



PARENTAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND STUDENTS' DEVIANT TENDENCIES IN OWERRI MUNICIPAL, IMO STATE.

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ABSTRACT: The study examined the extent to which parents emotional intelligence predicts students' deviant tendencies in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal, Imo State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. Correlation research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted 1277 senior secondary two students in the eight public secondary schools in Owerri Municipal from which sample and respondents of 383 was derived using proportionate (at 40%) and simple sampling technique respectively. The data collection process was handled through a researcher-designed research instrument entitled: Parents' Emotional Intelligence and Students Deviant Scale (PEISDS). The instrument validation was faced evaluated by two experts in the field of Instrument Test and Measurement and the reliability tested at 0.93 using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. The collated data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as bar chart, percentage, mean and linear regression (R^2). The result reveals that the extent of emulation of parents among students in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal was low ($\bar{x}=3.19$). It was also revealed that the only 11.3 percent variation in students' deviant tendencies (SDTs) was explained or predicted by parents' self-awareness (PSA), implying a very low extent prediction. The results equally shown that only 23.3percent variation in SDTs was explained or predicted by parents' self-regulation (PSR), implying a very low extent prediction. It is therefore concluded that parents emotional intelligence (with specific consideration to PSA and PSR) do not contribute significantly in regulating students' deviant tendencies in schools. This perhaps due to secondary category factors such as peer group influence, self-oriented, self-originated, juvenile curiosity and continuous exposure to these sources or instructions. Therefore, it is recommended among others that parents should create and sustain a satisfactory home environment that can adequately retain the interest of their wards, establish attachment affinity in them, and maintain the status quo through a routinely observed conscious effort. This will spur their wards to emulate them and in turn, instill those values irrespective of the contentious influence of the school system (peer group influence and the teachers' mannerism).

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence, PSA, PSR, Deviancy, SDTs.



INTRODUCTION/REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Thinking about quality education in secondary schools in the twenty-first century society is a daunting task for the school administrators. This is because for secondary education to remain a cardinal bridge for the transformation or reformation of learner's characters and behaviours, the administrators requires strategic and tactical measures to regulate the behavioural patterns of the learners. The level of quality expected of every secondary schools recently is a function of how effective the behavioural patterns of the students are being managed. Otherwise, no matter the formidability of the school administrators' effort in ensuring availability and adequacy of instructional facilities, teachers' quality and others school variables, when students' behavioural and attitudinal patterns are not aligning with the norms of the school and the etiquette of good manners, effective and quality education outcome cannot be achieved. In other words, quality of education is derived where and when the students can coexist in line with the acceptable traditional laws of the school. The scenario in most of the public secondary schools in Owerri tends to show a low level of educational quality as some of the schools experienced unacceptably high level of students' deviant tendency.

Issues of students deviant tendencies especially in public secondary schools in Owerri has become a concern for critical assessment. Statistics have shown that rate of students deviancy is increasing (Aremu, et al., 2018, Oladipo, et al., 2023). The areas of concern are involvement in the examination malpractices, vandalism of school properties, bullying of fellow students, drug abuse and fighting. Other areas that are emerging though very disturbing are raping, maiming, violent assault to fellow students and others aggressive display of negative psychosocial tendencies. These deviant tendencies have inimical implications on the orderliness of the school system, impact greatly on the psyche of both the victims and the culprits, disorganize psychosocial environment requisite for efficient and effective learning, and as well, constituting a block to the smooth organization of the school for quality education outcome. Many studies maintained that students' deviancy promote social nuisance, moral crisis, disrupt quality learning and drain vital values (Nnajie, et al., 2024, Asiyal, 2019, Ifeyinwa and Muriel, 2023).

The deviant tendencies as a concept revolves around the unwillingness of an individual to live in consonance with the standard, acceptable and harmonized with regulations governing a people in an organization. Many studies inferred deviant tendencies or deviancy as acting in variant with the originally established codes, ethics and norms of an organisation (Nnajie, et al., 2024, Martins, et al., 2020, Ifeyinwa, et al., 2023, Oladipo, et al., 2023). Nnajie, et al., (2024) explained the concept of deviancy as acts that are variant to norms and expectations of a particular social groups.

Many factors are attributed to students' deviant tendencies. Some of these factors are peer influence, biological, mass media, the society and the peer group pressure (Ifeyinwa, et al., 2023), unhealthy discipline in school (Hanimoglu, 2019), and students failure in school as well as the school system (Asiya, 2019). These factors could be grouped into primary category, secondary category and the tertiary category. The primary category are the fundamental factors that comes with an individual from birth or associated with individual by birth without any direct or indirect influence/control of the individual. Since this category of factors are derived from the sub-consciousness and biological level of an individual's existence, they serve as the bedrock of an individual development, as well as the template



that facilitate the learning process. Examples of primary category of factors are genotypic and chromosomal constitutions and the parental training. The secondary category of factors affecting individual's behavioral tendencies falls within those he/she chooses to emulate. This categories form a bridge that determine the favorability and unfavourability of individuals' choice with the public order established. These secondary category factors though may be regulated by external influence, are actually adopted contentiously by an individual (self). Example of this category are peer influence, imitation and display of inbuilt characters maturation. Meanwhile, the tertiary category occurs as a results of what the school system accept as norms which are variant with the generality of a larger group acceptability. This become a sub-systemic factors. Examples are schools indulgence in examination malpractice, and acceptance of other dilutions of norms. Nevertheless, of these categories, it may be argued that parental psychosocial creation constitute a fulcrum which other categories falls on.

Parents are the fundamental blueprint that encode the first signal on the psychosocial make-ups of a child. They set norms, standards and lay formidable platforms that sustains their wards development. Many studies maintained that parents' played significant role in the behavioural development of their children (Musa, et al., 2020, Okello, 2023, Eteng, et al., 2021), engineered their attitude towards self and others (Haslip., 2019), and regulates their psychosocial support system (Reily, 2024, Soenens, et al., 2018). Whether the parents are demanding, supportive, attentive or lazier-fairic, they contributes remarkable influence on their children (Eteng, et al., 2021, Musa, et al., 2020, Okello, 2023). However, many believed that the influence of parents can be remarkably changed if not totally eliminated when the attachment of children are relatively severed by school attendance and the zeal for peer belongingness (Sevari and Razaei, 2019, Delgado, et al., 2022, Abia, et al., 2022). These contradictory position can be rebuffed in favour of the positive implications of quality parents emotional intelligence.

Parent emotional intelligence unlike others parental factors has lifelong impact on children (Kelvin, et al., 2023, Sharma, et al., 2024). It revolves around parents social, mental, emotional and cognitive ability to interpret situations, moods and dispositions that relates to self and others. Fadhli, Lubis, Salmi and Idris (2020) considered parent emotional intelligence as ability to accurately perceived diverse psychosocial environmental changes and as well, controls stimulations, motivation and set a mood that is acceptable for pleasantries. Studies revealed that (parents with) quality emotional intelligence has potency to coordinate mood change (Sadiku, et al., 2020), creates rooms for social adaptability (Gonzalez, et al., 2021), promotes social adjustability (Iqbal, 2020), and handles fluctuations in stress-related experienced (Mbwaga & Tefurukwa, 2024). Quality emotional intelligence leads individuals to a state of satisfaction and contentment and commitment (Galal, Lasib & Abdelmoaty, 2023), encourage carefulness by providing psychosocial support for the individual and others (Liu & Liu, 2013), and as well, promotes sense of duty in regulating the feelings of others. Parents with quality emotional intelligence can exerts optimized level of influence on their children conduct by providing a blueprint that are emulatable. This may results in their ability to drastically adjust to social changes and situational experience without altering established and acceptable blueprint. When this occurs, it may exert veritable examples of patterns for the children's value acquisition. In other words, children that experienced when their parents handled challenges with decorum most likely emulates same when faced with similar experiences (Gonzalez, et al., 2021, Iqbal,



2020). Quality emotional intelligence enforces commitment in others (Liu, et al., 2013), causes less stress in handling challenges, promotes empathy, sensibility and sensitivity to the affairs and wellbeing of others (Galal, et al., 2023, Fida, et al., 2021, Bakst, et al., 2014), and enhance quality performance on responsibilities (Vratskikh, et al., 2016).

The two aspects of parental emotional intelligence argued to promote essential outcome that can transform children psychosocial and cognitive balancing are self-awareness and self-regulation (Edler and Valentino, 2024, Ahmad, 2024). Self-awareness defines parents capability of predicting, visualizing and accurately managing a known self feelings towards guaranteeing psychosocial stability. Galal, et al. (2023) explained the concept of self-awareness as knowing self-capacity to see and predicts event within self accurately. Scholars maintained that individual with self-awareness can foster or hinder children and adolescents' self-regulation development (Ahmad, 2024, Edler, et al., 2024). Supporting this position, Jung and Yoon (2016) and Sabahi, et al. (2018) emphasized that managing others requires self-management as the first step. In other words, quality self-management results to quality product which in this case implies having a well mannered and emotionally intelligent children. Edwin Sutherland Theory of Differential Association emphatically provides a template that reinforces the premise that every behavioural pattern is learnable and has a translational impact according to the source of the instructions. According to the theory, deviance behaviour is learned within the interaction with the learning activities through the process of communication with intimate groups (Sutherland, 1939). Parents with quality self-awareness can therefore exhibit or provide a template that serves a quality learning activities to their children vis-a-vis exposing them to efficient interactional communication, essential to guarantee wards non-involvement in deviancy.

Parent self-regulation is another aspect inferred to promote better development in their wards (Ahmad, 2024, Lacin and Turp, 2022). Self-regulation involves regulating feelings, emotions and reactions (Vohs and Baumeister, 2009, Koole and Aldao, 2015). This self-regulations are grounds for intellectual growth, management of attitude including anger and anxiety (Lam & O'Higg, 2012), as well as emotional conflicts management (Jung, et al., 2016, Galal, et al., 2023). According to Ahmad (2024), parent self-regulation is positively associated with supportive emotional-related socialization behaviour and negatively associated with unsupportive emotional-related socialisation behaviours. This may equally served as basement for wards rationalization and attitude shaping towards societal norms. However, from the cardinal points of the Theory of Differential Association by Sutherland (1939), which maintained that delinquent behaviour is learned while communicating, and associating with others with longer exposure to a set of activities and attitudinal practices, one may rather argue that students exposure to peers and other external psychosocial environmental influences could contribute to the rising level of deviant tendencies in school. The contemplation is based on the assumption that students juveniles and sense of belongingness among peers exert better influence on their deviant tendencies than parents do. However, whether parents emotional intelligence as a first template of influence has a moderating effect than peer influence on students' deviant tendencies formed the basis for the study. The following research questions guided the study:

- i. what is the extent to which students emulate parents in their daily living in public secondary schools, Owerri municipal?



- ii. what is the extent to which parents self-awareness predict students deviant tendencies in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal?
- iii. what is the extent to which parents self-regulation predict students deviant tendencies in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal?

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted correlation research design which emphasized on assessing the relationships between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. The study area was Owerri Municipal, a capital of Imo State, Nigeria. Located in the heart of Nigeria's south eastern geopolitical zone, Owerri Municipal is situated within latitude of 5° 29' 1.1" (5.4836°) north and longitude of 7° 1' 59.7" (7.0333°) east. The area has six distinctive clans (Uratta, Alaenyi, Ezelukwu, Arah, Nwaoha, and Ochie) and the people are typically known as the Igbos. Their uniqueness in Nigeria stemmed from the traditional heritage which revolves around hard-work, discipline, integrity, and obedience to traditions of respect to family values and reputation, respect for elders, respect to the constituted authorities and self. The Owerri Municipal has numerous public and private educational institutions but for point of emphasis, only public secondary schools were considered. The rising level of students deviant tendencies despite the valuable norms of the people prompted the assessment of the area.

The population of the study consisted 1277 senior secondary two students in the eight public secondary schools in Owerri Municipal from which sample of 383 was derived using proportionate (at 40%) and simple sampling technique. The data collection process was handled through a researcher-designed research instrument entitled: Parents' Emotional Intelligence and Students Deviant Scale (PEISDS). The research instrument clustered into six sections with different patterns of presentations that detailed the students' parents EI alongside that of the students. The section A of the instrument provided the students' gender (male, female), parents marital status (single, married, divorce), parent's educational level (below tertiary level, tertiary level), and parents adequacy in provision of needs (optioned: yes, no). The section B provided details on the extent of students emulations of parents instead of peers or self-choiced. This section had seven items designed on five rating scale of very high extent (VHE), high extent (HE), low extent (LE), very low extent (VLE), and not at all (NAT) (coded as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively). The section C elicited information from the respondents on their perceived or experienced assessment of parents EI. Organised on closed-end patterns of assessment with YES or No options, the section had six items. In the section D of the instrument, eight items with five rating scale of VHE, HE, LE, VLE, and NAT (coded as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively) was structured eliciting information regarding students' deviants tendencies. Meanwhile, section E and F explained the parents self-awareness and self-regulations as experienced and or perceived by the respondents with four items each on four rating scale of VHE, HE, LE and VLE (coded as 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively).

The instrument validation was faced evaluated by two experts in the field of Instrument Test and Measurement to ensure appropriateness of items and suitability in providing valuable detailed information. The reliability of 0.93 with Cronbach Alpha



coefficient was estimate from 40 non-participated students, approving the instrument to be highly reliable. The possibility of data collection was attained using three adhoc assistants services. The administration of instrument was instant retrieval which resulted to 100percent valid return. The collated data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentage, mean and linear regression.

RESULTS

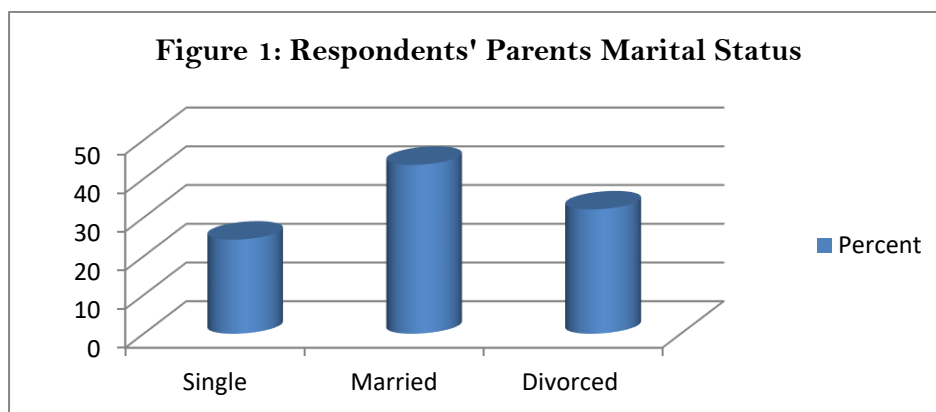


Figure 1 shows that majority of the respondents' parents were married (43.6%) closely followed by the divorced (32.1%).

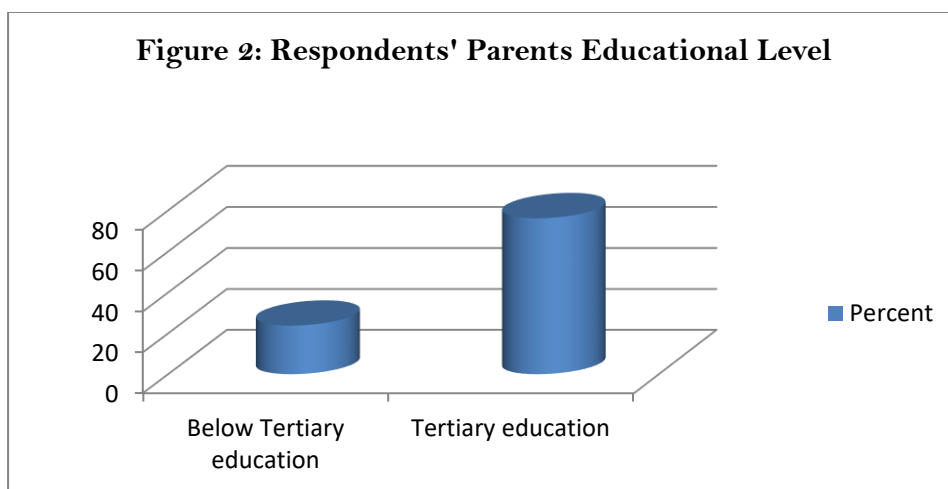


Figure 2 shows that majority of the respondents' parent has attended tertiary education(76.2%).

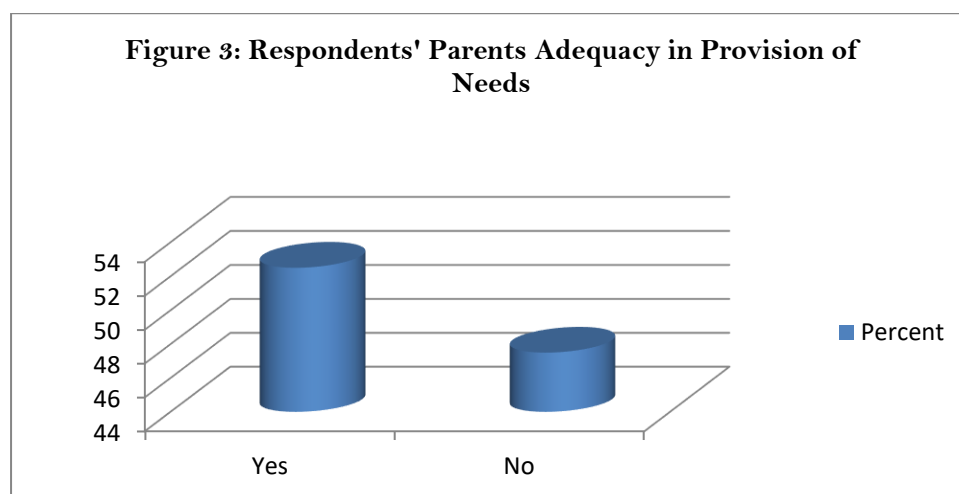


Figure 3 shows that majority of the respondents parents' adequacy in provision of their needs (52.5%)

Table 1: Respondents assessment of parents' Emotional Intelligence (EI) (N=383)

Items Description <i>Do your parents....</i>	Option (Yes)
Beat you or anybody severely when he/she is angry.	134
Destroy something when he/she is not happy.	99
Shout always when things go wrong in the house.	201
Engage in fight or quarrel with others always when he/she is unhappy.	
Deny you needs when unhappy.	199
Argue with people severely when faced with misunderstanding.	179
	183
Average	166
Percentage	43%

(Source: Field Survey Data, 2025)

Table 1 reveals that 43percent of parents in Owerri Municipal exhibit ineffective EI. This implies that greater majority (57%) has quality EI.

Table 2: Respondents' Assessment of their Deviant Tendencies (N=383)

Items description <i>The extent which you...</i>	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Remarks
Always fight when people offend you.	4.73	HE
Always destroy things when you are angry.	4.52	HE
Always refused to talk with someone when angry.	4.51	HE
Always show your anger by shouting.	4.55	HE
Encourage your friends to fight during quarrel with another person.	5.20	HE
Sometimes cheat in examination.	4.91	HE
Disobey the constituted authority when angry.	4.64	HE
Disrespect elders when they violate you.	4.55	HE
Average $\bar{x}$	4.70	HE

(Source: Field Survey Data, 2025)



Table 2 indicates the extent of students' deviant tendencies in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal is low ($\bar{x} = 4.70$).

Research Question One: What is the extent to which students emulate parents in their daily living in public secondary schools, Owerri municipal?

Table 3: Mean score of the extent of students' emulation of parents in public secondary schools in Owerri Municipal (N=383)

Items description	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Remarks
<i>The extent you emulate your parents instead of peers in...</i>		
Responding to anger issues.	4.42	LE
Solving conflicts between you and another person.	3.00	LE
Tolerating when someone offends you.	2.20	VLE
Withdrawing from problems.	4.10	LE
Obedying all the order from established authority	3.31	LE
Respecting other people's opinion.	2.31	VLE
Managing yourself when you lack.	3.01	LE
Average	3.19	LE

(Source: Field Survey Data, 2025)

Table 3 reveals a mean of score of 3.19, implying that the extent of students emulation of parents in Owerri municipal is low.

Research Question Two: What is the extent to which parents self-awareness predict students deviant tendencies in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal?

Table 4: Results of Simple linear regression of the prediction of students' deviant tendencies (SDTs) by parents' self-awareness (PSA)(N=383)

Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Remark
SDTs	.150	.113	.152	VL. Extent
PSA				

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The result presented in Table 4 revealed that the R-value of .150 as the strength of the relationship between PSA and SDTs. The R² value of .113 also shown indicates that only 11.3 percent variation in SDTs is explained or predicted by PSA. This result implies that PSA predicts SDTs in public secondary schools in Owerri Municipal to a very low extent.



Research Question Three: What is the extent to which parents self-regulation predict students deviant tendencies in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal?

Table 5: Results of Simple linear regression of the prediction of students' deviant tendencies (SDTs) by parents' self-regulation (PSR)(N=383)

Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Remark
SDTs	.23	.233	.171	VL. Extent
PSR				

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The result presented in Table 5 revealed that the R-value of .23 as the strength of the relationship between PSR and SDTs. The R² value of .233 also shown indicates that only 23.3percent variation in SDTs is explained or predicted by PSR. This result implies that PSR predicts SDTs in public secondary schools in Owerri Municipal to a very low extent.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Extent of emulation of parents among students in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal

The answer to the research question one raised revealed that the extent to which students' emulate parents in Owerri municipal was low. The implication is that parents' emotional intelligence does not necessarily translate significant impact on the students' deviant tendencies. The rising level of SDTs are influenced by factors that may be related to peer group influence, and self-stride curiosity. Meanwhile, the relatedness of peer influence and the deviant tendencies among students may be due to the duration of exposure to the peers which could have long lasting impact than the parents EI. This aligned with the Theory of Differential Association which emphasized on the source of instructions (peers) and the duration of exposure (Sutherland, 1939). Many factors in this case that dislodged the effectiveness of parents EI on wards mannerism may be inability to significantly provide needs, self-information and identity, the rising level of marital challenges as well as peer group influence. This position aligned with the conclusion drawn in studies conducted by Ifeyinwa, et al., (2023), Hanimoglu (2019), Asiya, (2019). However, this is contradictory to several positions that parents' EI has significant impact on their wards (Musa, et al., 2020, Okello, 2023, Eteng, et al., 2021, Reily, 2024, Soenens, et al., 2018).

Parents self-awareness and students' deviant tendencies

The answer to research question two raised revealed a very low extent of prediction of SDTs by parents self-awareness. This implies that quality parents' self-awareness does not translates to students' quality mannerism. The situation of students' deviant tendencies may be related to issues regarded as situational created by longer exposure to external variables that are beyond the influence of parents self-awareness. This secondary category factors may be related to juvenile curiosity, social media and peer group influence, as well as dissatisfaction that may stemmed from needs and the rising cases of family challenges. The findings aligned



with the positions of Asiya, (2019), Hanimoglu (2019), Ifeyinwa, et al., (2023) which emphasized on the significant negative implications of peer group influence, the source of instructions in school and seemingly effect of exposure to others longer than the parents as well as the rising marital challenges. The low level impact of parents self-awareness on students could equally be a function of self-independency and uniqueness in perception of event or issues by the students.

Parents self-regulation and students deviant tendencies in secondary schools in Owerri municipal

The results of question three answered indicates that the extent to which parents' self-regulation predicts students' deviant tendencies was very low. This implies that quality parents self-regulation does not regulates students' deviant tendencies. Parent self-regulation is one of the attributes of the parents and perhaps could only controlled the behavioural patterns of their children to the extent of mutual attachment, the quality of interpersonal relationship existing between them, as well as the acceptability of the children to continually imbibe and emulate the parents style. When the children being unique individuals do not want to exhibit similar tendencies as observed in the parents, but rather routinely admired those of the peers and the self-originated concepts, what attract their passion and sustained satisfaction become the behavioural tendencies. Sutherland (1939) acknowledged this in his Theory of Differential Association as the source of continuous instructions. Meanwhile, the primary source of the diversion of interest from the parents to the peer and self-oriented concepts among the students may equally be attributed to self-adventure, juvenile curiosity, exposure to social media, and the need to close the void created by parents absent-mindedness on their children due to socioeconomic challenges. These variables highlighted are prominent factors with remarkable effect on students (Sevari and Razaei, 2019, Delgado, et al., 2022, Abia, et al., 2022, Asiya, 2019, Hanimoglu, 2019, Ifeyinwa, et al., 2023), vis-a-vis having potentials to reshape their psychosocial patterns (Asiya, 2019, Hanimoglu, 2019, Ifeyinwa, et al., 2023). However, the findings contradicted the position of (Eteng, et al., 2021, Musa, et al., 2020, Okello, 2023, Reily, 2024, Soenens, et al., 2018) that placed family/home environment as the prominent contributor of students' behavioural and attitudinal patterns.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the implications of each of the elements and factors that influence students' deviant tendencies is an essential step in curtailing the rising impact associating with the abnormality. It is concluded that parents emotional intelligence with specific consideration to self-awareness and self-regulation do not contribute significantly in regulating students' deviant tendencies in schools. This is attributed to the school system effect of the secondary category factors such as peer group influence, self-oriented, self-originated, juvenile curiosity and continuous exposure to these sources or instructions. The students' differential alignment with these variant sources of instructions rather than the parents source may results from the observed rising level of family instability, inadequacies of the family to satisfied children's basic needs, and poor interpersonal relationship between parents and their wards.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Against the backdrop of the conclusion drawn from the findings of the analyzed data, it is recommended that:

- i. Parents should create and sustain a satisfactory home environment that can adequately retain the interest of their children, establish attachment affinity in them, and maintain the status quo through a routinely observed conscious effort. This will spur their children to emulate them and in turn, instill those values irrespective of the contentious influence of the school system (peer group influence and the teachers' mannerism).
- ii. Parents should create differential association with their children, counsel them and consistently evaluate their attitude, mannerism, and sources of instructions to ensure what they emulate are in tandem with the blueprint and template of the family. This in a long run will transform students' psychosocial consciousness to withstand the external pressure from the school system, and as well, organize their juvenile curiosity and self-orientation in line with the acceptable social norms.
- iii. The school administrators and teachers should equally create formidable templates in school system that routinely appraise students' behavioural patterns and report same to the parents. This will serve as psychosocial check watchdog that stabilize students' consciousness towards acceptable norms vis-a-vis creates essential template for strategic counseling towards discouraging students' deviant tendencies.

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