

**ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AS A PREDICTOR OF
BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER SYMPTOMS AND LOW
SELF-ESTEEM
AMONG COVENANT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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AUGUST, 2023

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BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE
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THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF SCIENCE (M.Sc) IN
PSYCHOLOGY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, COLLEGE
OF LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES, COVENANT
UNIVERSITY, OTA, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**

AUGUST, 2023

ACCEPTANCE

This is to attest that this dissertation is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Psychology in the Department of Psychology, College of Leadership and Developmental Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria.

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DECLARATION

I, AMADI-FRANK PAMELA CVHIDINMA (13BB014796), declare that this research work was carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Emmanuel Abikoye of the Department of Psychology, College of Leadership and Developmental Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State. I attest that the dissertation has not been presented either wholly or partially for the award of any degree elsewhere. All sources of data and scholarly information used in this dissertation were duly acknowledged.

AMADI-FRANK, PAMELA CHIDINMA

Signature and Date

CERTIFICATION

We certify that the dissertation titled “**ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AS A PREDICTOR OF BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER SYMPTOMS AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM AMONG COVENANT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**” is an original work carried out **AMADI-FRANK, PAMELA CHIDINMA (13BB014796)** in the Department of Psychology, College of Leadership and Development Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. under the supervision of Prof. Gboyega E. Abikoye. We have examined and found this work acceptable as part of the requirements for the award of Master of Science degree (M.Sc.) in Psychology.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty for His faithfulness and provision. I express great gratitude to Jesus who made this possible.

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ABSTRACT

Adverse childhood experiences (ACE), present formidable challenges within the Nigerian context. Similar to other societies, Nigeria faces the distressing realities of child abuse, neglect, and dysfunctional family dynamics. Nevertheless, the Nigerian landscape encompasses distinctive factors that intensify these challenges, encompassing poverty, restricted access to quality education and healthcare, cultural norms, and social inequalities. The implications of ACE on Nigerian youths are a cause for concern, as they impede holistic development and overall well-being. BPD symptoms manifest in various facets of their lives, including relationships, academic performance, and future prospects. Moreover, low self-esteem contributes to a pervasive sense of inadequacy, hampering their capacity to fully realize their potential. This study aimed to examine the role of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) as a predictor of borderline personality disorder (BPD) symptoms and low self-esteem. A quantitative survey was conducted among 331 students enrolled at Covenant University in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. To collect data, three established questionnaires, namely the McLean Screening Instrument for BPD (MSI-BPD), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE-Q) Questionnaire by Felitti et al. (1998), were utilized. The obtained data underwent analysis using simple linear regression. The results of the study revealed a significant predictive relationship between adverse childhood experiences and borderline personality disorder symptoms, as indicated by the regression analysis ($b = .056$, $t = 13.161$, $R^2 = .355$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, adverse childhood experiences were found to inversely and significantly predict low self-esteem ($b = -.394$, $t = 33.718$, $R^2 = .155$, $p < .001$). The findings also demonstrated an inverse correlation between adverse childhood experiences and both depression and low self-esteem. In order to contribute to the existing body of knowledge, refine theoretical frameworks, and inform evidence-based interventions targeting the adverse effects of ACE on psychological well-being, further research is warranted. Conducting additional studies will enable a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics involved, and facilitate the development of effective interventions to support individuals who have experienced adverse childhood experiences.

Keywords: Adverse childhood experiences, borderline personality disorder symptoms and low self-esteem