

# Childhood Experiences as determinant of Antisocial Behaviours among Basic School Pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.0551>

Published May 08, 2026

**Citation:** Adesina O.J., Olawoyin A.A., Adeyanju M.S. and Odeleye A.A. (2026) Childhood Experiences as determinant of Antisocial Behaviours among Basic School Pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*, 7(3),16-29

**Abstract:** *The study examined how childhood experience determined antisocial behaviour among basic school pupils in Oyo state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed to identify the level of antisocial behaviour, assessed prevalent childhood experiences among basic school children in Oyo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was employed. The research employed multi-stage sampling procedures incorporating simple random sampling and a baseline method. From a total*

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*population of 2503 basic school, a sample of 96 schools were selected across 24 local government areas, comprising a total sample size of 812 pupils across all selected schools. The "Childhood Experiences, Questionnaire (CESQ) ( $r = 0.893$ ) was used to gather information. One research question and one hypothesis were raised and tested. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson Correlation, and Multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed bullying victimisation experiences being most prevalent. Females exhibited higher antisocial behaviour ( $t = 92.170$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.62017$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) than males ( $t = 77.959$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.39682$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study provides a comprehensive understanding of antisocial behaviour among basic school pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria. revealing the complex interplay between gender differences. Implementing school-based behaviour management, peer mediation, and empathy-building activities is recommended to reduce subtle antisocial behaviours.*

**Keywords:** antisocial behaviour, childhood experiences, basic school pupils.

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## INTRODUCTION

Childhood period is a critical stage of human development during which individuals begin to form their identities and engage more deeply with peers, family, and society. This period is characterised by rapid physical, emotional, and social changes. Young people begin to assert their independence, explore their personal identities, and build stronger relationships with peers, teachers, and community members. However, this period also increases vulnerability to risky behaviours. Environmental and social factors play a significant role in shaping behavioural outcomes during this time, including the tendency to engage in what society often labels as antisocial behaviour. This is one of the reasons why, Adedigba and Agarry (2013) affirmed that whatever children experience during childhood period has tremendous impact on their learning, development and their future achievements. Childhood experiences have been shown to significantly influence personality development, cognitive functioning, and behavioural patterns (Folayan, Oginni, Arowolo and Tantawi, 2020). Emotional abuse, which encompasses actions such as being called names, being threatened, or being made to feel worthless, can result in profound psychological and physiological impacts on adolescents (Awosan, and Ajeh 2023). Emotional abuse, as a form of childhood trauma, can lead to the development of antisocial behaviours and other negative consequences that are associated with antisocial behavior. The emotional scars from such abuse can contribute to the manifestation of aggressive and disruptive behaviours, potentially fostering a cycle of violence and antisocial behaviours.

Antisocial behaviour refers to actions or attitudes that go against established social norms, values, and laws. This type of behaviour usually leads to conflicts within families, schools, and communities, disrupting social harmony and posing challenges to authority figures such as parents, teachers, and law enforcement. Although antisocial behaviour can manifest in various forms and intensities, a common thread among them is a lack of empathy, respect, or responsibility in interactions with others. This behaviour not only disrupts the learning environment but also threatens the social fabric by exposing young people to criminal tendencies and hindering their social adjustment later in life. Examples of antisocial behaviour include truancy, bullying or victimization, delinquency, violence, substance abuse, rape, verbal or physical aggression, gambling, examination malpractice, hostility, lying, theft, and a general disregard for the rights or feelings of others.

Antisocial behaviour in childhood is a significant concern as it can hinder healthy social development and academic success performance. Various factors can contribute to the development of these behaviours, including adverse childhood experiences, exposure to violence, poor parenting styles, peer influence, and excessive social media use. If not addressed early, these behaviours can escalate into more serious issues such as criminal activities, substance dependence, or long-term social maladjustment. Therefore, understanding and managing antisocial behaviour is crucial for promoting positive development and maintaining social order during childhood.

A substantial body of research has explored the complex landscape of antisocial behaviors among basic education school pupils, scrutinizing its diverse dimensions and employing a range of assessment tools and indicators to fathom its intricate nature (Anih, Söderberg and Björkqvist 2023). Antisocial behaviors, frequently characterised by actions and attitudes that contravene societal norms, presents a considerable challenge to adolescents, imperiling their interpersonal relationships and occasionally resulting in legal repercussions. Verbal and physical aggression may be prevalent forms of antisocial behaviors among basic education school pupils. Verbal aggression often takes the form of insults, threats, or confrontations, while physical aggression involves actions such as fighting or physically harming others Makinde (2021). These aggressive behaviours can result in peer conflicts, emotional distress, and academic challenges, highlighting the multifaceted impact of aggression on children well-being Osiesi., Sanni, Blignaut, Adeniran, Dikko, Fajobi, and Adegboyega, (2023). Bullying stands as another pervasive manifestation of antisocial behaviour in schools worldwide, characterised by repetitive, intentional acts of aggression, typically perpetrated by more powerful individuals or groups against less powerful peers (Prince, Umoke, Mary, Christian, Ugwuanyi, Chinedu, Okeke, Chiedu, Adaorah, Onuorah, Gloria, and Ugwu, 2020). Often, the intent behind bullying is to cause harm or distress (Prince, Umoke, Mary, Christian, Ugwuanyi, Chinedu, Okeke, Chiedu, Adaorah, Onuorah, Gloria, and Ugwu, 2020). The consequences of bullying can be severe, leading to psychological and emotional trauma, academic problems, and even instances of self-harm or suicide among victims. (Ighaede-

Edwards, Liu, Olawade, Ling, Odetayo and David-Olawade, 2023). Its far-reaching effects underscore the urgency of addressing and preventing bullying in educational settings.

Additionally, adolescents may resort to lying and cheating, whether academically or in social interactions, as a means of manipulation or deceit (Eze, 2021). These behaviours have a detrimental impact on trust-building, academic integrity, and the moral development of adolescents, eroding the foundation of honesty and ethical conduct (Eze, 2021). Furthermore, substance abuse, including the misuse of drugs and alcohol, represents another dimension of antisocial behaviour that exacts severe consequences on the physical and mental health of adolescents Adesina, Adesanya, and Olufadewa, (2020). Substance abuse can disrupt academic performance, impair decision-making, and lead to legal entanglements, creating a complex web of challenges for adolescents who succumb to this behavior (Namadi, and Haruna, 2019). Given the profound impact of these antisocial behaviours on affected students and society, understanding the root causes becomes of paramount importance. This research has tried to unveil several factors that can potentially contribute to the emergence of antisocial behaviour in adolescents, encompassing childhood experiences, social media usage, and parenting styles. From the previous literatures, there still exist gaps in specific area regarding antisocial behaviours such as passive-aggression and bullying, and victimisation. These two indicators of antisocial behaviours may seem subtle and mild, but they could culminate into criminal behaviour either in the present or the future. Passive aggression may blossom into active aggression and violence, while bullying and victimisation may result in full-blown gangsterism, cultism, terrorism, militancy, and commercial killing.

The early stages of life, particularly childhood, marks a critical period in human development during which the brain and body are still undergoing maturation. Childhood experiences can either be positive or negative and could influence antisocial behaviour in later life. Positive or Benevolent Childhood Experiences (BCEs) as a field has not received much research attention, and this is a gap that this study seeks to address. This formative phase is profoundly significant as childhood trauma can exert a substantial impact on adolescent behavioural patterns<sup>18</sup>. Childhood trauma, often referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), encompasses a spectrum of distressing events that children may endure. These experiences include neglect, abandonment, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, witnessing the abuse of a sibling or parent, or having a mentally ill caregiver (Ijeoma, Effiom, Undiyaundeye, and Kelechi 2022). These events leave profound psychological, physiological, and sociological imprints, often resulting in enduring negative consequences for health and overall well-being (Ijeoma, Effiom, Undiyaundeye, and Kelechi 2022). The trauma discussed in this study primarily pertains to emotional abuse, which includes experiences such as name-calling, verbal degradation, threats, and actions that diminish an individual's self-worth In addition to the indicators scrutinised in the research, other common

manifestations of antisocial behaviour among learners encompass truancy, vandalism, and theft (Anih, Söderberg and Björkqvist 2023). This study concentrated on four pivotal facets of antisocial behaviour, each accompanied by its distinct challenges and potential risks to the development of basic school pupils specifically aggression, bullying, lying and cheating, and substance abuse.

There are many studies on the study of traumatic childhood experiences within the context of antisocial behaviour among learner in educational settings. For instance, Folayan, Oginni, Arowolo and Tantawi (2020) conducted a study on Internal Consistency and Correlation of the Adverse Childhood Experiences, Bully Victimization, Self-Esteem, Resilience, and Social Support Scales in Nigerian Children. The study evaluated the internal consistencies and the correlation between measures of adverse childhood experiences (ACE), bully victimization, self-esteem, resilience, and social support in children/adolescents in Nigeria and found out that children exposed to more adverse childhood experience and bully victimization had lower self-esteem than did others not exposed or exposed less to adverse childhood experience and bully victimization.

Also, Atariata (2022) studied childhood experiences and factors associated with perpetration of violence among young adults In Delta State Prisons, Nigeria. The study was conducted to determine the prevalence of childhood trauma, and to assess the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and other predicting factors, and the perpetration of violence among young adults in Delta state prisons and found out that the most common abuse/neglect experienced while growing up was physical neglect. The study concluded that having witnessed violence while growing up were all significant predictors of the perpetration of violence.

In addition, Abubakar, Suleiman, Abdullahi, Suleiman and Orume (2023) investigated the influence of childhood trauma and substance use on adolescent's antisocial behaviour in some selected secondary schools in Lafia, Nasarawa State and found out that there was a positive predictive relationship between childhood trauma and adolescent's antisocial behavior. They also found out that there was a positive relationship between substance use and adolescent's antisocial behavior among the student under the study.

These previous studies have justified the fact that researchers have worked on the impact of childhood experiences on basic school pupils. However, such research efforts seem to be very scarce, especially regarding childhood experiences as determinant of antisocial behaviours among Primary School Pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria. This study aims to explore how childhood

experiences contribute to antisocial behaviour among basic school pupils in Oyo State. By investigating the frequency and underlying causes the research seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how these elements interact and influence learners. The anticipated findings are expected to offer valuable insights for parents, educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals to devise targeted interventions that effectively mitigate antisocial behaviour and support healthier psychosocial development among learners.

### **Statement of the problem**

The detrimental impact of abusive behaviours on children highlights the need for recognising, preventing, and addressing such abuse to promote the healthy development of children and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour. The impact of childhood experiences on basic school pupils is a critical concern, and it's vital to recognise the significant role these experiences can play in the development of antisocial behaviour among pupils. Understanding the specific ways in which emotional and sexual abuse can influence childhood behaviour and well-being is essential for parents, educators, counsellors, and policymakers to provide appropriate support and interventions for those affected.

### **Purpose of the study**

This study investigated childhood experiences, social media use, and parenting styles as determinants of antisocial behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Oyo State, Nigeria. The objectives of this study are to:

- i. identify the level of antisocial behaviour among basic school pupils in Oyo State Nigeria;
- ii. assess the significance of gender difference in antisocial behaviour among pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are raised in the study based on the objectives:

1. What was the level of antisocial behaviour among senior secondary school adolescents in Oyo State Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypothesis will be tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance:

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant difference in antisocial behaviour among basic school pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria based on gender.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study. In line with the stated objectives, this chapter outlines the research design, the study's population, the sample, and the sampling technique, as well as the methods of data collection and data analysis. The study employed a descriptive research design, specifically a survey type. This design is adopted to allow the researcher to describe the existing phenomena in the study setting without manipulating the variables. The target population of this study comprised Eighty-one thousand and eighty-three (81,083) pupils enrolled in basic schools in Oyo State. The study's sample size was established by a multi-stage sampling procedure that included total sampling, simple random sampling, and a baseline method. In the initial phase, the researcher utilized the total enumeration method, specifically encompassing the three senatorial districts of Oyo State: Oyo South, Oyo Central, and Oyo North, all of which were fully enumerated. Basic random sample method was employed to select eight local government areas from each senatorial district, resulting in a total of 24 local government areas. These 24 LGAs constituted over two-thirds of the 33 LGAs in Oyo State. This aims to obtain a substantial sample for the study, yielding generalizable conclusions and findings.

The study utilized a questionnaire titled the "Childhood Experiences Antisocial Behaviour Questionnaire (CEABQ), which was divided into three sections, Section A gathered demographic information about the participants, while Section B focused on antisocial behaviour, encompassing both passive aggression and bullying/victimisation scales.

Cronbach's alpha was employed to evaluate the reliability of the instrument, defined as its consistency in assessing its intended constructs. Pilot testing was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency and stability of the instrument's items using Cronbach's alpha reliability test. For the pilot test, a minimum of thirty children from basic eight were administered the questionnaires. The final study excluded these children. The internal consistency and stability of the questionnaires were assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.893. The psychometric outcomes were subsequently employed to analyse the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. The researcher administered the instruments with the help of three research assistants to expedite the distribution of questionnaires to the basic schools in Oyo State.

Upon collection, collation, sorting, and coding of the data, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed to analyse the information obtained from the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, were employed to analyse the

demographics information. At the 0.05 significance level, inferential statistics, including t-tests, was employed to evaluate the hypothesis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Demographic Data Analysis

**Table I**

#### Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	393	48.4	48.4	48.4
Female	419	51.6	51.6	100.0
Total	812	100.0	100.0	

#### Source: Field Survey 2025

Table I showed the gender distribution of 812 pupils of the total, 48.4% (393) are male, while 51.6% (419) are female. The cumulative percentage reaches 100%, indicating that the survey includes equal consideration of both genders

### Research Question One:

What is the level of antisocial behaviour among senior basic school pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria?

### Summary of Response to the Level of Passive-Aggression among basic school pupils in Oyo State

**Table 2**

	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Decision
When I talk about someone, I pretend to praise their strength but also drop hints about their weakness	812	2.16	1.027	Moderate
I report mistakes made by someone to a higher authority to damage their reputation.	812	2.68	1.106	Moderate

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I intentionally reveal embarrassing events or the dark pasts of someone	812	2.87	.978	Moderate
I mock someone by being sarcastic and pretending it is just a joke	812	2.70	1.052	Moderate
I pretend I am the victim to give someone a hard time.	812	2.68	1.032	Moderate
I purposefully avoid eye contact with	812	2.27	.982	Moderate
I give people the silent treatment	812	2.12	.946	Moderate
I have a cold and dismissive attitude towards people	812	2.43	1.117	Moderate
I deliberately delay people to give them a hard time.	812	2.90	1.095	Moderate
I pretend to help people, but sabotage their work behind their backs	812	2.99	1.070	Moderate
<b>Total</b>	<b>812</b>			<b>Decision= Moderate</b>

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**Source: Field Survey 2025.**

**Weighted Mean= 2.58**

**Decision rule:** (1.00-1.99 = Low, 2.0-2.99= Moderate, 3.0 and above = High)

Table 2 presents data on the level of passive-aggressive behaviour, a form of antisocial behaviour, among basic school pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria. With a weighted mean score of **2.58**, the overall level of passive-aggression is classified as **moderate**. All individual items measuring behaviours such as sarcasm, silent treatment, backhanded compliments, and subtle sabotage also fall within the **moderate** range (mean scores between 2.12 and 2.99). This suggests that while such antisocial behaviours are not extreme, they are **noticeably present** among the adolescents surveyed.

**Table 3****Summary of Response to the Level of Bullying Behaviour and Victimization Scale among basic 9 pupils in Oyo State**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
I teased the pupils to make them angry.	812	2.30	1.065	Moderate
I beat up pupils in the school.	812	2.74	1.099	Moderate
I say things about students to make others laugh.	812	2.76	1.000	Moderate
Other pupils encouraged me to fight.	812	2.75	1.045	Moderate
I push or shove pupils.	812	2.68	1.086	Moderate
A classmate asked me to fight.	812	2.12	.915	Moderate
Slapping or kicking classmates is not bad.	812	2.04	.949	Moderate
I call classmates (or their families) bad names.	812	2.40	1.109	Moderate
I can threaten to hurt or to hit pupils without doing it.	812	2.92	1.115	Moderate
<b>Total</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>2.91</b>	<b>1.089</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
<b>Weighted Mean: 2.6</b>				

**Source: Field Survey 2025****Decision: Moderate****Decision rule:** (1.00-1.99 = Low, 2.0-2.99= Moderate, 3.0 and above = High)

Table 3 presents the responses of 812 basic school pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria, regarding their involvement in bullying behaviours and victimisation. The weighted mean score of 2.6 indicates a moderate level of antisocial behaviour among the adolescents surveyed. Each individual item, such as teasing, physical aggression,

name-calling, and threats, also falls within the moderate range (2.04 to 2.92), suggesting that while these behaviours are present, they are not excessively high among the population studied. The level of antisocial behaviour among pupils in Oyo State is moderate ( $\bar{X} = 2.6$ )

### Ranking of Passive-Aggression and Bullying / Victimisation among basic School pupils in Oyo State

Antisocial Behaviour	Weighted Mean	Rank
Passive-Aggression	2.58	2 <sup>st</sup>
Bullying Victimisation	2.6	1 <sup>nd</sup>

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The findings reveal that, among the two forms of antisocial behaviours examined, **Bullying/ Victimisation (Weighted Mean = 2.58)** was slightly higher than **Passive-Aggression (Weighted Mean = 2.6)**. This implies that basic school pupils in Oyo State tend to exhibit bullying behaviours tendencies more frequently than direct passive-aggressive. Although both behaviours fall within the moderate range, the marginal difference suggests that pupils are more inclined to express acts such as physical aggression, threats, or name-calling rather than acts like sarcasm, silent treatment, or sabotaging and others. This highlights the need for educators and school authorities to address both forms of antisocial behaviour, with particular attention to Bullying Victimisation tendencies that may often go unnoticed but still have harmful effects on peer relationships and school climate.

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant gender difference in antisocial behaviour among basic school pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria.

### T-test Summary of Gender Difference in Antisocial Behaviour basic education school pupils in Oyo State

Gender	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
					Lower	Upper	
Male	Antisoc Beh	77.959	392	.000	2.39682	2.3364	2.4573
Female	Antisoc Beh	92.170	418	.000	2.62017	2.5643	2.6760

Source: Field Survey 2025

The table above presents a t-test summary analysing gender differences in antisocial behaviour among basic education school pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria. The mean of antisocial behaviour score for males is 2.39682, while for females, it is 2.62017. The t-values for both males ( $t = 77.959$ ) and females ( $t = 92.170$ ) are significant, with a p-value of .000 ( $p < 0.005$ ) for each, indicating that the difference between male and female antisocial behaviour is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, there was a significant gender difference in antisocial behaviour. This indicates that there is a significant difference in antisocial behavior between male and female adolescents, with females showing slightly higher levels of antisocial behaviour compared to males.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Regarding antisocial behaviour among basic school pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria, respondents generally disagreed with engaging in antisocial behaviours. However, specific tendencies, such as manipulating situations (e.g., revealing embarrassing events or deliberately delaying others, teasing, physical aggression, name-calling, and threats), indicate a moderate presence of indirect antisocial conduct. In contrast, more overt behaviours, such as giving the silent treatment or avoiding eye contact, were reported less frequently. This suggests a tilt toward more covert and relationally damaging behaviours rather than overt aggression. These results challenge the standard narrative about escalating antisocial tendencies among adolescents. While previous studies highlight a rise in impulsivity, irritability, and deception among youths (Alofolake, Okunola, and Onyinyechi, 2021).

In addition, The level of bullying and victimization among pupils in Oyo State is moderate ( $\bar{X} = 2.6$ ). The level of passive-aggression among adolescents in Oyo State is also moderate ( $\bar{X} = 2.58$ ). The data indicate that **adverse childhood experiences** are the most prevalent, with a combined total of **730**, ranking **1st**. In contrast, **benevolent childhood experiences** recorded a significantly lower total of **184.7**, ranking **2nd**.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of antisocial behaviour among basic school pupils in Oyo State, Nigeria. Addressing these problem requires a multi-stakeholder approaches emphasizing the need to implement school-based behaviour management programs, to reduce the levels of antisocial behaviour among basic school pupils, Teachers and counsellors should be trained to identify and intervene in early signs of such behaviours, Parenting workshops that teach

emotional responsiveness and supportive communication should be promoted and child protection services to prevent and respond to abuse cases should be strengthened.

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