BUANG, ABNO, KULANG-KULANG: SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

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ABSTRACT

Using the structural approach to the study of Social Representations, my research unraveled professional and lay understandings of mental illness. I also explored how social representations function as knowledge, orientation, justification, and identity. I collected questionnaire data from 107 mental health service providers and 111 lay residents from four out of five districts of Iloilo province. Abric's (2008) Hierarchical Evocation Method was used as methodological framework. My findings show that both groups align in their central understanding that mental illness is a neuropsychological disorder. My findings further suggest that both groups' internal organization fuse into a global organization of meanings. Furthermore, both groups have a broader understanding that mental illness is both a societal and an individual affliction.