MENTAL HEALTH AND RULES VIOLATION IN SOCIETY

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Abstract

This paper is on mental health and rule violation to the society. The study conceptualized on mental health and deviance through the sociological, biological and psychological dimension. All the theories agreed that deviant and mental health begins from childhood through old-age. This suggests a deviation from behaviour appropriate to the laws or norms and values of a particular society. This makes deviance and mental health to be relative, depending on the society and individual. This paper also suggests that mental health and deviance work hand in hand and it is only a mentally ill person that can violate the rules and regulation of a society.
Key Words: Deviance, Mental Health, Mental Illness, Violation, Society, Psychological Dimension.

Introduction

Human behaviour is conceived of as an outcome of genetic and biochemical characteristics, past learning experiences, motivational states, psycho-social antecedents and the cultural context in which it unfold. Every human being is suppose to enjoy highest standard of health as a fundamental right. Everyone has the right to standard living, adequate health of himself including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary services. Health is a unity and harmony within the mind, body and spirit, which is unique to each person. The level of wellness or health is in part, determined by the ability to deal with and defend against stress.

The Concept of Mental Health

Mental health is one concept that has not one universal acceptable definition. Psychologist, psychiatrists and other mental hygienists have differed in their views on what mental health is. In one of the earliest definitions, Appel (1957) a one-time president of the American psychiatric association said that mental health is the ability of people to meet and handle problems, to make choices and decisions, to find satisfaction in accepting tasks, to do jobs without avoiding them and without pushing them unto others, to carryon without undue dependency on others, to live effectively and satisfactorily with others without crippling complications to contribute one's share in life, to enjoy life and to be able to love and be loved.

According to Rennee and Woodward (1948) in their definition equate mental health with individual maturity. According to them, a mature and mentally healthy person is one who:
1.   Respects and has confidence in himself and because he knows his worth, waste no time proving it to him and others.

2. Accepts, works with, and to a large extent, enjoys other people: and
3. Carries on his work, play and his family and social life with a minimum of conflict, fear and hostility.

According to Sandstron (1972) defines mental health as the ability to adjust oneself satisfactorily to the changes and problems met with in life.

Reber (1995) also defines mental health as a term used in designating the condition of one who is functioning at a high level of behavioural and emotional adjustment and adaptiveness and for one who is simply not mentally ill.

However, mental health is described as an appropriate balance between the individual, his social group, and the larger environment. These three components combine to promote psychological and social harmony, a sense of wellbeing, self-actualization and environmental mastery.

Mental health has assumed great significance; mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness, but a positive concept of displaying an ability to adapt to social and interpersonal relationships and to reach a harmonious relationship with the society. It is the mental health component of overall health that gives quality and meaning to our lives. When the individual is unable to cope with the changes, it not only affects his social role but also disturbs the psycho-social homeostasis.

Characteristics of Mental Health

Kinanen (1998) has identified the following characteristics of mentally healthy people:

1. They perceive reality efficiently
2. They are individuals who are adjusted and can understand their actions.
3. They are able to translate their abilities into problem solving activities in the light of the environment in which they find themselves.
4. They have a thorough knowledge of themselves in terms of their motives, feelings, strengths and weaknesses. They are in touch with themselves.
5. They appreciate their worth especially in the context of the group among who they live.
6. They have the ability to produce with whatever resources that are available to them.
7. Mental health enhances emotional health, and emotionally adjusted people are able to enter into healthy relationships with people.
8. Individuals who are mentally sound are able to control their behaviour through the control of their emotion.
9. They feel that they are wanted and such people feels comfortable and safe.
10. They make their own decisions

Deviance

Deviance simply means to go "astray". In sociology, social deviance or deviance means those behaviour or characteristics that violate significant social norms and expectations and are negatively valued by a large number of people. We can also look at deviance simply as those behaviours that breach commonly held norms, values and expectations of a society. Those that depart from conventional norms are called deviants. Haward Becker, a renowned sociologist, sees deviance as that behaviour that people so label.

The study of deviance can be divided into the study of why people violate laws or norms

and the study of how society reacts. This reaction includes the labeling process by which deviance comes to be recognized as such. The societal reaction to deviant behaviour suggests that social groups actually create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitute deviance and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. We are interested in studying deviance in order to understand why people violate social norms i.e. why do some people commit crime while others conform to norms? We are also interested on knowing how deviant behaviour mentally affects the well-being of an individual and the society at large. Finally, is to suggest psychological techniques in providing psychotherapy to deviant.

Some types and examples of deviant behaviours in many societies include armed robbery, murder, examination malpractice, rape, forgery, drug abuse and addiction (smoking and drinking), bribery and corruption, homo-sexuality, vandalization, gangsterism, intimidating behaviours, keeping late hours, sexual harassment and indecent dressing (such as transparent and tied cloths for girls, and radical wears or appearance like coiling of hairs etc. for boys), disobedience to parents, elders and other social authorities, addicted to party, gossiping, greed, jealousy, truancy, among others. It should be noted that all sociologists and social workers have subscribe to the position that there is nothing inherently criminal in a particular act which makes such act deviant. They are only so because they are prescribed by the society. Deviance is therefore relative and not absolute. An act is only deviant when it is socially defined as such. Definition of deviance differs from time to time, place to place and from group to group. For example, to kill a fellow human being is a deviant act but to kill an enemy soldier in times of war is a norm. behaviour that may be considered deviant in one culture may not be in another. In addition to that, when an Oba fell short of expectations of his people in pre-colonial Yoruba society, he was presented with a calabash which symbolizes that his people have lost confidence in him, he was therefore forced to commit suicide. In other cultures, this is not the case. This suggest the positivism and negativism of deviance.

Negative Effects of Deviance

Deviance is seen by lots of people as a bad behaviour because it constitute a social problems. This is because deviant behaviour affects the smooth flow of social interaction and impairs social organization. As a result of the chaotic phenomena of deviant behaviour, government and government officials divert and allocated huge amount of resource into modern agents of social control such as buying bullet proof cars, uniforms for police and prison officers, construct police stations, court and prisons all-over the country. All these agents are meant to enforce or set conformity. These resources could have been invested into other profitable area such as industries, agriculture, education, human and society development. Furthermore, deviant behaviour also undermines trust. For instance, as a result of activities of some few individuals in drug trafficking, fraud, armed robbery, kidnapping, and religious war, some people no longer have confidence in Nigeria. The deviant behaviour of few Nigerians has daunted the image of our country.

Positive Effects of Deviance

On the other hand, deviant behaviour has positive effects too. Firstly if everybody was afraid to risk that label of deviants, social control would be extremely rigid. Black in South Africa would have been contented with apartheid rule, women would have been satisfied with subordinate roles, Nigeria could have been contented with colonial rule Niger Delta could have

been satisfied with governments' marginalization and exploitation of both their natural and human resources. Secondly, all social changes start as deviant behaviour. Lots of people had to risk their lives and reputation to effect social changes. For instance, in Africa during the colonial era freedom fighters like Zik of Africa, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, and Nelson Mandela were tagged political deviants. But the consistent and persistent struggles brought about political changes from the shackles of colonialism to independence of Africa and their freedom fighters. For example, Nelson Mandela was recently given befitting funeral rites because of his positive act of deviance.

Deviance and Mental Health

Deviance and mental illness often go hand-in-hand.

While not all deviants are considered mentally ill, almost all mentally ill persons are considered deviant (since mental illness is not considered normal"). When studying deviance, then, sociologists also often study mental illness. The three main theoretical frameworks of sociology regard mental illness a little differently, however, they all look to the social systems in which mental illness is define, identified and treated functionalists believe that by recognizing mental illness, society upholds values about conforming behaviour. Symbolic interactionists see mentally ill persons not as "sick", but as victims of societal reactions to their behaviour.

Finally, conflict theorists combined with labelling theorists, believe that the people in a society with the fewest resources are the most likely to be labeled mentally ill. For instance, women, racial minorities, and the poor all suffer higher rates of mental illness than groups of higher social and economic status. Further, research has consistently shown that middle and upper-class persons are more likely to receive some form of psychotherapy for their mental illness. Minorities and poorer individuals are more likely to only receive medication and physical rehabilitation and not psychotherapy. Sociologists have two possible explanation for the link between social status and mental illness.

First, some say it is the stresses of being in a low-income group, being a racial minority, or being a woman in a sexist society that contributes to higher rate of mental illness because this harsher social environment is a threat to mental health. On the other hand, others argue that the same behaviour that is labeled mentally ill for some groups may be tolerated in other groups and so therefore not labeled as such. For instance, if a homeless woman were to exhibit crazy, "deranged" behaviour, she would be considered mentally ill whereas if a rich woman exhibited the same behaviour, she might be seen as merely eccentric or charming. Women also have higher rates of mental illness than men. Sociologists believe that this stems from the roles that women are forced to play in society. Poverty, unhappy marriages, physical and sexual abuse, the stresses of rearing children, and spending a lot of time doing house work all contribute to higher rate of mental illness for women.

Mental Health and Rule Violation in the Society

Having known the definition of deviance which simply means to go astray or to violate significant social norms and expectations and are negatively valued by a large number of people and mental health as the appropriate balance between the individual, his social group and the larger environment. It is also the ability to adjust oneself satisfactorily to the changes and problems met with in life.

However, it is only deviants and mentally disorder persons that violate the rules and regulations

of a society in the sense that they do things that are not in accordance to the rules, laws and regulation of the society. Every society has behaviour that is approved because it conforms to social norm; any behaviour that deviates markedly from these norms is considered abnormal. People with mental illness or deviant do not share a set of value and this person is disregarded, are ignored, ridiculed or even incarcerated. This people are dangerous, they should have a separate place where they are kept and treated, because their being allow roaming around the society will cause a lot of havoc to the society including violating the rules and regulation set in a society.

Conclusion

The relationship between deviance and mental disorder is viewed as culturally and socially relative. Category whose precise boundaries and meanings varies over time and place and is highly contested. However, deviants who are technically mental illness are inextricably linked to the treatment of mental illness. However, human beings are acutely responsive to how and what other people perceive, evaluates, and feel about them. Positive and negative reactions from others often affect the quality of interpersonal relationship. Behavioural scientists have documented that positive responses from others foster a psychological and physical well-being whereas; long-term exposure to negative reactions is associated with psychological difficulties and mental illness.

Finally violation of rules in society is cause by some deviant and mentally disorder person and this persons should not be discriminated rather they should be given their right as mentally disorder person, rather than living them and they continue to violate the rules of the society.

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