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Stigmatising attitudes toward employees with mental health challenges :the effect of demographic differences and mental health literacy

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Abstract

While literature has indicated that that there are stigmatising attitudes towards people with mental health challenges in the Western workplace, it appears that little research has been conducted to investigate the levels of stigmatising attitudes against employees with mental health condition in southern Africa. This research aimed to establish the levels of stigmatising attitudes in workplaces across South Africa and Botswana and to determine the factors that are associated with such stigma.

Data was collected from a sample of 153 participants through the use of a computerised self-administered questionnaire distributed as a website link via email and social network sites. Stigma was measured in its cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. The results suggested that that mental health challenge (MHC) stigma was present in all its components but not in all types within the components. Of the proposed predictors, it was found that only race and nationality have statistically significant effects on stigma against employees with MHCs. Black people were found to have higher levels of cognitive stigma than White people and South Africans scored less than people of other nationalities in the sample on all three components of stigma.

The current research has implications for anti-stigma interventions. It is recommended that further research be conducted to investigate the exact type of MHC stigmas held by different populations and the factors that determine such stigmas in order to inform the design and implementation of effective anti-stigma interventions.

Keywords: Stigma, stigmatising attitudes, mental health challenges, employees.