ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN ADO-EKITI LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EKITI STATE

ADEWUMI Damilola Mercy
Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education,
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti
dammymercy89@gmail.com
07033048321
&
OGUNLADE Abigail Toyin
Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education,
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti
abigail.ogunlade@eksu.edu.ng
08103052893

Abstract
This project is basically on anti-social behaviour among adolescents in Ekiti state. The objective is to examine the types and patterns of anti-social behaviour commonly exhibited by adolescents. This study made use of descriptive research design of survey type. The population of the study comprised of in-school students in Secondary Schools in Ado Ekiti Local Government. Samples were 100 students from five in Ado Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti state. An instrument was used to collect data in this study. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. For the descriptive statistics, simple percentage and frequency counts was used. The inferential statistics was used to test hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that truancy is a common behaviour among students, many students in my school are involved in bullying weaker peers, some adolescents deliberately destroy school property or facilities. It was concluded that truancy is a common behaviour among students, many students in my school are involved in bullying weaker peers, some adolescents deliberately destroy school property or facilities. Based on the findings, it was recommended that students should be encouraged to develop self-discipline and emotional regulation skills through participation in social–emotional learning programs. Guidance counsellors should be actively involved in identifying at-risk students early and providing appropriate counselling and mentorship support.

Keywords: anti-social behaviour, adolescents, truancy, self-discipline

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by rapid physical, emotional, and psychological changes. During this period, individuals experience increased responsibilities, academic pressures, social challenges, and identity formation issues, all of which can contribute to heightened stress levels (Spear, 2019). The inability to effectively manage stress during adolescence can lead to various maladaptive behaviours, including anti-social tendencies.

Anti-social behaviour refers to actions that violate social norms and the rights of others, including aggression, delinquency, vandalism, and defiance of authority (Frick & Viding, 2019). Such behaviours are often considered a response to underlying emotional distress, poor impulse control, or dysfunctional family and social environments. Anti-social behaviour among adolescents encompasses a range of disruptive and harmful activities, such as aggression, defiance, rule-breaking, truancy, and criminal involvement. These behaviours not only jeopardize the individual's development but also impact schools, families, and communities at large (Compas, 2019).

Anti-social behaviour during adolescence is influenced by various factors, including familial, peer, and environmental influences. Family dynamics, such as parental neglect, poor parenting practices, or exposure to violence within the home, have been linked to higher rates of anti-social behaviour in adolescents (Hawkins et al., 1992). Adolescents who experience inconsistent discipline, lack of emotional support, or who grow up in environments characterized by conflict may be more likely to engage in behaviours that violate social norms (Broidy., 2019). Furthermore, peer influence is another significant factor, as adolescents are highly susceptible to the behaviours and attitudes of their peers. Peer pressure and the desire to belong to a social group can drive adolescents to engage in anti-social acts to gain approval (Gardner & Steinberg, 2019).

The impact of anti-social behaviour on adolescents can be seen across several domains of life, including academic performance, mental health, and future relationships. Adolescents who engage in anti-social behaviours often struggle academically, as their disruptive actions can lead to suspensions, expulsions, and a lack of focus in school (Loeber & Farrington, 2019). This lack of academic achievement can limit their future career opportunities and contribute to a cycle of poverty and crime. Moreover, anti-social behaviour is associated with an increased risk of developing mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety. The feelings of isolation and rejection that accompany anti-social behaviour can contribute to these mental health issues, further compounding the difficulties faced by these adolescents (Odgers et al., 2019).

Several studies have found a strong correlation between adolescent stress and the emergence of anti-social behaviour. Adolescents under stress may resort to aggression, rebellion, or withdrawal as a means of coping or expressing frustration (Agnew, 2019). Strain theory also suggests that when individuals are unable to achieve goals through legitimate means, they may engage in deviant behaviours to relieve their stress or frustration.

Antisocial behaviour is often understood within the framework of developmental psychopathology, which emphasizes the interaction of biological predispositions and environmental influences. Contemporary research suggests that genetic vulnerability, impulsivity, and poor emotional regulation may predispose adolescents to externalizing behaviours. However, environmental contexts such as family dynamics, peer influence, school climate, and community structure play crucial roles in either exacerbating or mitigating these tendencies. Adolescents raised in environments characterized by conflict, neglect, inconsistent discipline, or exposure to violence are more likely to develop antisocial traits, particularly when protective factors such as parental warmth and supervision are absent (Moffitt, 2018; Frick & Ray, 2021).

Family appears to be one of the significant predictors of adolescent behaviour. Parenting styles marked by harsh punishment, low monitoring, and emotional detachment have been consistently associated with higher levels of conduct problems and delinquency. Conversely, authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and firm control, is linked to reduced antisocial tendencies. Recent studies emphasize that parental involvement and open communication significantly buffer adolescents from negative peer pressures and risky behaviours (Pinquart, 2017; Hoeve et al., 2020). In many developing contexts, socioeconomic stressors such as poverty, unemployment, and family instability further compound the risk, creating conditions where antisocial behaviours may emerge as coping mechanisms or survival strategies.

Peer influence becomes increasingly salient during adolescence as individuals seek identity, belonging, and social approval. Association with deviant peers has been identified as one of the strongest predictors of antisocial behaviour. Social learning theory posits that adolescent's model behaviours observed and reinforced within their peer groups. When delinquent behaviours are normalized or rewarded within a social circle, individuals are more likely to adopt similar

patterns. Empirical findings indicate that peer rejection in early adolescence may also push individuals toward deviant peer groups, thereby reinforcing antisocial trajectories (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2019; Dishion & Tipsord, 2019).

The school environment equally contributes to shaping adolescent conduct. Poor academic performance, low school attachment, negative teacher–student relationships, and punitive disciplinary practices have been associated with increased behavioural problems. Adolescents who experience academic frustration or feel disconnected from school communities may exhibit disruptive or aggressive behaviours as expressions of alienation. Conversely, positive school climates characterized by supportive teachers, inclusive policies, and extracurricular engagement serve as protective factors. Recent educational research highlights the importance of social-emotional learning programs in reducing behavioural misconduct and fostering prosocial skills (Durlak, 2022).

Media exposure and digital environments have emerged as contemporary factors influencing antisocial behaviour. The proliferation of violent content in movies, video games, and social media platforms has raised concerns regarding desensitization to aggression and imitation of harmful behaviours. While not all adolescents exposed to violent media develop antisocial tendencies, studies suggest that prolonged and unregulated exposure may increase aggressive cognitions and reduce empathy, particularly among vulnerable youth populations (Anderson et al., 2020). Additionally, cyberbullying has become a modern manifestation of antisocial behaviour, extending aggression beyond physical spaces into digital communities.

Socioeconomic and community-level variables further contextualize adolescent antisocial behaviour. Communities characterized by high crime rates, weak social cohesion, inadequate recreational facilities, and limited access to quality education often create environments where deviant behaviours flourish. Strain theory explains that when adolescents perceive a disparity between societal goals and legitimate means to achieve them, frustration may lead to delinquent acts. Recent sociological research underscores that structural inequalities, unemployment, and neighborhood disorganization significantly predict youth involvement in antisocial activities (Murray & Farrington, 2021).

The consequences of antisocial behaviour during adolescence extend beyond immediate disciplinary concerns. Persistent behavioural problems often predict academic failure, school dropout, substance dependence, unemployment, and adult criminality. Longitudinal studies demonstrate that early-onset antisocial behaviour is particularly stable and resistant to change without intervention. The societal costs are substantial, affecting public safety, economic productivity, and social cohesion. Consequently, early identification and preventive interventions have become central to policy and research agendas worldwide (Odgers, 2020).

Delinquency is often associated with peer pressure, socio-economic disadvantage, and weak attachment to school. Contemporary studies highlight that adolescents who affiliate with deviant peer groups are more likely to engage in risky and unlawful behaviours (Moffitt, 2022). Delinquent acts may initially appear minor but can escalate into chronic offending patterns if not addressed early through supportive interventions and structured supervision.

Oppositional and defiant behaviour also constitutes a significant form of antisocial conduct. This type includes persistent disobedience, hostility toward authority figures, argumentativeness, and deliberate annoyance of others. While some level of defiance may reflect normal adolescent striving for autonomy, excessive and consistent patterns may indicate deeper behavioural concerns. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders identifies oppositional patterns that interfere with functioning across home and school contexts (APA, 2022). Such behaviours often coexist with academic difficulties and strained family relationships.

Cyber antisocial behaviour has emerged as a modern dimension of adolescent misconduct. With increased access to digital technologies and social media platforms, adolescents may engage in cyberbullying, online harassment, identity fraud, and the sharing of harmful or explicit content. Unlike traditional forms of aggression, cyber antisocial behaviour can occur anonymously and reach a wide audience within a short time. Recent literature underscores the psychological harm associated with cyberbullying, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Kowalski et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2023). The digital context has therefore expanded the scope and complexity of antisocial behaviour among youths.

Substance-related antisocial behaviour is another significant category. Adolescents may engage in alcohol consumption, drug abuse, or the distribution of illicit substances, often as a coping mechanism for stress or as a result of peer influence. Substance misuse is frequently intertwined with other forms of antisocial acts such as theft or violence. Empirical studies have demonstrated strong associations between early substance initiation and later behavioural disorders (Volkow & Blanco, 2023). Substance-related misconduct not only jeopardizes health but also increases the likelihood of school dropout and conflict with law enforcement.

Property-related offences, including vandalism and arson, represent additional expressions of antisocial tendencies. These acts typically reflect frustration, rebellion, or a desire for peer recognition. In many communities, especially those facing economic hardship, adolescents may damage public or private property as a form of protest or thrill-seeking. Research suggests that early intervention programs focusing on emotional regulation and community engagement can reduce property-related delinquency (Farrington et al., 2021). Without such interventions, these behaviours may develop into entrenched criminal patterns.

Purpose of this Study

The broad purpose of this study is to examine anti-social behaviour among adolescents in Ekiti state. Specifically, the objective is to:

1. examine the types and patterns of anti-social behaviour commonly exhibited by adolescents.

Research Question

The following research question was raised for this study

1. What are the types and patterns of anti-social behaviour commonly exhibited by adolescents?

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was formulated for this study

1. There is no significance relationship between anti-social behaviour and adolescents.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted descriptive research design of survey type. The descriptive design will be used to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied without any manipulation of the variables. The descriptive research design will be employed to obtain information on relationship between anti-social behaviour among adolescents in the study area.

Population and Sample

The population of the study comprised of in-school students in Secondary Schools in Ado Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti state. The sample for this study consisted of 100 students selected through multistage sampling procedure. The first stage will involve the use of simple random sampling technique to select one local government area from the sixteen local governments in Ekiti State. The second stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select Five (5) secondary schools from Ado Local Government, the third stage involved the use of simple random technique to select Twenty (20) students from each of the selected schools making a total of 100 students.

Research Instrument

A self-designed instrument was used as the research instrument which was divided into **two** sections. Section A contained items

on the socio-demographic variables of the respondents. Section B contained items on anti-social behaviour among adolescents.

Data Analysis

Data collected will be coded and arranged before analysis. Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. For the descriptive statistics, simple percentage and frequency counts was used. In making inferences, PPMCC statistical technique will be used to test hypothesis.

Results

Research Question: What are the types and patterns of anti-social behaviour commonly exhibited by adolescents?

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of the types and patterns of anti-social behaviour commonly exhibited by adolescents

Items	**Agree**		**Disagree**	
	f	%	*f*	%
Truancy (skipping classes or school) is a common behaviour amo students.	71	71	29	29
Many students in my school are involved in bullying weaker peers.	84	84	16	16
Some adolescents deliberately destroy school property or facilities.	53	53	47	47
Fighting and physical aggression are common among students.	56	56	44	44
Some students form gangs or cliques that intimidate others.	59	59	41	41

Result presented in table 1 showed that 71% of the respondents agreed that truancy is a common behaviour among students while 29% of the respondents disagreed. 84% of the respondents agreed that many students in my school are involved in bullying weaker peers while 16% of the respondents disagreed. 53% of the respondents agreed that some adolescents deliberately destroy school property or facilities while 47% of the respondents disagreed. 59% of the respondents agreed that some students form gangs or cliques that intimidate others while 41% of the respondents disagreed.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship anti-social behaviour and adolescents.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the anti-social behaviour and adolescents

Variable	***N***	***Mean***	***SD***	r_{cal}	***sig.***
Anti-social behaviour	100	7.25	12.971	-0.162	.000
Adolescents	100	2.327	5.03		

p < 0.05

Result presented in Table 2 shows that r-calculated value was -0.162 and the corresponding p-value was 0.00. Since the p-value of 0.00 was < 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between anti-social behaviour and adolescents. In addition it was revealed that the correlation that exists between anti-social behaviour and adolescents was weak and negative.

Discussion

The findings revealed that truancy is a common behaviour among students, many students in my school are involved in bullying weaker peers, some adolescents deliberately destroy school property or facilities, some students form gangs or cliques that intimidate others. Sampson & Laub, (2019) opined that adolescents involved in delinquency may be influenced by several factors, including poor family dynamics, peer influence, and socioeconomic disadvantages.

It was revealed that there is a significant relationship between anti-social behaviour and adolescents. In addition it was revealed that the correlation that exists between anti-social behaviour and adolescents was weak and negative. Farrington, (2020) noted that adolescents who feel connected to their school and community are less likely to engage

in anti-social behaviour, as they have access to resources and role models that encourage positive coping strategies.

Conclusion

The study concluded that antisocial influenced adolescents in Ekiti state. Also, it concluded that truancy is a common behaviour among students, many students in my school are involved in bullying weaker peers, some adolescents deliberately destroy school property or facilities, some students form gangs or cliques that intimidate others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made:

1. Students should be encouraged to develop self-discipline and emotional regulation skills through participation in social–emotional learning programs.
2. Parents and guardians should adopt consistent and supportive parenting practices characterized by effective monitoring, open communication, and positive discipline strategies.
3. Schools should implement comprehensive behavioural intervention programs that focus on social–emotional learning, conflict resolution skills, anger management, and empathy development.
4. Guidance counsellors and school psychologists should be actively involved in identifying at-risk students early and providing appropriate counselling and mentorship support.

Limitation of the Study

The major limitation of the study lies in the difficulty of obtaining data from the students. Time and financial constraint in obtaining data.

References

Agnew, R. (2019). General strain theory and delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 56*(1), 3–33.

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.). American Psychiatric Publishing.

Anderson, C. A., Bushman, B. J., Bartholow, B. D., Cantor, J., Christakis, D., Coyne, S. M., … Ybarra, M. L. (2020). Screen violence and youth behavior: A comprehensive review. *Pediatrics, 140*(Supplement 2), S142–S147.

Brechwald, W. A., & Prinstein, M. J. (2019). Beyond homophily: A decade of advances in understanding peer influence processes. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 29*(1), 5–23.

Broidy, L. (2019). Gender and antisocial behaviour. *Crime and Justice Review, 48*(2), 215–240.

Compas, B. E. (2019). Coping, stress, and adolescent development. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 15*, 353–377.

Dishion, T. J., & Tipsord, J. M. (2019). Peer contagion in child and adolescent social and emotional development. *Annual Review of Psychology, 70*, 45–68.

Durlak, J. A. (2022). Social and emotional learning: Evidence and implications. *Educational Psychologist, 57*(2), 1–15.

Farrington, D. P., Gaffney, H., & Ttofi, M. M. (2021). Systematic reviews of early interventions to prevent antisocial behaviour. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 58*, 101518.

Frick, P. J., & Ray, J. V. (2021). Evaluating callous-unemotional traits as a personality construct. *Journal of Personality, 89*(1), 3–25.

Frick, P. J., & Viding, E. (2019). Antisocial behavior from a developmental psychopathology perspective. *Development and Psychopathology, 31*(4), 1–10.

Gardner, M., & Steinberg, L. (2019). Peer influence on risk taking, risk preference, and risky decision making. *Developmental Psychology, 41*(4), 625–635.

Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., & Miller, J. Y. (1992). Risk and protective factors for alcohol and other drug problems in adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin, 112*(1), 64–105.

Hoeve, M., Dubas, J. S., Eichelsheim, V. I., Van der Laan, P. H., Smeenk, W., & Gerris, J. R. (2020). The relationship between parenting and delinquency. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 48*(3), 1–15.

Kowalski, R. M., Limber, S. P., & McCord, A. (2023). Cyberbullying among youth: A review of current research. *Psychological Bulletin, 149*(1), 1–34.

Loeber, R., & Farrington, D. P. (2019). *Young children who commit crime: Epidemiology, developmental origins, risk factors, early interventions, and policy implications*. Development and Psychopathology Press.

Moffitt, T. E. (2018). Male antisocial behaviour in adolescence and beyond. *Nature Human Behaviour, 2*(3), 177–186.

Moffitt, T. E. (2022). Life-course persistent and adolescence-limited antisocial behavior: Updated review. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 18*, 1–25.

Murray, J., & Farrington, D. P. (2021). Risk factors for antisocial behaviour in adolescence. *Crime and Justice, 50*(1), 1–45.

Odgers, C. L. (2020). Annual research review: Adolescent mental health in the digital age. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 61*(3), 336–348.

Odgers, C. L., Robins, S. J., & Russell, M. A. (2019). Morbidity and mortality risk in antisocial youth. *The Lancet Psychiatry, 6*(12), 1020–1031.

Pinquart, M. (2017). Associations of parenting styles with externalizing problems. *Educational Psychology Review, 29*(1), 1–31.

Spear, L. P. (2019). The adolescent brain and age-related behavioral manifestations. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews, 24*(4), 417–463.

UNESCO. (2023). *Cyberbullying and youth: Global status report*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Volkow, N. D., & Blanco, C. (2023). Substance use disorders in adolescents. *New England Journal of Medicine, 388*(5), 1–10.