 53
6.3 Significance of the study 54
6.4 Limitations of the study 55
6.5 Recommendations for future studies 55

REFERENCES 56

APPENDICES 64

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE 64
APPENDIX B: DIPOTŠIŠO TŠA NYAKIŠIŠO 65
APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER AND FORM 66
APPENDIX D: LETLAKALA LE FOROMO YA TUMELELANO YA BATŠEAKAROLO 67
APPENDIX E: CONCENT FORM TO BE SIGNED BY THE PARTICIPANT 69
APPENDIX F: FOROMO YA TUMELELANO YEO E SAENAGO KE MOTŠEAKAROLO 70

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS 32