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**Authoritarian and Authoritative Parenting Styles as Correlates of Students' Tendency to Abuse Drugs in Rivers State, Southern Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study investigated Authoritarian and Authoritative parenting styles and as correlates of student's abuse of drugs in Rivers State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding null-hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlational design. A sample size of 400 SS I and SS II students drawn from the population of 22,413 secondary school students through simple and non-proportionate stratified random sampling techniques were used for the study. Two instruments used in the study were Parenting Style Scale (PSS) and Abuse of Drugs Inventory (ADI). The instruments were validated by three experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The reliabilities of the instruments were determined using Cronbach Alpha techniques. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.81, 0.77, 0.84 and 0.73 for Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive and Uninvolved Parenting Styles respectively and Abuse of Drugs inventory had a reliability coefficient of 0.79. Multiple Regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used in data analysis. The results revealed that Authoritarian and Authoritative Parenting Styles do not significantly correlate with students abuse of drugs. The conclusion drawn from this study is that parenting style had a significant joint contribution in determining the outcome of children's abuse of drugs, while some parenting styles (e.g. authoritative and authoritarian) are negatively associated with abuse of drugs. Based on the results, recommendations were made, one of which was that parents should adopt authoritative parenting style in rearing their children as this has been shown to minimize the tendency of them to be involved in abuse of drugs.*

**KEY WORDS:** Parenting style, authoritarian, authoritative, drug abuse, adolescents.

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## INTRODUCTION

A major public health challenge facing not only African nations but the entire globe today, especially among youths is drug abuse. From the estimate of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) world drug report of 2019, 271 million, which is the same as 5.5 percent of the world population that fall within the age range of 15 – 64 years had used drugs during the previous

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year. This report also projected that as at the time of this report, as many as 35 million were possibly suffering from various disorders that originated from drugs (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2019). Similarly, a report in 2017 by Global Burden of Disease estimated that there were about 585,000 deaths that were drugs based across the world. The same body (UNODC) reported that in 2021, around 275 million people used drugs worldwide in the previous year, while over 36 million people suffered from drug related disorders.

The case is not different in Nigeria where the 2018 National Drug Survey revealed that at that time in Nigeria, there were around 14.3 million drug users out of which 3 million suffered from drug use disorders. No doubt, it is a notable fact that abuse of drugs is one of the problems confronting Nigerian youths both in our secondary schools and higher institutions. In fact, with regard to issues that have to do with the fruitful growth and development of modern day Nigerian youths, abuse of drugs has to be seen as the most challenging social problems (Anokwu, 2015). Abuse of drugs among youths in Nigeria is not just a challenge, but one that is on the increase. Abuse of drugs refers to the detrimental use of psychoactive drugs, including alcohol and illicit drugs, which can lead to a number of dependence syndromes/disorders (World Health Organization, 2020). On the other hand, Rathus (2006) defined drug abuse as a persistent pattern of use of drugs characterized by frequent intoxication and impairment of physical, social, or emotional wellbeing. This implies the use of a drug in amounts or by methods that are harmful to the individual or others.

There are many reasons why adolescents in particular use drugs. Adolescents use drugs not only to cope with their medical problems but also to resolve daily tensions, run – of – the – mill depression, and even boredom. Many adolescents use drugs for the same reason that adults do, but they also use them because they don't want to be the odd person out among their peer group. Because adolescence by nature is a period of fashion, the average youth wants to imitate whatever his friends are doing. In fact, because of this tendency to be like others, during the teenage years, an adolescent can get involved in what he knows is wrong, as long as it makes him feel that he belongs. The case is not different with the use of drugs. Some use drugs for the purpose of rebelling against their parents who are likely begging them not to (Jarvis, 2004). They also use drugs to experience pleasure, to deaden pain, and to earn prestige among peers. According to Ibrahim et al., (2017), the highest influential factor leading to substance misuse among adolescents is peer group who are males. This author also posits that 70 per cent of substance users engage in the menace as a result of peer group influence and 28 per cent of the time it is due to improper care by parents.

Psychologists and educators are so concerned about the use of drugs among youths for many reasons. The point is, drug abuse is not just a moral issue. In other words, drugs are not bad just because they are legally wrong. Adolescents are advised to avoid drugs not just because they are not old enough to use drugs. It is because drugs can have potential serious harmful effects on their health. There are three main categories of drugs mostly abused by adolescents. These include depressants, stimulants and hallucinogens. The first category of drugs easily used and abused by adolescents is depressants. A common characteristic of depressants is that they slow the activity of the nervous system, which causes the muscles to relax and calms and soothes a person. Apart

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from that, they can affect the individual biologically and cognitively. Depressants include alcohol, narcotics, derived from the opium poppy (heroin, morphine, and the like), and sedatives (which include barbiturates and methaqualone) (Rathus, 2006)'. Research studies has shown that alcohol for examples lessens inhibitions, which means that under the influence of of alcohol, adolescents may do things they would not do normally (Feola et al., 2000). Relationship has also been found between taking more drinks on a row (binge drinking) and bad grades, as well as bad and risky behaviour (such as unprotected, promiscuous sex, aggressive acts, and accidents) (Bryant et al., 2003). Apart from being a stimulant, alcohol can also intoxicate and distort perception, impair concentration, hinder coordination and slur the speech. While so much attention is focused on the effects of more perceived serious drugs like heroin and cocaine abuse, many young people die each year from alcohol related causes. Just like alcohol, other depressants are equally dangerous and harmful.

Stimulants are a class of drugs that speed up messages travelling between the brain and body. Abuse of stimulants can also be very harmful to health. Stimulants speed up the heart beat and other functions of the body. They also have the tendency to keep people awake and alert but at the expense of some wear and tear. The most commonly used stimulants are nicotine, cocaine and amphetamines. Cigars cigarettes and chewing tobaccos contain nicotine. When nicotine enters the body, it causes the release of the hormone adrenaline, which ramps up the heart, disrupts sits rhythm, and causes liver to pour sugar into the blood (Jarvis, 2004). Cocaine is a stimulant which produces feelings of euphoria, relieves pain, boosts self-confidence, and reduces the appetite. Cocaine affects an individual psychologically and, as well as biologically. It causes the acceleration of the heart rate raises the blood pressure, constricts the arteries of the heart and causes the thickening of the blood all which in combination can lead to cardiovascular and respiratory collapse (Moliterno et al., 1994).

Hallucinogens are a diverse group of drugs that alter a person's awareness of their surroundings as well as their own thoughts and feelings. Usually, these drugs give rise to perceptual distortions known as hallucinations. An individual suffering from hallucination may believe that the hallucination cannot be real, yet it strongly affects his senses and so much that he confuses the experience with reality. Examples of hallucinogenic drugs include Marijuana, Ecstasy, LSD, and PCP. Marijuana, which is typically smoked or eaten is derived from the Cannabis sativa plant. From the report of many adolescents, marijuana helps them relax and elevates their mood. Marijuana carries a number of health risks which include the impairment of perceptual motor coordination used in driving. It impairs short term-memory and slows learning (Ashton, 2001). Ecstasy which is also called MDMA (short form for its chemical formula) is a common party drug or club drug. As a hallucinogen, it distorts reality. LSD is the acronym for lysergic acid diethylamide, another drug of the hallucinogen family. One dangerous of the use of this category of drugs among adolescents is that regular use of hallucinogens can lead to psychological dependence and tolerance

There are many factors associated with the experimentation and abuse of drugs among adolescents. According to social cognitive theorists, children and adolescents usually try drugs because

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someone has recommended them. At other times it is because they have observed someone else using them. Other theorists suggest factors such as personal values (Galdos & Sanchez, 2010) and personality traits (Saiz, Alvaro & Martinez, 2011). However, of these factors, one of the most important is parenting style. Most psychologists believe that parenting style plays a big role (Baumrid, 1991; Dorius, et al., 2004).

Parenting styles are systems, techniques, or styles employed in raising up a child or children. It can also be seen as a psychological construct that represents standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. Kretcmar-Hendricks (2017) defined parenting style as the process of bringing up children by the means of giving protection and care for them to transition healthily in to adulthood. This implies a system of rearing children through which their cognitive, social, physiological ethical emotional and spiritual growth are encouraged from birth to adulthood. In his own definition, Sigmon (2011) referred to parenting styles simply as the behaviour of a caregiver in front of children which encompasses the mien of a parent when interacting or communicating with their kids, making it a definitive factor. Parenting styles therefore more or less represents how parents respond to and make demands on their children. Parenting styles have been categorized into two based (i), on how much behavioural maturity is expected by parents from, and the level of control exercised over their children; and (2), on responsiveness which describes the extent of parental acceptance and expression of love and care as well as being keen to the children's cognitive and psychological needs. However, broadly speaking, parenting styles have been categorized into four ways based on how parents relate and train their children (Baumrind, 1992). These are authoritarian, permissive, authoritative and uninvolved.

Authoritarian parenting style is the one in which parents believe that their children must follow their prescribed rules without exception. Parents that adopt this style do not give room for their children to be heard or seen, but rather believe rules must be as they say without considering the feelings of their children. In this parenting environment, rules are rarely clarified, and there are high expectations due to the one-way nature of parent – child communication, limited flexibility and less nurturing. The authoritative parenting style is the parenting system that is characterized by power and authority. The authoritative parenting style though similar to the authoritarian parenting style, differ in their characteristics. While the former is strict and cold, the latter is strict and warm (Sigmon, 2011). Authoritative parents have high demandingness as well as high responsiveness in terms of their method of discipline. They set limits and enforce them by setting clear and reasonable expectations, providing explanations with regard to rules and expectations.

Permissive parenting style on the other hand is characterized by excessive behavioural freedom. There is low demandingness and high responsiveness but control, discipline and monitoring are absent. Permissive parents are generally tolerant of their children's wants and actions, giving them the freedom to control their own conduct. Apart from having difficulty controlling themselves these children are unaware of the limits of proper conduct (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2018). They also lack social skills (Morin, 2021). The last parenting style in these categories is the uninvolved parenting style. Parents that adopt uninvolved parenting style are more of detached from their children. There exists a kind of emotional gap between them and their children. They allow their children the liberty to do whatever they choose. They exhibit the 'I don't care' attitude toward

their children. There are low demands, low responsiveness, and very little communication, almost no nurturing nor any disciplinary method.

Parenting styles play a key role in drugs use and abuse. Significant association has been found between adolescent substance abuse and some aspects of parenting styles like parental supervision and involvement (Sharma, 2015). Research studies have shown that having open lines of communication with a parent helps inhibit drug use. The authoritarian and authoritative patterns of child rearing have been known to protect children from drug abuse, while the permissive and uninvolved or neglectful parenting styles tend to increase the risk (Hoeve, , Blokland, Dubas, & Loeber, 2008). In fact, it has been found that children reared in a family environment where their parents were firm, controlling, and traditional tended to be associated with low levels of drug abuse; although, these levels were not same low level as those from authoritative parents (Baumrind, 1991) This study aims at determining the extent to which authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles relate with drugs abuse in the area of the study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Abuse of drugs has been observed to be a serious challenge not only to the secondary school student, but to his family, and society at large. A lot of students have taken to drugs and it has greatly affected different areas of their lives, including their educational pursuit. Some students have dropped out of school because of their indulgence in drug abuse, some can even be seen roaming the streets of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area because of illicit use of drugs. The problem is that wrong parenting style and negative peer pressure are major influences of students' abuse of drugs. If parents neglect their roles of guiding their children aright, they therefore leave their children in the hands of their peers for guidance, that could be dangerous for them.

The Bible, one of the greatest books of all times instructs that parents should train up their children in the right way they should go, and they will grow up with such training and do the right things. Parents who are not fully involved in the lives of their children are endangering the lives of their children, because there is a high tendency for children to follow the wrong part if they lack guidance from their parents. Such children could do whatever they are told to do by their peers without any restriction because their parents are not properly involved in bringing them up with cautions and necessary instructions. Such children could end up as abusers of drugs get involved in all manner of crime which in turn affects the society at large. Since it is well established that a very important suspect in the problem of drugs use and abuse among adolescents is parenting styles as shown by studies carried out in other climes, to what extent does authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles relate with the use and abuse of drugs among adolescents in this area of study. This forms the crux of the problem of this study.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study was to investigate parenting styles and peer pressure as correlates of students' abuse of drugs in Rivers State, Southern Nigeria. Specifically, this study intends to:

1. Find out the extent to which authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved parenting styles jointly relate with students' abuse of drugs in Rivers Stat, Southern Nigeria

2. Find out the extent to which authoritarian parenting style relate with students' abuse of drugs in Rivers State, Southern Nigeria.
3. Find out the extent to which authoritative parenting style relate with students' abuse of drugs.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent do authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved parenting styles jointly relate with students' abuse of drugs?
2. To what extent does authoritarian parenting style relate with students' abuse of drugs?
3. To what extent does authoritative parenting style relate with students' abuse of drugs?

### **Hypotheses**

1. Authoritarian, Authoritative, permissive and uninvolved parenting styles do not jointly impact significantly on students' abuse of drugs in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and students' abuse of drugs.
3. There is no significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and students' abuse of drugs.

### **METHOD**

The study investigated Authoritative and Authoritarian parenting styles and as correlates of student's abuse of drugs in Rivers State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding null-hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlational design. A sample size of 400 SS I and SS II students drawn from the population of 22,413 secondary school students through simple and non-proportionate stratified random sampling techniques were used for the study. Two instruments used in the study were Parenting Style Scale (PSS) and Abuse of Drugs Inventory (ADI). The instruments were validated by three experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The reliabilities of the instruments were determined using Cronbach Alpha techniques. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.81, 0.77, 0.84 and 0.73 for Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive and Uninvolved Parenting Styles respectively and Abuse of Drugs inventory had a reliability coefficient of 0.79. Multiple Regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used in data analysis. The results revealed that Authoritarian and Authoritative Parenting Styles do not significantly correlate with students abuse of drugs. The conclusion drawn from this study is that parenting style had a significant joint contribution in determining the outcome of children's abuse of drugs, while some parenting styles (e.g. authoritative and authoritarian) are negatively associated with abuse of drugs. Based on the results, recommendations were made, one of which was that parents should adopt authoritative parenting style in rearing their children as this has been shown to minimize the tendency of them to be involved in abuse of drugs.

## RESULTS

**Research Question One:** To what extent do authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved parenting styles jointly relate with students' abuse of drugs in Rivers State?

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant joint relationship between authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and, uninvolved parenting styles and students' abuse of drugs in Rivers State.

In order to answer research question one, the scores of respondents on the various sections of parenting styles were regressed against their score on the Abuse of Drug Inventory. That yielded a multiple regression coefficient as shown in Table 4.1 below. Furthermore, the value obtained was subjected to an ANOVA associated with multiple regression as shown below:

**Table 1: Joint prediction of parenting styles on abuse of drugs among students.**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of Estimates 10.41		
	0.227	0.152	0.142			
<b>Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)</b>						
Model		Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression		2334.377	4	583.594	5.380	0.0005
Residual		42845.983	395	108.471		
Total		45180.360	399			

From the result shown in table 1, it can be seen that when the scores of respondents on the various parenting styles were regressed on their Abuse of Drugs Inventory using multiple regression, it yielded an R-value of 0.227, with associated R squared and Adj R squared values of 0.152 and 0.142 respectively. From this results, it can be seen that the joint prediction of parenting styles accounted for 14.2% of the prediction of drug abuse among secondary school students. This indicates that the remaining 85% of drug abuse might be attributed to other factors outside the scope of the present study. In addition, when tested with ANOVA associated with multiple regression, this result revealed an F-value of 5.380 at 4 and 395 degrees of freedom with an associated p- value of 0.0005 which was lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05. The meaning of this result is that the joint influence of parenting style has a significant prediction on the abuse of drugs among secondary school students in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent does authoritarian parenting style relate with students' abuse of drugs?

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and students' abuse of drugs.

Research question two and the corresponding null hypothesis were analyzed using the scores of

respondents on authoritarian from the authoritarian parenting scale which were correlated with their response on the Abuse of Drug Inventory. Result from the analysis is displayed in table 4.2 below. The corresponding null hypothesis was tested using z-test associated with PPMC, which was also reported on the same table

**Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on Authoritarian parenting style and abuse of drugs**

Variable	Mean	SD	N	R	P	A	Decision
Authoritarian	22.57	5.24	400	0.024	0.628	0.05	Retain
Abuse of Drugs	39.71	6.64					H <sup>2</sup>

According to the result shown in Table 4.2, it is observed that when the responses of students on the extent to which their parents displayed authoritarian parenting style and their abuse of drugs, mean values of 22.57 (SD = 5.24) and 39.71 (SD = 6.64) were obtained. Furthermore, when PPMC was applied to the responses, an R-value of 0.024 was gotten with an associated p-value of 0.628 at 0.05 level of probability. Furthermore, this result is not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance, since the p-value was greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05. From this result, it can be stated that there is a very weak relationship between authoritarian parenting style and abuse of drugs among adolescents. The corresponding null hypothesis was therefore retained.

**Research Question Three:** To what extent does authoritative parenting style relate with students' abuse of drugs?

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and students' abuse of drugs.

**Tables3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of authoritative parenting style and abuse of drugs**

Variable	Mean	SD	N	R	P	A	Decision
Authoritative	22.05	4.47	400	-0.057	0.251	0.05	Retain
Abuse of Drugs	39.71	6.64					H <sup>3</sup>

From the result displayed on Table 3, it is observed that when the responses of students on the extent to which their parents displayed authoritative parenting style and their abuse of drugs, mean values of 22.05 (SD = 4.47) and 39.71 (SD = 6.64) were obtained respectively. Furthermore, when PPMC was applied to the responses, an r- value of -0.057 was gotten with an associated p-value



of 0.251 at 0.05 level of probability. From this result, it can be stated that there is a negative relationship between authoritative parenting style and abuse of drugs among adolescents. However, this result was not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance, since the p-value was greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05. The corresponding null hypothesis was therefore retained.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **Joint Relationship Between Parenting Style, Peer Group Influence and Abuse of Drugs**

From research question one, it was revealed that the joint influence of parenting styles accounted for 14.2% on the abuse of drugs among the students. This result implies that the various parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved) influence is responsible for the abuse of drugs among secondary school students in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Furthermore, the result showed that this value obtained was statistically significant and not attributed to chance or error factors. This result further confirms that the remaining 85.8% in the dependent variable which was abuse of drugs can be attributed to other factors such as parental socioeconomic status, gender, sibling relationship which were not considered within the context of the present study.

This result is expected and not surprising to the researcher because this researcher believes that as the first agent of socialization, parents make immense contribution to the developmental trajectory of their children. Furthermore, the style adopted by parents can either enable children to develop strong bond with them or pull away from them. When this bond is weak, the children might be exposed to substance abuse, especially when peers step into the picture. As children continue to feel the absence of active role of their parents, the temporary consolation that drug provides might be used as an alternative to feel loved and special.

The result of this study is in line with that obtained by Ahmadi, Dadfar, Nasrolalu, Abdeni and Azar-Abdar (2014) who found that among undergraduate students in Iran, parenting style accounted for over 38% of addition to substance abuse. The conclusion drawn from their study was that parenting style was a significant contributor to the problem of students' tendency to abuse drugs. Similar result that the finding of this study supports, is that of Brewer (2017) who found that parenting style is a significant contributor to the problem of substance abuse among undergraduate students in Mississippi, United States. Conversely, in their study of Swedish adolescents using a longitudinal study, the result revealed that parenting style was not significantly associated with substance abuse. Despite the similarity between the current study and the cited ones above, it can be observed that while their studies focused on what is happening in the Western World, the present study focused on what is happening in Nigeria, and Rivers State in particular.

### **Relationship between Authoritarian Parenting Style and Abuse of Drugs**

The result of the analysis revealed that authoritarian parenting style had a very low positive relationship with abuse of drugs among adolescents. This results indicates that those students who come from homes where the parents are actively adopt the authoritarian style are less likely

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to be involved in drug abuse. This result is not surprising, but expected as authoritarian parents often involve in establishing strict guidelines for their children. These guidelines often involve avoiding socially unapproved behaviours such as substance abuse and smoking. This tendency contributes to the low level of drug abuse as reported from this finding. Furthermore, the outcome of this result showed that although a positive finding was obtained, the result might not be too reliable as further test using z-test indicated that the result was not significant.

The result of this study is similar to that obtained by Ritter (2006) who found students who reported authoritarian parenting style had low level of alcohol usage among youths in the United States. Similarly, Benchaya (2006) showed that when parents adopt the authoritarian style, their children are less likely to be drug abusers.

### **Relationship between Authoritative Parenting Style and Abuse of Drug**

The result from the study showed that there is a negative relationship between authoritative parenting style and abuse of drugs among adolescents in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This means that the more a parent adopts the authoritative parenting style, the lesser the tendency for the child or children to be involved with the abuse of drug. The result obtained through this research question and the corresponding null hypothesis were not surprising but expected for a few reasons that are mentioned here. Authoritative parents enjoy a special bond with their children and ensure to provide reasons for their actions. In addition, these children are provided their basis needs by their parents who also provide reasons for disciplines when needed. With this sought of family climate, it is less likely that the children will not be taken care of. Also, it can easily be noticed by the parents when children involve themselves in drug abuse because the parents are vigilant, and monitoring. As such, appropriate timely corrective measures can be taken to address it. The result of this study is similar to that obtained by Onukwufor and Chukwu (2017) who reported that among senior secondary school students in Rivers State, authoritative parenting style is negatively associated with drug addiction. While the population of this study and that of Onukwufor and Chukwu (2017) are similar, the methodology adopted and the instrument used for data collection were different.

### **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion drawn from this study is that parenting styles had a significant joint contribution in determining the outcome of children's abuse of drugs. While some parenting styles (e.g. authoritative and authoritarian) are negatively associated with abuse of drugs, others such as permissive and uninvolved are positively associated with abuse of drugs among secondary school students in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of River State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion reached in this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should be more intentional in their approach to the rearing and raising of their children because they are the primary change agents against the myriad of societal vices that

threaten the healthy and safe development of their children into responsible and truly integrated members of society.

2. Parents should attempt to adopt the authoritative parenting style in rearing their children as this has been shown to minimize the tendency for them to be involved in the abuse of drugs.

3. Counsellors in schools should collaboratively work with parents in advocating for more authoritative

pattern of child rearing as against the permissive and uninvolved approaches as this has more promise of reducing the incidence of drug abuse among secondary school students.

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