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INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL VERBAL ABUSE, DOMICILIATION, GENDER AND AGE ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OWERRI, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the influence of parental verbal abuse, domiciliation, gender and age among secondary school students in Owerri. Three hundred and seventeen secondary school students were selected from three secondary schools in Owerri through the simple random sampling technique. Participants comprised of 141 males and 176 females with ages ranging from 14 to 17 years (Mean = 15.25 years; SD = 0.94). The participants were administered the Parental Verbal Abuse Scale and the Emotional Intelligence Scale. Four hypotheses were postulated and tested. The Cross-sectional survey design was adopted while multiple regression statistics was used to analyze the data collected. Results revealed that parental verbal abuse (β = -.051, p = -.367, t = -.904), domiciliation (β = - 011, p = -.851, t = -.188), gender (β = -.083, p = -.143, t =-1.470), and age (β = -.052, p = .352, t = -.932) separately and jointly (R^2 = .010, F(3,313) = 1.073, p = .361; R^2 = .013, F(l, 312) = 1.10, p = .403) were not significant predictors of emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri. The study findings suggested that the assumptions that parental verbal abuse, domiciliation, gender, and age could potentially improve emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri may not be true as other factors could be playing such a role. Therefore, the study recommends, among others, that adults should desist from perceiving students from verbally abused homes as people who would score very low on emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Parental Verbal Abuse, Domiciliation, Secondary School Students, Owerri

INTRODUCTION

The concept of emotional intelligence has gained significant attention since its inception in the mid-20th century, notably emerging in the works of Beldoch (1964) and Leuner (1966), who introduced the term in the psychotherapeutic context. Leuner's study, "Emotional Intelligence and Emancipation," published in the Psychotherapeutic Journal of Child Psychology and Child Psychiatry, laid the foundational groundwork by suggesting that traditional measures of intelligence, such as IQ, were insufficient in capturing the complexities of human cognition.

Leuner proposed the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, which included interpersonal intelligence (understanding others' intentions, motivations, and desires) and intrapersonal intelligence (self-awareness of one's own emotions, fears, and motivations), reshaping the discourse surrounding intelligence (Gardner, 1983).

However, it was Daniel Goleman's seminal work, "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ," that propelled the concept into mainstream consciousness. Goleman's subsequent publications further solidified emotional intelligence's significance, emphasizing its profound impact on various aspects of life.

Goleman defined emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, understand, use, and manage emotions effectively, both in oneself and in others (Goleman & Andrew, 2008). This multidimensional construct incorporates a range of abilities, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Emotional intelligence integrates cognitive abilities, empathy, and emotional awareness, enriching individuals' understanding of interpersonal dynamics (Mayer, 2008).

Despite its widespread recognition, there remains considerable debate surrounding the definition and operationalization of emotional intelligence. Currently, three primary models prevail: the ability model, the mixed model (often categorized under trait emotional intelligence), and the trait model. These models have led to the development of various assessment instruments, each capturing different facets of the construct. While overlap may exist among these measures, researchers generally agree that they tap into distinct aspects of emotional intelligence.

Contemporary psychology has recognised emotional intelligence from four essential characteristics; self-management, self-awareness, social awareness and relationship management (Segal, Smith, Robinson, & Shubin, 2024). Self-management includes the capacity to control impulsive thoughts and actions, successfully and positively control emotions, show initiative, keep promises made, and adjust to changing conditions. Self-awareness refers to being conscious of one's feelings and how they affect one's ideas and behaviours. People in this category have a strong awareness of their advantages and disadvantages, which boosts confidence. Social awareness refers to individuals who are socially aware and show empathy by being able to relate to and comprehend the needs, feelings, and worries of others. They read emotions well, are great in social situations, and can identify power relationships in teams or organisations. Lastly, relationship management involves building and sustaining healthy interpersonal relationships is a key component of competency in relationship management. People who possess this skill are good communicators,

Emotional intelligence, contrary to common misconception, is not antithetical to intellectual prowess but rather represents an integration of cognitive and affective faculties (Caruso, 2002). Emotions wield considerable influence over an individual's personal and professional conduct,

underscoring the significance of emotional intelligence in navigating the complexities of human interaction.

Serrat (2017) alongside Palmer, Gignac, Ekermans, and Stough (2008) delineated three models explaining the role of emotions in facilitating cognition and comprehension. These models include Ability, Mixed, and Trait Models.

The Ability Model, as posited by Salovey and Mayer, seeks to conceptualise emotional intelligence within the framework of traditional intelligence criteria. Through iterative research, their initial definition evolved into "The ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to promote personal growth" (Salovey & Mayer, 1997, p. 22). This evolving definition encompasses the capacity to reason about emotions, enhancing cognitive processes. It entails accurately perceiving, accessing, and generating emotions to aid understanding and regulate emotions for personal development (Salovey & Mayer, 1997). In this model, emotions serve as valuable sources of information for social navigation (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), with individuals varying in their ability to process emotional information and integrate it with cognition, manifesting in adaptive behaviours.

The Ability Model outlines four core abilities:

- Perceiving Emotions: Detecting and interpreting emotions in various stimuli, including one's own emotions, laying the foundation for emotional intelligence.
- Using Emotions: Leveraging emotions to enhance cognitive tasks and problem-solving, adapting emotional states to suit the task at hand.
- Understanding Emotions: Comprehending emotion language and nuances in emotional relationships, including the evolution of emotions over time.
- Managing Emotion: Regulating emotions in oneself and others to achieve desired outcomes, even utilizing negative emotions constructively.

The Mixed Model, introduced by Goleman (1998), frames emotional intelligence as a broad spectrum of competencies essential for effective leadership. Goleman's model identifies five key constructs:

- Self-awareness: Recognizing one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values, and their impact on others, using intuition to guide decisions.
- Self-regulation: Controlling disruptive emotions and impulses, adapting to changing circumstances.
- Social skills: Managing relationships to influence others positively.
- Empathy: Considering others' feelings, particularly in decision-making.
- Motivation: Driven by intrinsic goals and achievements.

Lastly, the Trait Model, proposed by Petrides, distinguishes between ability-based and trait-based emotional intelligence, focusing on self-perceptions of emotional abilities (Petrides, et

al., 2007). Trait emotional intelligence comprises emotional self-perceptions situated within personality traits, measured via self-reports. This model encompasses behavioural dispositions and self-perceived abilities, transcending traditional cognitive ability taxonomies. Studies have shown a positive correlation between higher emotional intelligence and various positive outcomes (Mayer, 2008).

Parental verbal abuse can significantly impact emotional intelligence, as it shapes the emotional experiences and interpersonal dynamics of individuals. parental verbal abuse refers to the use of derogatory, demeaning, or hurtful language by parents or guardians towards their children. This form of abuse may include verbal insults, threats, yelling, constant criticism, belittling remarks, or the use of profanity directed at the child. It encompasses any communication that inflicts emotional pain, instils fear, or undermines the child's sense of self-worth and security within the family dynamic. Parental verbal abuse can occur in various settings, including the home environment, and may be directed towards children of any age. Studies have shown that exposure to verbal abuse from parents can lead to various negative outcomes, including decreased self-esteem, heightened emotional distress, and impaired social functioning (Grych & Fincham, 1990; Garnefski, et al., 2001). Moreover, parental verbal abuse has been linked to deficits in emotion regulation and interpersonal skills, which are core components of emotional intelligence (Graziano, Reavis, & Keane, 2007; Carpenter & Trull, 2013).

In the context of Nigeria, parental verbal abuse is indeed prevalent, although it often remains concealed within families due to cultural norms and societal stigma surrounding family issues (Oluseye, 2021). Family abuse, including verbal abuse, is frequently regarded as a private matter, and victims may hesitate to report or seek help due to fear of shame, blame, or retaliation. Moreover, the lack of awareness and resources for addressing family violence further contributes to its underreporting and perpetuation (Oluseye, 2021).

Parents may engage in verbal abuse towards their children through various means. This can include name-calling, belittling, swearing, or insults such as "You are stupid" or "You're a rotten kid." Additionally, indirect criticism, such as disparaging the child to a spouse, can also be harmful, as the child may still feel the sting of rejection. Threatening abandonment, with statements like "I wish you'd never been born" or "I should put you up for adoption," can create a sense of being unwanted within the family.

Verbal abuse may also involve threatening bodily harm. Research has shown a link between verbal aggression and physical aggression, suggesting that parents who frequently yell are more likely to resort to physical violence as well. Even if violent threats are not acted upon, they can instil fear and distrust in the child (de Zoysa, et al., 2010).

Scapegoating or blaming the child, with phrases like "You're the reason this family is such a mess" or "If I didn't have to take care of you, I could have a better life," can lead the child to believe they are inherently bad and deserving of unhappiness. Similarly, using sarcasm, such as making mocking remarks when the child spills juice, can undermine their self-esteem.

Verbal abuse within the parental relationship can also have detrimental effects on children. Witnessing parents berating each other can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, and interpersonal problems in children. Surprisingly, research suggests that verbal aggression between parents may be more traumatic for children than physical violence.

Verbal abuse can manifest in various signs and behaviours that indicate its detrimental impact on children. One common effect is a negative self-image, where children may express feelings of inadequacy or worthlessness, such as saying "I'm stupid" or exhibiting withdrawn and depressed behaviour. Verbal abuse undermines a child's sense of self-worth, contributing to low self-esteem (Islam et al., 2022).

Additionally, self-destructive acts like cutting or engaging in risky behaviours indicate distress and may be a response to verbal abuse. Research shows that verbally abused children may demonstrate higher rates of physical aggression, delinquency, and interpersonal problems, such as quarrelling with peers or being cruel to animals.

Verbal abuse can also impede a child's development across various domains, including physical, social, academic, and emotional realms. Children may struggle to make friends, experience academic setbacks, or engage in regressive behaviours like thumb-sucking or bed-wetting.

Moreover, the effects of parental verbal abuse can extend into adulthood, with individuals at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of abuse themselves. They may also experience long-term consequences such as depression, self-destructive behaviour, and anxiety.

Several factors may contribute to verbally abusive behaviour by parents, including a lack of understanding about alternative disciplinary methods, the misconception that verbal abuse is a form of "tough love," difficulty controlling strong emotions, or a history of experiencing verbal abuse from authority figures.

Verbal abuse is a form of emotional abuse aimed at inflicting intense humiliation, denigration, and fear on the victim. Network-based approaches have been utilized to explore the complex interplay of psychological factors and external stimuli associated with verbal abuse across diverse populations.

Parental verbal abuse transcends the confines of the home, often extending into public spaces, thereby exacerbating the humiliation experienced by the child (Bagshaw, 2014). This form of abuse is not solely a domestic affair; it can also be deemed criminal (Bagshaw, 2014). While teenagers typically undergo a transition from dependence to independence, unhealthy parental control dynamics can impede this process, leading to challenges in proper child-rearing (Canadian National Clearing House on Family Violence, 2004). It is not uncommon for children, adolescents, or parents to exhibit no remorse or guilt and to feel justified in their abusive behaviours, particularly when the abuse is initiated by females toward smaller, vulnerable children (Stephenson, 2008). Parents must discern between acceptable behaviour

and abusive conduct, as their responsibility extends to both recognizing and addressing abusive tendencies (Cottrel, 2001).

The manifestations of parental abuse can take various forms, including physical, verbal, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse (Cottrel, 2001). While some may attribute parent abuse to poor parenting or neglect, adolescents from ostensibly "normal" backgrounds may also perpetrate such abuse (Cottrel, 2001). Factors contributing to parental abuse can range from arguments spiralling out of control to mental illness and fear (Cottrel, 2001). Notably, parental verbal abuse often precedes physical abuse and is prevalent in a majority of abusive cases (Evans & Warren-Sohlberg, 1989). In Nigeria, physical and verbal abuse are particularly rampant, with single-mother households experiencing the highest rates of abuse (Alao & Olaniyi, 2009).

Parental verbal abuse is not confined to specific demographics; it can occur in families across diverse ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic classes, and sexual orientations (Bagshaw, 2014). Stressors such as work, marital conflicts, and financial instability may exacerbate parental verbal abuse, as can a parent's own history of abuse or feelings of inferiority (Bagshaw, 2014). The effects of parental verbal abuse on children are profound, encompassing negative self-image, depression, withdrawal, and self-destructive behaviour such as cutting (Bagshaw, 2014).

Verbal abuse is often insidious and challenging to detect, as its scars are not readily visible, and victims may become accustomed to such treatment (Bagshaw, 2014). Despite its subtle nature, verbal abuse can have enduring consequences, impacting an individual's self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and overall well-being (Bagshaw, 2014). Conversely, positive reinforcement and encouragement can foster high emotional intelligence and self-esteem in children and adolescents, guiding them toward success (Bagshaw, 2014). Therefore, addressing parental abuse, whether verbal or otherwise, is paramount in safeguarding the emotional development and well-being of individuals across the lifespan.

Domiciliation, often overlooked yet significant, could play a crucial role in shaping the emotional intelligence of secondary school students. The term "domicile" comes from the Latin word "domus," which means "home," and it has been used in English since the 12th century to refer to "home" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). In simple terms, domiciliation means where a person lives at a particular time, whether it's in the countryside or the city.

In legal contexts, domicile is about more than just where someone lives—it's about where they consider their permanent home or roots to be located (Miller, 2013). This legal concept grants a status of lawful permanent residency within a specific jurisdiction, regardless of whether the person is physically present there, as long as they maintain sufficient ties with that jurisdiction (Miller, 2013).

So, domiciliation in the context of secondary school students, implies where they live and the environment they're surrounded by. This could be in urban areas, where there might be more

access to resources and opportunities, or in rural areas, where life might be quieter and less bustling. Where students are domiciled could influence various aspects of their lives, including their emotional well-being and intelligence.

Demographic characteristics, intrinsic and immutable to individuals in various contexts, play a pivotal role in shaping emotional intelligence (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). Extensive research has examined the associations between demographic variables and emotional intelligence. For instance, studies conducted by Brimeyer, Perrucci, and Wadsworth (2010) and Chughtai and Zafar (2006) have demonstrated significant and positive correlations between factors such as gender and domicility with commitment, emotional intelligence, and depression.

Parental verbal abuse, pervasive across societal strata, has become entrenched within cultural norms, permeating familial, educational, and professional settings, as well as media platforms (Bagshaw, 2014). Certain locales, be they rural or urban, may exhibit a higher prevalence of parental verbal abuse, contributing to an environment where emotional intelligence is hindered among children and adolescents (Bagshaw, 2014). Conversely, regions where parental verbal abuse is mitigated or absent altogether foster emotional resilience and intelligence among youths, shielding them from the deleterious effects of verbal abuse (Bagshaw, 2014).

Gender could play a significant role in shaping the experience of emotional intelligence, influencing the social attributes, roles, and opportunities associated with being male or female. These roles are not inherent but are socially constructed and learned through processes of socialization (Oyisoji, 2005). Gender norms dictate societal expectations, permissions, and values attributed to individuals based on their gender within a given context (Oyisoji, 2005). In many societies, disparities exist between men and women concerning responsibilities, activities, access to resources, and decision-making opportunities.

Research conducted by Oyisoji (2005) suggests that males often exhibit greater emotional control and commitment compared to females. This observation is often attributed to traditional gender roles, where males are typically regarded as breadwinners and are expected to demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence to fulfil their familial responsibilities. Consequently, males may exhibit greater dedication, concentration, and diligence in their pursuits, reflecting a potential impact of gender on emotional intelligence.

Age could serve as an essential factor influencing emotional intelligence among secondary school students. Age refers to the length of time that a person has lived or a thing has existed. It can also be viewed as the time of life when a person becomes qualified to assume certain civil and personal rights and responsibilities. For example, in Nigeria, it signifies the attainment of certain rights and responsibilities, such as voting and legal accountability, typically recognized at the age of 18 in Nigeria. Parents often perceive age as a determinant of their children's behaviour, granting privileges commensurate with their perceived maturity, such as driving privileges. Consequently, age may exert a significant influence on emotional

intelligence, with older individuals potentially demonstrating greater emotional control and resilience compared to their younger counterparts (Orgeta, 2009)

Research indicates a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and age, with emotional intelligence typically increasing with age and life experience (Goleman, 1998; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Maddocks & Sparrows, 1998). Studies have observed that emotional intelligence tends to rise until the fourth or fifth decade of life, with older individuals exhibiting higher emotional intelligence scores (Bar-on, 2000; Kafetsios, 2004; Stein, 2009; Bradberry & Greaves, 2005; Singh, 2006). Certain aspects of emotional intelligence can be honed through training, highlighting the potential for ongoing development regardless of age (Fariselli, Ghini & Freedom, 2006). Emotional intelligence, viewed as a key competency, is significant for managerial and HR professionals and educators, counsellors, and educationalists (Higgs & Dulewiez, 1999; Fineman, 1997).

As individuals progress through various life stages, they undergo distinct developmental phases characterized by learning and experience. Emotional intelligence, conceptualized as an ability, exhibits diverse patterns across different age groups, necessitating an understanding of emotional intelligence levels and dynamics across age cohorts (Mayer & Salovey). Therefore, the present study aims to assess emotional intelligence among individuals in different age groups, spanning young adulthood, middle age, and mature age, to discern variations in emotional intelligence components within these cohorts.

Statement of the Problem

Emotional intelligence (EI) describes the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups (Serrat, 2017). Individuals, secondary school students inclusive, require adequate EI to achieve their set goals as it could be a very important determinant of a successful academic, social and emotional life.

Among Nigerians, one likely aspect influencing emotional intelligence could be parental behaviour, particularly parental verbal abuse and the establishment of unrealistic standards by parents and relations. When parents subject their children to verbal abuse, it can detrimentally affect their self-worth, leading to diminished emotional intelligence (Morimoto, & Sharma, 2004). Additionally, the environment in which students reside, characterized by domiciliation, along with factors such as age and gender, may also play pivotal roles in shaping emotional intelligence.

Despite the importance of emotional intelligence and its potential determinants, identified prior studies conducted in Owerri had only addressed specific aspects of emotional intelligence. For example, Ibezim's (2015) study was centred on emotional intelligence among employees in Owerri while Onwudiele's (2012) study focused on emotional intelligence among individuals with visual illusions. Thus, there is a death in the literature on the influence of parental verbal abuse on emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri. Consequently, there remains a critical gap in understanding the specific impact of parental behaviour and

some demographic factors on emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri.

This study aims to address this gap by investigating the influence of parental verbal abuse, domiciliation, gender, and age on emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria. By comprehensively examining these factors, the research endeavours to contribute valuable insights to the existing literature, thereby enhancing understanding and facilitating more effective interventions to promote emotional well-being and academic success among secondary school students in Owerri.

Purpose of the Study

The researchers investigated if parental verbal abuse domiciliation gender, and age will influence emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri.

Specifically, this research work aims at:

1. To find out if parental verbal abuse will significantly predict emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria.
2. To examine if domiciliation will significantly predict emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria.
3. To investigate if gender will significantly predict emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria.
4. To ascertain if age will significantly predict emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Parental Verbal Abuse and Emotional Intelligence

Malmud, et al. (2020) examined the issue of parental verbal abuse within urban poor families. Their qualitative research, rooted in a post-positive philosophy, aimed to understand this phenomenon prevalent among poor families in Makassar City, particularly in the densely populated Pattinggaloang village of Ujuong Fanah Sub District. This location was chosen due to its high concentration of impoverished families facing challenges such as low income and limited access to education. Employing a cluster sampling technique, the researchers gathered data from 108 participants (57 males and 51 females). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that factors contributing to verbal abuse within poor families included educational deficits, low income, and environmental influences.

Kameliawati, et al. (2020) explored parental experiences of verbal abuse in preschool-aged children through a qualitative, phenomenological approach. Using snowball sampling, the researchers collected data from three samples, conducting in-depth interviews and transcribing participant responses. Through meticulous data analysis, they identified five key themes

related to verbal abuse in children: knowledge of verbal abuse, causative factors, effects on children, parenting patterns, and its impact on paediatric development.

Yun, Shim, and Jeong (2019) investigated the repercussions of verbal abuse on self-esteem, mental health, and social interaction among college students. Utilizing responses from 5,616 undergraduate and graduate students, they employed self-reporting questionnaires and various psychometric measures. Findings underscored the diverse manifestations and sources of verbal abuse, highlighting its detrimental effects on psychomotor functions, self-esteem, and social interactions, particularly exacerbated by severe instances of abuse.

Tsirigotis and Luczak (2016) examined the emotional intelligence of women who experienced parental verbal abuse in Taiwan. Comparing them to a control group, they found that women subjected to verbal abuse exhibited lower emotional intelligence, suggesting a significant impact on their psychological well-being. Similarly, Kim and Yeon (1994) explored the relationship between parental verbal aggression and children's emotional intelligence, revealing notable associations between verbal abuse and emotional well-being in children.

In another vein, Kokkinos and Kipritis (2012) investigated the nexus between bullying, emotional intelligence, and empathy among adolescents in Turkey. They discovered negative impacts of bullying and victimization on emotional intelligence, underscoring the need for interventions to mitigate such effects. Conversely, Garcia, Salguero, and Fernandez (2014) explored the inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and aggression, shedding light on the role of emotional intelligence in reducing violent behaviour and physical abuse.

Meanwhile, Ehis, Ekpo, and Uromi (2005) examined the influence of parental abuse, family size, and gender on emotional intelligence among undergraduates in Nigeria. Their findings highlighted the significant impact of parental abuse on emotional intelligence, surpassing the effects of family size and gender. The literature reflects a mixed perspective on verbal abuse, with varying prevalence rates and impacts across different contexts. While some studies emphasize its pervasive nature and long-term consequences, others underscore the need for targeted interventions to address its detrimental effects on emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.

A noteworthy study by Hugos and Stern (2002) from Florida State University revealed the enduring effects of childhood verbal abuse on adult mental health, including increased susceptibility to depression, anxiety, and low emotional intelligence. Their findings underscore the importance of recognizing verbal abuse as a significant contributor to long-term psychological distress, warranting greater attention and intervention.

In summary, verbal abuse, particularly within familial and educational contexts, poses significant challenges to emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Understanding its multifaceted nature and developing targeted interventions are crucial steps toward mitigating its adverse effects on individuals' mental health and social functioning.

Domiciliation and Emotional Intelligence

Gayathri and Meenakshi (2013) conducted an iterative review of emotional intelligence, investigating various thematic aspects to provide insightful recommendations for the future. The study purposively selected 164 participants, consisting of 93 males and 71 females. Results demonstrated that emotional intelligence exhibited correlations with verbal intelligence, a facet of general intelligence. Furthermore, the study identified that emotional intelligence tends to develop with age and environmental influences.

Furthermore, Smith, McGrath and Cummings (2009) investigated emotional intelligence among nurses. A broad search of computerized databases focusing on articles published in English during 1995-2007 was completed. Findings showed widespread support of emotional intelligence concepts in nursing. Theoretical and editorial interactive confirms that emotional intelligence concepts 'are centred on nursing.

The effect of gender, domiciliation and number of siblings on emotional intelligence was investigated by Ryff and Singer (2007). One hundred and eighty-six participants were drawn for the study through the convenience sampling technique. The emotional Intelligence Scale by Schutte *et al*. (1997) was administered to the participants comprised of (Males = 89 and females = 97) who were chosen from different regions in Thailand their ages ranged from 31 to 53 years. Data collected was analysed using Analysis of Variance. Findings showed that domiciliation and the number of siblings affected emotional intelligence.

Geeta (2014), also researched the effects of domiciliation on emotional intelligence and quality of life among undergraduates and postgraduate students. A total of two hundred and seventy-three students were drawn. Results after data was analysed showed that obesity influenced emotional intelligence as people who were obese had lower emotional intelligence while domicility had no significant role on emotional intelligence.

Ludban and Gitimu (2010) studied the emotional intelligence of college students and the role of domicility, and age (traditional vs non-traditional students). The participants were college students from a medium-sized mid-western university in the United States. Participants of this study were volunteer students who completed the survey during usual class time. For domicility variable an ANOVA was conducted, urban and rural significantly differed for four of the subscales (personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance) with rural students scoring higher than males in all four subscales. Class level had no difference in emotional intelligence; marital status had no impact on life satisfaction.

Mirabel, Kroos and Baker (2007) investigated demographic variables such as age, domiciliation and self-efficacy on emotional intelligence among married people. Findings showed that age and domicility did not predict emotional intelligence while self-efficacy predicted emotional intelligence among students. Salami, Mustapha and Hakimi (2009) worked on the influence of self-esteem, domiciliation and educational level on Emotional Intelligence among students in the College of Education Zaria. Findings showed that self-

esteem and domilicialtion predicted Emotional Intelligence while educational level on the other hand did not predict Emotional Intelligence among students.

Gender and Emotional Intelligence

Galanks, Krana, and Nikola (2021) conducted a study focusing on emotional intelligence among primary school teachers, examining the influence of gender, age, and tenure. Their findings, drawn from a sample of 109 teachers, revealed that emotional intelligence remained unaffected by these demographic factors. Despite variations in gender, age, and years of teaching experience, emotional intelligence scores remained consistent across the sample. This study underscores the stability of emotional intelligence within the context of primary school teaching.

Similarly, Platsidou (2010) explored the impact of age, gender, and tenure on emotional intelligence among special needs teachers. Analysing data from 123 participants, Platsidou found that emotional intelligence was not significantly influenced by age or teaching experience. However, gender differences emerged, with women demonstrating greater ability to manage the emotions of others compared to men. These findings highlight the nuanced interplay between gender and emotional intelligence within the teaching profession.

Louise, Maclean, and Allen (2002) delved into age-related differences in understanding emotions, comparing young and older adults across various emotional ability measures. Their study revealed specific deficits in older adults' ability to identify facial expressions of anger and sadness, as well as in understanding theory of mind from facial cues. However, no age effects were observed in understanding emotions from verbal descriptions. These findings shed light on age-related variations in emotional processing, emphasizing the importance of context and modality in emotional comprehension.

Chen, Peng, and Fang (2017) investigated the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between age and subjective well-being among Chinese adults. Analysing data from 360 participants, they found that emotional intelligence partially mediated the relationship between age and life satisfaction, suggesting that older adults may leverage their emotional intelligence to enhance subjective well-being. This study underscores the potential adaptive function of emotional intelligence across the lifespan.

In contrast, Dhillon (2018) conducted a comparative study on age and gender differences in emotional intelligence among 186 participants. While age and gender were found to influence emotional intelligence scores, the main effects were deemed insignificant. This suggests that while age and gender may contribute to variations in emotional intelligence, other factors may play a more substantial role in shaping emotional competencies.

Furthermore, Ghanawat, et al. (2016) explored the relationship between family functioning, demographic variables, and emotional intelligence among adolescents. Their findings revealed a significant positive correlation between family functioning and emotional intelligence, while

demographic factors such as age negatively influenced emotional intelligence. This underscores the importance of familial dynamics in fostering emotional competencies during adolescence.

Sharma (2017) examined the impact of age on emotional intelligence and its components among Indian adults. Utilizing a sample of 186 respondents across different age groups, Sharma found no significant changes in emotional intelligence scores with age. Additionally, regression analysis and ANOVA tests revealed no significant impact of emotional intelligence components on total emotional intelligence across age groups. These findings suggest relative stability in emotional intelligence across adulthood.

Lastly, Naddocks and Sparrow (2010) investigated age-related changes in emotional intelligence among a large sample of participants aged 16 to 50. Their results indicated a consistent increase in emotional intelligence scores with age, highlighting the potential for emotional growth and development across the lifespan. Similarly, Farisilli, Ghini, and Freedom (2006) found a slight but significant increase in emotional intelligence with age among participants aged 22 to 70. However, certain elements of emotional intelligence did not exhibit age-related increases, suggesting the importance of targeted interventions for enhancing specific emotional competencies.

Research on the interplay between gender and emotional intelligence offers valuable insights into the stability and variability of emotional competencies across different populations and life stages. While some studies highlight the role of gender in shaping emotional intelligence, others underscore the resilience and potential for growth in emotional competencies across the lifespan. Further research is needed to elucidate the complex interactions between demographic factors and emotional intelligence and their implications for personal and professional well-being.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no statistically significant influence of parental verbal abuse on emotional intelligence of secondary school students in Owerri.
2. There will be no statistically significant influence of domicility on emotional intelligence of secondary school students in Owerri.
3. There will be no statistically significant influence of gender on emotional intelligence of secondary school students in Owerri.
4. There will be no statistically significant influence of age on emotional intelligence of secondary school students in Owerri.

METHOD

Participants

Three hundred and seventeen secondary school students, drawn through the convenience sampling technique from Owerri City School, Premier International Secondary School and Comprehensive Secondary School all in Owerri, Imo State constituted the sample for the study. These schools were selected because they comprised students living in both urban and rural areas. The participants in this study were made up of 141 males and 146 females. The participants' ages, as obtained in this study, ranged from 14 to 17 years with a mean age of 15.25 and a standard deviation of 0.94. Students were only selected using convenience sampling technique from the population of students in SS1 and SS2 classes of the three schools because they were not exam classes

Instruments

Two instruments were used for data collection: Parental Verbal Abuse and Emotional Intelligence Scale.

Parental Verbal Abuse Scale (PVAS)

The Parental Verbal Abuse Scale (PVAS) developed by Nwankwo and Agu (2018) was used for this study. The PVAS was designed to measure the degree of parental verbal abuse on their wards/children. For this study, the PVAS was used to identify students who were verbally abused by their parents. The PVAS is a 4-point Likert-type response format ranging from "Strongly disagree" as 1 point to "Strongly Agree" as 4 points. Sample items include; "My parent(s) ridiculously laugh about my past failures in life" and I always see myself as failure and never-do-well because of the words my parents use on me". A predictive validity test was conducted to assess the direction of the relationship between Parental Verbal Abuse Scale (PVAS) and Verbal Abuse Scale (VAS) by Teicher, Samson, Polcari and McGreenery (2006). Results showed that the correlation coefficient r between the two scales is .63. For Nigerian use, Parental Verbal Scale was subjected to a pilot study by Nwankwo and Agu (2018) using one hundred and twenty participants drawn from three secondary schools in Enugu. A Cronbach alpha coefficient of .71 was obtained. All items are scored directly. A higher composite score indicates a higher level of parental verbal abuse and vice versa.

Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggert, Cooper and Golden (1998) measures the level of control over one's emotions. It contains 33 items scored on a 5-point Likert format ranging from 1 – Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree. A series of studies by Schutte *et al*. (1998) revealed adequate internal reliability estimates for the scale at .87 and above and two weeks' test-retest reliability of .78. EIS was revalidated in Nigeria by Ibezim (2015) through a pilot study conducted with eighty workers drawn from Imo

State University, Owerri. Using Cronbach's Alpha Method; a reliability of .89 and a concurrent validity of .62 were obtained. The norm for the scale is 58.64. Scores higher than the norm indicate emotional intelligence while scores lower than the norm indicates low emotional intelligence.

Procedure

The first step that was taken was to obtain letters of identification and approval from the Head of the Psychology Department, which was then taken to the various schools. When the researchers got to the schools, the letters of identification and approval were presented to the principals of the three schools on different days so as to obtain permission to engage their students in the research. When permissions were obtained, the principals introduced the researchers through a designated staff to the students during their break time or free periods, and the researchers informed them of the purpose of the study and presented them with a consent form which would be approved by their parents or guardian. On a designated date, the researchers revisited the students. After ascertaining students who returned the signed consent forms and obtaining the voluntary participation of these students, they were issued with a set of the questionnaires for the study. Students were informed that they could discontinue the completion of the questionnaires at any time they so desired. They were also assured that no information rendered would be used for other purposes except for this research and that their privacy and sensitivity would be protected. Upon completion of the questionnaires, the researchers thanked the students as he collected the questionnaires back. In all, out of the 500 questionnaires distributed, 317 were returned filled; representing a 63.4% response rate. A total of 113, 107 and 97 students were drawn from Owerri City Secondary School, Orji Comprehensive Secondary School, and Premier International Secondary School respectively.

Design and Statistics

Cross sectional survey design was employed for the study because samples from a large population cutting across people with different age, gender were used; (Lee, 2014). The Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (on SPSS Version 21) was adopted for the analysis of data because the dependent variable (Emotional Intelligence) was scored with a continuous scale, giving room for the examination of more than one independent variable on the dependent variable and to check if variables explain a statically significant amount of variance on the dependent variable.

RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation of All Variables in the Study

	EI	PV	Domiciliation	Gender	Age
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	1.00	-.058	-.018	-.086	.055
Parental Verbal (PV) Abuse		1. 00	.018	.083	-.001
Domiciliation			1.00	.104	.032
Gender				1.00	-.029
Age					1

Note: N = 317

The correlation analyses of all variables used in the study as presented in Table 1 above showed no significant relationships among all the variables. Emotional intelligence and parental verbal abuse (r = -.058, n= 317, p =.305); emotional intelligence and domiciliation (r = -.018, n =317, p =.755); emotional intelligence and gender (r = -.086, n=317, p=128); emotional intelligence and age (r =.05, n = 317, p =.333); parental verbal abuse and domiciliation (r =.018, n = 377, p = 750); parental verbal abuse and gender (r = 317, n = 317, p =.l40); parental verbal abuse and age (r = -.001, n = 317, p = 98l); domiciliation and gender (r = .104, n = 317, p = .065); domiciliation and age (r = .032, n = 31, p = .565): and gender and age (r = -.029, n = 317, p = .608).

Table 2: Summary of three Steps Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for Emotional Intelligence, Parental Verbal Abuse, Domiciliation, Gender and Age

Predictors	Step 1β	t	Step 2β	t
Step 1				
Domiciliation	-.011	-.188	-.010	-.180
Gender	-.083	-1.470	-.079	1.391
Age	.052	.932	.052	.932
Step 2				
Parental Verbal Abuse			-.051	.904
ΔF	1.073	.818		
R^2	.010	.013		
ΔR^2	.010	.003		
Df	3,313	1,312		
Dublin Watson	1.71			

Note: N = 317, p >.05

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis as presented in Table 2 above was used to test the four hypotheses postulated for the study. The overall model of the four-step hierarchical regression analyses was not significant for domiciliation, gender and age (R^2 .010, F(3,313) = 1.073, p = .361) and for parental verbal abuse (R^2 = .013, F(l,312) = 1.10, p = .403). The overall fit of the model showed that only 1.3% of the variation in emotional intelligence was accounted for by the predictor variables. The Durbin-Watson of 1.71 falls within the accepted range (1.5 < D < 2.5), indicating that there is no autocorrelation problem in the data and that the error term is independent.

To test for hypothesis one, parental verbal abuse was regressed into the model. The result also showed that parental verbal abuse did not predict emotional intelligence among students (β = -.051, p = -.367, t = -.904). Thus, the first hypothesis which stated that there will be statistically significant influence of parental verbal abuse on the emotional intelligence of students is accepted.

Similarly, domiciliation, gender and age, when regressed into the model to test for the second, third and fourth hypotheses respectively, the results showed no significant prediction of emotional intelligence; domiciliation (β = - 011, p = -.851, t = -.188), gender (β = -.083, p = -.143, t =-1.470), and age (β = -.052, p = .352, t = -.932). Therefore, the second, third and fourth hypotheses were respectively accepted.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the influence of parental verbal abuse, domiciliation, gender, and age on emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria. The first finding of this study indicated that parental verbal abuse is not a significant predictor of emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria. The study of Tsirigotis and Luczak (2016) supports this finding because their finding showed that parental verbal abuse did not influence emotional intelligence. However, studies by Kim and Yeon (2004) and Kokkinos and Kipritis (2012) contradict the present finding as their findings showed that parental verbal abuse had significant influences on emotional intelligence. One plausible reason for this finding could be that parental verbal abuse, while undoubtedly harmful, may not always predictably impact emotional intelligence. It's essential to consider the broader context in which emotional intelligence develops. While parental influence is significant, emotional intelligence is a multifaceted construct influenced by various factors, including social interactions, educational experiences, and individual resilience.

Moreover, in the Nigerian context, where cultural and societal norms may shape how children respond to parental verbal abuse, students may develop coping mechanisms or seek support from other sources, such as peers, teachers, or community members. These alternative sources of support and positive interactions could mitigate the negative impact of parental verbal abuse on emotional intelligence.

Additionally, the lack of significant findings regarding parental verbal abuse as a predictor of emotional intelligence may suggest that other factors, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, play more substantial roles in shaping emotional intelligence among secondary school students. These factors could be influenced by a myriad of environmental, personal, and social factors beyond parental behaviour alone.

The second finding of this study may appear to contradict some previous studies, such as Ryff and Singer (2007) and Geeta (2014), which found an influence of domiciliation on emotional intelligence. However, it aligns with the findings of Ludban and Gitimu (2010), who also did not find a significant difference in emotional intelligence between rural and urban dwellers.

One plausible reason for this finding could be that the impact of domiciliation on emotional intelligence is mediated by various contextual and individual factors. While rural and urban environments may differ in terms of resources, social support networks, and exposure to stressors, these factors may not directly translate into differences in emotional intelligence.

For instance, in urban areas where there may be greater awareness of the negative effects of verbal abuse and more access to support services, parents may be less likely to engage in abusive behaviours. As a result, children in urban areas may experience less verbal abuse and have better emotional intelligence compared to those in rural areas where support services may be less accessible.

Additionally, the presence of individuals with low emotional intelligence in a particular area may influence the emotional development of children residing there. If a student is surrounded by peers or community members with low emotional intelligence, they may be less likely to develop strong emotional intelligence themselves, regardless of their domiciliation.

Moreover, individual differences and personal experiences within urban and rural contexts can also play a significant role in shaping emotional intelligence. Factors such as family dynamics, parental upbringing, educational opportunities, and personal resilience may have a more substantial impact on emotional intelligence than simply the geographical location of one's residence.

Similarly, the third finding of this study revealed that gender does not influence emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria. This finding may appear to contradict some previous studies, such as those conducted by Pinquart and Sorenson (2001) and Visani et al. (2011), which found that gender predicted emotional intelligence. However, it aligns with the findings of Lohr, Essex, and Klein (2003), who also did not find differences in emotional intelligence scores between males and females. One plausible reason for this finding could be that emotional intelligence is not inherently tied to gender but rather influenced by a combination of biological, social, and environmental factors. While some studies may have observed gender differences in emotional intelligence, these differences may be attributed to societal expectations, cultural norms, and individual experiences rather than innate differences between males and females.

Moreover, the role of nature versus nurture in emotional intelligence development suggests that gender alone may not be a determining factor. Emotional intelligence can be cultivated and enhanced through various interventions, such as education, training, and social support, regardless of gender. Therefore, professionals specializing in emotional intelligence can effectively assist students in improving their emotional intelligence regardless of their gender. Additionally, the absence of gender differences in emotional intelligence found in this study may reflect the changing social dynamics and evolving gender roles in contemporary society. As traditional gender stereotypes continue to be challenged and more opportunities for equal education and personal development become available to both genders, the influence of gender on emotional intelligence may diminish.

Furthermore, individual variations within each gender group may overshadow any potential differences between males and females in emotional intelligence. Factors such as personality traits, coping strategies, and life experiences may play a more significant role in shaping emotional intelligence than gender alone.

Finally, the fourth finding of this study revealed that age does not significantly predict emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria. This finding may seem to contradict some previous studies, such as those conducted by Ghanawat et al. (2016) and Chen, Peng, and Fang (2017), which found that age influenced emotional intelligence. However, it aligns with the findings of Dhillon (2018), who also did not find a significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence.

One plausible reason for this finding could be that the development of emotional intelligence is not solely dependent on chronological age. While it is true that individuals may accumulate more life experiences and coping strategies as they age, these experiences may not necessarily translate into higher emotional intelligence scores. Emotional intelligence encompasses a complex set of skills and abilities, including self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, which may develop at different rates for different individuals regardless of their age.

Furthermore, the lack of a significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence found in this study may indicate that emotional intelligence is a dynamic construct that can be influenced by various factors throughout the lifespan. Individuals may have the capacity to enhance their emotional intelligence through learning, practice, and personal growth, regardless of their age.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study have several implications for understanding and supporting emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria. Firstly, the discovery that parental verbal abuse does not significantly predict emotional intelligence challenges common assumptions. It suggests that emotional intelligence development is multidimensional and may not be solely influenced by the absence of verbal abuse in the home

environment. This insight emphasises the importance of addressing emotional well-being holistically, beyond the absence of parental abuse, to foster healthy emotional development among students.

Secondly, the finding that domiciliation does not significantly influence emotional intelligence challenges the notion that individuals living in environments with low emotional intelligence would necessarily adopt similar behaviours. This highlights the potential for individuals to develop emotional intelligence independently of their living environment, emphasizing personal agency and resilience, especially among individuals residing in rural areas.

Furthermore, the discovery that gender does not influence emotional intelligence challenges stereotypes and biases. Employers and educators should avoid making assumptions about emotional intelligence based on gender, promoting fair and equitable opportunities for all individuals and contributing to more inclusive and diverse workplaces and educational environments.

Lastly, the finding that age is not a significant factor in emotional intelligence challenges the assumption that older individuals inherently possess higher emotional intelligence due to their life experiences. This underscores the importance of recognizing emotional intelligence as a dynamic construct that can be developed at any age, promoting lifelong learning initiatives and personal development programs aimed at individuals across different age groups.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the influence of parental verbal abuse, domiciliation, gender, and age on emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri. A sample of three hundred and seventeen students was selected from Owerri City Secondary School, Comprehensive Development Secondary School, and Premier International Secondary School using a simple random sampling technique. Multiple regression analysis was employed to analyse the data.

The findings of the study indicate that parental verbal abuse, domiciliation, gender, and age do not significantly influence the emotional intelligence of secondary school students in Owerri. Despite expectations and prior research suggesting potential relationships between these variables and emotional intelligence, the results of this study suggest otherwise.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of considering various factors that may affect emotional intelligence among secondary school students. While parental verbal abuse, domiciliation, gender, and age were explored in this study, further research is needed to delve deeper into other potential influencers of emotional intelligence. Understanding the complex interplay of factors affecting emotional intelligence can inform educational policies and interventions aimed at fostering emotional well-being among students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. People should refrain from assuming that individuals from verbally abusive homes inherently possess lower emotional intelligence. This study indicates that parental verbal abuse does not significantly influence emotional intelligence, challenging common stereotypes. It's essential to recognize that emotional intelligence development is multifaceted and influenced by various factors beyond parental behaviour.
2. Employers should avoid using domiciliation, gender, and age as sole criteria for employment decisions. This study suggests that these factors do not significantly impact emotional intelligence. Embracing fair and equitable hiring practices can contribute to fostering diverse and inclusive workplaces.
3. While parental verbal abuse may not directly influence emotional intelligence among secondary school students, parents are encouraged to refrain from all forms of abusive behaviour. Creating a supportive and nurturing environment at home can positively impact children's emotional development.

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