

CHILD NEGLECT AS A CORRELATE OF ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR AMONG
ADOLESCENTS IN AKWA IBOM STATE.

By

Imoh-Obong Inyang INYANG, Ph.D
Department of Social Studies,
Akwa Ibom State College of Education,
Afaha Nsit, Nsit Ibom L.G.A.

ABSTRACT

This study assessed child neglect as a correlate of antisocial behavior among adolescents in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. In carrying out the study, correlational study design was adopted. The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State. The targeted population for the study comprised all social scientists and primary school teachers in Akwa Ibom state. Sampling random technique was used to select 25 social scientists and 25 primary school teachers each from Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State which gave a total of 150 respondents used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Child Neglect and Antisocial Behavior Questionnaire (CNABQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.82, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. Descriptive analysis was used to answer the research question while Simple Regression Analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. Descriptive to answer the research question while Simple Regression Analysis was to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The study concluded that child neglect in Akwa Ibom State contributes to the development of antisocial behaviors among adolescents. Neglectful experiences, including emotional and physical deprivation, disrupt healthy emotional regulation and social skills, making adolescents more susceptible to delinquency and aggression. One of the recommendations made was that the government should prioritize accessible, quality education and mental health services to ensure that adolescents who have experienced neglect can receive the support they need. Schools and community centers can serve as points of intervention, offering counseling and mentorship programs.

KEYWORDS: Child Neglect, Antisocial Behavior, Adolescents Akwa Ibom State.

INTRODUCTION

Child neglect is a pervasive form of maltreatment that significantly impacts a child's emotional, cognitive, and social development. In Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, where the adolescent population is rapidly growing, child neglect has been identified as a critical factor contributing to the rise in antisocial behavior. Antisocial behaviors, which include aggression, substance abuse, delinquency, and lack of empathy, often emerge as a result of early neglectful experiences. Neglect, often involving failure to provide basic needs such as food, shelter, emotional care, or adequate supervision, leaves children vulnerable to developing maladaptive behaviors, particularly during adolescence when individuals are more likely to engage in risky or deviant acts.

Recent studies indicate that neglect in childhood can disrupt normal emotional regulation, cognitive development, and social interaction skills, which are crucial for healthy adolescent development (Caldwell et al., 2021). In the specific context of Akwa Ibom State, factors such as poverty, inadequate access to education, and limited community resources exacerbate the likelihood of neglect, often leading to negative behavioral outcomes among adolescents. These conditions

increase the likelihood that children will grow up in environments where neglect is prevalent, further heightening their susceptibility to antisocial behaviors.

The effects of neglect extend beyond immediate emotional distress. Adolescents who experience neglect may struggle with forming secure attachments, which are essential for fostering empathy and prosocial behaviors (Tough et al., 2022). Without stable caregiving, they may engage in behaviors such as truancy, aggression, and criminal activity as coping mechanisms or as a way to seek attention or validation. In Akwa Ibom State, where the incidence of antisocial behaviors among adolescents is on the rise, understanding the link between child neglect and these behaviors is essential for designing effective interventions.

Statement of the Problem

Child neglect has become a serious social problem affecting the proper development of adolescents in Akwa Ibom State. Many adolescents are exposed to neglectful conditions where parents or caregivers fail to provide adequate emotional support, supervision, education, healthcare, and other basic needs necessary for healthy growth and development. As a result, many young people develop negative behaviors such as truancy, aggression, stealing, violence, bullying, substance abuse, and other forms of antisocial behavior that threaten peace and stability within society.

The increasing rate of antisocial behavior among adolescents in Akwa Ibom State has become a major concern to parents, teachers, counselors, religious leaders, and government authorities. Factors such as poverty, broken homes, unemployment, poor parental care, and lack of proper guidance have contributed greatly to the problem of child neglect. Adolescents who experience neglect often struggle with emotional instability, low self-esteem, poor social adjustment, and association with deviant peer groups, which may increase their involvement in antisocial activities.

Despite the growing concern over child neglect and antisocial behavior, limited studies have specifically examined the relationship between child neglect and antisocial behavior among adolescents in Akwa Ibom State. This creates a gap in knowledge on how neglect influences adolescent behavior within the state. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate child neglect as a correlate of antisocial behavior among adolescents in Akwa Ibom State in order to provide useful information that may help parents, educators, counselors, and policymakers develop effective strategies for reducing child neglect and antisocial behavior among adolescents.

Research Objective

The following objectives will guide the study:

1. To examine the causes of child neglect in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To evaluate the effects of child neglect on antisocial behaviour in Akwa Ibom State.
3. **To determine the remedial strategies to child neglect in Akwa Ibom State.**

Research Question:

1. What are the causes of child neglect in Akwa Ibom State?

2. What are the effects of child neglect on antisocial behaviour in Akwa Ibom State?
3. What are the remedial strategies to child neglect in Akwa Ibom State?

Research hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between child neglect on antisocial behavior

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Child Neglect

Child neglect is a form of maltreatment that occurs when caregivers fail to provide for the basic needs of a child, including physical care, emotional support, supervision, and education. Unlike physical abuse, neglect involves omission rather than commission, meaning the harm comes from what caregivers do not do rather than what they actively do (StatPearls, 2025). Neglect can affect a child's health, psychological development, and social adjustment, and it often goes unnoticed because its effects are gradual and less visible than other forms of abuse.

Physical neglect is one of the most visible aspects of child neglect, involving the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. Studies have shown that children who experience physical neglect are at risk of malnutrition, frequent illness, stunted growth, and delayed cognitive development (Pelajar & Yusof, 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these risks as families faced financial hardships, which in some cases reduced caregivers' ability to meet children's basic needs. Physical neglect, therefore, can have both immediate and long-term consequences for a child's overall development.

Emotional neglect occurs when caregivers fail to provide affection, attention, or psychological support to children. Studies show that kids who don't get emotional care often have low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and trouble making healthy relationships (Cohen, Marey-Sarwan, & Gross Manos, 2024). These children may struggle to trust others and can show poor emotional regulation, which affects both their social interactions and academic performance. Emotional neglect is particularly insidious because it may coexist with other forms of neglect, yet its impact on psychological development is profound and long-lasting.

Another critical dimension of neglect is educational and supervisory neglect, where children are left without proper guidance, supervision, or access to schooling. Evidence from recent studies shows that educational neglect is linked to poor academic performance, absenteeism, and higher rates of maladaptive behavior among children (Adikwu et al., 2023). Supervisory neglect also exposes children to physical dangers, including accidents or exploitation. The combination of educational and supervisory neglect highlights how neglect not only affects immediate well-being but also undermines a child's future opportunities.

Concept of Antisocial Behavior

Antisocial behavior is a central concept in psychology and social sciences that refers to a broad range of actions and patterns of conduct in which an individual intentionally violates social norms, disregards the rights of others, and often engages in hostility, aggression, or rule-breaking. Unlike solitary or isolated misbehavior, antisocial behavior represents a consistent pattern of behaviors that undermine social cohesion and interpersonal relationships, causing harm to individuals, communities, and societies at large. In psychological literature, antisocial behavior is

conceptualized as both a behavioral manifestation of underlying emotional and cognitive processes and a social phenomenon shaped by environmental contexts.

At its root, antisocial behavior is characterized by deliberate activities that contravene established rules of conduct. Physical violence (such as punching or bullying), property damage (such as theft or vandalism), dishonesty, truancy, and other rule-breaking behaviors (such as stealing, lying, or defiant conduct) are some examples of these behaviors. Research emphasizes that this behavior is not limited to single acts of misconduct but often reflects a stable pattern of externalizing behaviors that violate the norms and rights of others (Toro et al., 2020).

A growing body of research also highlights that antisocial behavior is multidimensional rather than one-dimensional. For example, studies using psychometric assessments have found that antisocial behavior includes distinct factors such as aggression, theft, conduct against rules, and vandalism, with variations in how these behaviors manifest across gender and developmental stages (Avances en Psicología Latinoamericana, 2024). This multifaceted viewpoint clarifies why some people may act aggressively most of the time, while others may act covertly or in violation of the law without using physical force.

From a developmental perspective, antisocial conduct frequently manifests in childhood or adolescence, and if left untreated, its intensity may continue into adulthood. Mental health literature identifies related conditions such as Conduct Disorder in youth and Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) in adults, both of which involve persistent patterns of disregarding the rights of others—though the clinical diagnoses represent extreme and enduring forms of antisocial behavior (PubMed, 2025). These tendencies are linked to decreased empathy, poor impulse control, and emotional regulation issues, all of which lead to recurrent problematic behavior.

The neural correlates of antisocial behavior further illustrate its complexity. Neuroimaging studies suggest that social victimization and antisocial interactions engage brain regions connected to emotional processing and regulation, such as prefrontal and striatal networks, and that individual traits like temperament and frustration tolerance significantly influence these neural responses (MDPI Brain Sciences, 2025). Such findings imply that antisocial conduct cannot be fully described without considering underlying neurobiological and emotional components.

Antisocial behavior does not occur in isolation; it is impacted by environmental and social settings, including family dynamics, peer connections, and broader societal influences. Research reveals that impairments in positive parenting, exposure to neglect or trauma, and association with antisocial peers dramatically enhance the chance of individuals adopting antisocial activity. Conversely, positive social supports—such as high-quality peer relationships, prosocial values, and school engagement—are associated with reduced antisocial behavior, highlighting the interplay between risk and protective factors (Gubbels, Assink & van der Put, 2023).

Recognizing the societal repercussions of antisocial behavior is another aspect of understanding it. Regular antisocial behavior frequently results in damaged relationships, social isolation, legal problems, and difficulties with academic or professional functioning. The impact on society is significant and includes decreased communal well-being, increased demand for mental health and legal services, and physical harm to victims (OpenAccessPub – Antisocial Behavior).

Types of Child Neglect

➤ Physical Neglect

Physical neglect manifests when a caregiver repeatedly fails to provide a kid with fundamental survival needs such as proper food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, and rest. Physical neglect, as opposed to isolated poverty-related hardship, is defined as caregivers failing to take reasonable precautions to safeguard a child from chronic hunger, inadequate housing, and exposure to extreme weather, or preventable sickness. Children who experience physical neglect may show delayed growth, frequent illness, and developmental setbacks that follow them into adulthood, reflecting the long-term physiological and psychological toll of unmet basic needs (Turney & Wildeman, 2016; Bland, Lambie & Best, 2018).

➤ Emotional (Psychological) Neglect

Emotional neglect refers to the chronic absence of emotional connection, affection, validation, and psychological support that children require to feel valued and secure. This type of neglect isn't about what caregivers do; rather, it's about what they don't offer, including warmth, support, steady attention, or consolation in times of suffering. Children raised in emotionally neglectful environments are at higher risk for anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and difficulty forming healthy relationships later in life, even when their physical needs are technically met (Berens & Nelson, 2015; Bland, Lambie & Best, 2018).

➤ Medical Neglect

Medical neglect unfolds when caregivers do to provide critical healthcare for youngsters, including preventive care, prompt treatment, medication adherence, or follow-up for chronic diseases. This form of neglect is particularly hazardous since it can turn minor illnesses into life-threatening situations. Medical neglect is defined as when caregivers fail to seek or comply with care despite having reasonable access or alternatives, while scholars point out that it is frequently linked to socioeconomic barriers. Research highlights that children suffering medical neglect frequently experience avoidable hospitalizations and long-term health complications, underscoring the ethical and developmental consequences of unmet healthcare needs (Turney & Wildeman, 2016; Wildeman, Emanuel & Leventhal, 2014).

➤ Educational Neglect

Educational neglect involves a caregiver's failure to ensure that a child receives an appropriate education, whether through consistent school attendance, enrollment, or support for learning needs. This includes chronic absenteeism, ignoring special education requirements, or refusing to address barriers that prevent learning. Children who experience educational neglect often struggle academically and socially, limiting future opportunities and reinforcing cycles of poverty and marginalization (Stahmer, Leslie, Hurlburt & Barth, 2016; Turney & Wildeman, 2016).

➤ Supervisory Neglect

The moment a child is exposed to injury or hazardous settings without the proper supervision for their age and developmental stage, this is known as supervisory neglect. This may involve leaving young children alone, placing them in the care of unsuitable adults, or failing to supervise harmful

activities. The literature shows that inadequate supervision significantly increases the risk of accidental injuries, exploitation, and involvement with child welfare systems (Bland, Lambie & Best, 2018; Ikenna, 2022).

➤ **Environmental Neglect**

Environmental neglect refers to exposing children to unsafe, unhealthy, or unstable living conditions, such as extreme filth, hazardous materials, overcrowding, or violence-prone environments. Unlike poverty alone, environmental neglect is identified when caregivers do not take reasonable steps to minimize dangers within their control. Recent public health research highlights how chronic exposure to unsafe environments affects children's physical health, stress responses, and cognitive development. These conditions often coexist with other forms of neglect, compounding their harmful effects across multiple domains of development (Onayemi & Hapunda, 2023; Agyepong, Sewankambo & Binagwaho, 2017).

➤ **Nutritional Neglect**

Nutritional neglect is a specific form of physical neglect involving the failure to provide adequate, balanced, and age-appropriate nutrition necessary for healthy growth and development. This includes chronic underfeeding, severely unbalanced diets, or neglecting special dietary needs. Research since 2016 shows that nutritional neglect has profound effects on brain development, immune function, and academic performance. Children experiencing nutritional neglect may suffer from stunted growth, cognitive delays, and long-term health risks that persist well beyond childhood (Turney & Wildeman, 2016; Berens & Nelson, 2015).

Types of Antisocial Behavior

➤ **Aggressive Behavior**

One of the most obvious types of antisocial behavior in children is aggressive behavior, which involves acts like kicking, punching, threatening, or verbally bullying others. Research distinguishes between reactive aggressiveness, which arises in response to perceived threats or dissatisfaction, and proactive aggression, which is planned and goal-oriented, such as bullying to obtain power or status. Studies since 2016 reveal that persistent violence in childhood is closely associated with issues in emotional control, exposure to harsh parenting, and bad social settings. If left unaddressed, aggressive behavior can escalate over time and is associated with later conduct problems, peer rejection, and academic difficulties (Hyde & Trentacosta, 2016; Blair, Leibenluft & Pine, 2018).

➤ **Rule-Breaking and Defiant Behavior**

Rule-breaking behavior involves frequent infractions of societal standards, school rules, or adult authority, such as chronic disobedience, truancy, lying, or willfully ignoring orders. Persistent rule-breaking indicates deeper issues with self-control and respect for boundaries, although sporadic disobedience is developmentally acceptable. According to research, kids who often exhibit this kind of antisocial behavior frequently have trouble controlling their impulses and may have had inconsistent parental monitoring or discipline. Longitudinal studies suggest that early rule-breaking can serve as a gateway to more serious antisocial patterns during adolescence if not addressed early (Odgers, Caspi & Moffitt, 2016; Frick & Ray, 2015).

➤ **Bullying and Peer Victimization**

Bullying is a type of antisocial behavior that involves intentionally hurting peers who are thought to be weak on a regular basis. It can be verbal, physical, relational (such as social exclusion or rumors), or digital (such as cyberbullying). According to recent studies, bullying is a complicated social process connected to power disparities and group dynamics rather than just "mean behavior." Long-term involvement is associated with antisocial behavior and mental health issues, whereas children who bully others frequently exhibit diminished empathy and an increased drive for dominance. Studies since 2016 underline the importance of school climate and peer norms in shaping bullying behavior (Arseneault, 2018).

➤ **Deceitful and Manipulative Behavior**

Chronic lying, manipulation, and tricking people for one's own benefit or to avoid accountability are examples of dishonest behavior. Unlike occasional dishonesty, this trend reveals a greater antisocial inclination to ignore trust and social rules. Research suggests that persistent deceit in childhood is often associated with callous-unemotional traits, low guilt, and limited emotional responsiveness to others' distress. (Frick, Ray, Thornton & Kahn, 2018).

➤ **Property-Related Antisocial Behavior**

This sort of antisocial activity involves damaging, stealing, or misusing property, such as vandalism, theft, or purposely destroying items. Property-related behaviors might be a reflection of underlying frustration, sensation-seeking, or peer pressure, and they frequently appear in late childhood or early adolescence. Research demonstrates that these actions are substantially connected with uncontrolled peer groups and exposure to antisocial role models. When persistent, property-related antisocial behavior is a significant predictor of later involvement with juvenile justice systems, highlighting the need for early preventive interventions (Moffitt, 2018).

➤ **Serious Conduct Problems**

The most severe and enduring type of antisocial behavior in children is represented by major conduct difficulties, which include behaviors that fit the criteria for conduct disorder, such as repeated stealing or dishonesty, severe rule violations, and violence toward people or animals. Children with major conduct difficulties often encounter many risk factors, including familial instability, trauma, and neurodevelopmental weaknesses. Without early intervention, these behaviors are strongly linked to long-term social, legal, and mental health consequences (Hyde & Trentacosta, 2016).

Effects of Child Neglect on Child Antisocial Behavior of a Child

Child neglect refers to a caregiver's failure to provide adequate physical, emotional, educational, or supervisory care necessary for a child's development. It is the most prevalent form of child maltreatment worldwide and has been linked to numerous adverse outcomes. Among these results, antisocial behaviour characterized by violence, rule-breaking, and violation of social norms has gained significant scholarly attention. Neglected children often demonstrate externalizing behaviours such as violence and rebellion. Neglected children are more likely to exhibit antisocial behavior that lasts into adolescence and adulthood, according to longitudinal studies. (Widom &

Maxfield, 2001). Impulsivity rises and emotional regulation is compromised when responsive caring is lacking.

Attachment and Emotional Regulation: Secure attachment is crucial for emotional growth. Attachment stability is compromised by neglect, which makes empathy and self-control challenging. Children who have unstable attachments are more prone to react violently to stressful situations. (Erickson & Egeland, 2002).

Peer Relationships: Neglect also affects peer interactions. Neglected children face higher rates of peer rejection, which contributes to delinquency and antisocial conduct (Lansford et al., 2007).

Methodology

In carrying out the study, correlational study design was adopted. The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State. The targeted population for the study comprised all social scientists and primary school teachers in Akwa Ibom state. Sampling random technique was used to select 25 social scientists and 25 primary school teachers each from Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State which gave a total of 150 respondents used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Child Neglect and Antisocial Behavior Questionnaire (CNABQ)”. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.82, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. Descriptive analysis was used to answer the research question while Simple Regression Analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level.

Result and Discussion

Research Questions 1:

The research question sought to examine the causes of child neglect. To answer the research question percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 1).

Table 1:

Percentage analysis of the causes of child neglect

Causes of child neglect	FRQ	%
Poverty and economic hardship	50	33.33**
Parental mental health problems	40	26.67
Substance abuse	25	16.67
Lack of parenting knowledge or skills	20	13.33
Family stress and lack of social support	15	10.00*
TOTAL	180	100%

** The highest percentage frequency

* The least percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 1 presents the percentage analysis of the causes of child neglect. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage (33.33%) was recorded for “poverty and economic hardship”, while the least percentage (10.00%) was recorded for “Family stress and lack of social support”. This finding agrees with the opinion of Mulder et al., (2023), who stated that financial strain might make parents more irritated and less able to properly provide for their children's fundamental requirements. Recent studies indicate that children living in low-income households are at a higher risk of experiencing neglect due to limited access to essential resources. His opinion also aligns with that of Bişkin, (2024) who mentioned that adolescent aggressive tendencies and dangerous behaviors are closely associated with childhood maltreatment, including neglect, particularly when coupled with family conflict.

Research Questions 2:

The research question sought to examine the effects of child neglect on antisocial behavior. To answer the research question percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 2).

Table 2

Percentage analysis of the effects of child neglect on antisocial behavior

Effects of Child Neglect	Frequency	Percentage
Increased Aggression and Delinquent Behavior	25	16.67
Development of Antisocial Personality Traits	18	12.00
Poor Emotional Regulation	40	26.67**
Increased Risk of Criminal Behavior	32	21.33
Poor Social Skills and Peer Relationships	20	13.33
Educational and Cognitive Problems	15	10 *
TOTAL	180	100%

** The highest percentage frequency

* The least percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field survey

The above Table 2 presents the Percentage analysis of the effects of child neglect on antisocial behavior. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage (26.67%) was recorded for “Poor Emotional Regulation”, while the least percentage (10%) was recorded for “educational and cognitive problems”. This finding agrees with the opinion of Lavi, Katz, & Gross, (2021) who asserted that lack of social support and family stress may be factors in child neglect. Families dealing with issues like social isolation, unemployment, or domestic conflict might not have many resources to help them handle parenting duties. Without assistance from relatives, community services, or social networks, caregivers may become overwhelmed and unable to adequately meet their children’s needs.

Research Questions 3:

The research question sought to examine the remedial strategies to child neglect. To answer the research question percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 3).

Table 3:

Percentage analysis of the remedial strategies to child neglect.

Remedial strategies to child neglect	Frequency	Percentage
Parenting Education and Support Programs	18	12
Early Childhood Intervention Programs	20	13.33
Psychological Counseling and Therapeutic Interventions	55	36.67* *
Community and School-Based Support Systems	44	29.33
Social Policies and Economic Support	13	8.67*
TOTAL	150	100%

* * The highest percentage frequency

* The least percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field survey

The above Table 3 presents the percentage analysis of the remedial strategies to child neglect. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage (36.67%) was recorded for “psychological counseling and therapeutic interventions”, while the least percentage (8.67%) was recorded for “social policies and economic support”. This finding agrees with the opinion of Reynolds, Mathieson, &Topitzes, (2019) by early childhood programs are crucial in reducing child abuse and enhancing children's long-term results by providing children with educational opportunities and supportive learning environments, these programs help mitigate the negative effects of neglect and promote social and cognitive development.

Hypothesis One:

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between child neglect on antisocial behavior. In order to answer the hypothesis, simple regression analysis was performed on the data (see table 4.)

Table 4:
Simple Regression Analysis of the relationship between child neglect on antisocial behavior

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.93a 0.87	0.87	0.88	0.591	

*Significant at 0.05 level; df=148; N= 150; critical R-value = 0.197

The above table 1 shows that the calculated R-value (0.93) was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.05 alpha levels with 150 degrees of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.87 predicts 48% of the effect of descriptive analytics on the relationship between child neglect on antisocial behavior. This result is in support of the findings of Pelajar & Yusof, (2025) who stated that physical neglect is one of the most visible aspects of child neglect, involving the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. Studies have shown that children who experience physical neglect are at risk of malnutrition, frequent illness, stunted growth, and delayed cognitive development. The result is also in agreement with Odgers, Caspi & Moffitt, 2016; Frick & Ray, (2015) who mentioned that kids who often exhibit this kind of antisocial behavior frequently have trouble controlling their impulses and may have had inconsistent parental monitoring or discipline. Longitudinal studies suggest that early rule-breaking can serve as a gateway to more serious antisocial patterns during adolescence if not addressed early. The result shows it is significant

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, child neglect in Akwa Ibom State contributes to the development of antisocial behaviours among adolescents. Neglectful experiences, including emotional and physical deprivation, disrupt healthy emotional regulation and social skills, making adolescents more susceptible to delinquency and aggression. The socio-economic conditions in the region exacerbate this issue, highlighting the need for targeted interventions. Addressing child neglect through improved social services, education, and community support systems is crucial in mitigating its long-term effects on youth behaviour. Further research is needed to explore effective prevention strategies and to understand the specific mechanisms linking neglect to antisocial tendencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The government should prioritize accessible, quality education and mental health services to ensure that adolescents who have experienced neglect can receive the support they need. Schools and community centers can serve as points of intervention, offering counseling and mentorship programs.
2. Establish community-based programs that provide parental training, emotional support, and resources to help families cope with the stressors of child-rearing, especially in impoverished areas. These programs should focus on promoting positive parenting practices to reduce the incidence of neglect.

REFERENCES

- Adikwu, V. O., Oguche, T. E., Usman, Z. S., & Olabode, O. B. (2023). Influence of child abuse and neglect on maladaptive behaviour and academic achievement. *International Journal of Research in Education and Sustainable Development*.
- Agyepong, I. A., Sewankambo, N., & Binagwaho, A. (2017). The path to longer and healthier lives for all Africans by 2030. *The Lancet*, 390(10114), 2803–2859. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)31509-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)31509-X)
- Avances en Psicología Latinoamericana. (2024). *Antisocial behavior: A unidimensional or multidimensional construct?* Retrieved from DOAJ database.
- Berens, A. E., & Nelson, C. A. (2015). The science of early adversity. *The Lancet*, 386(9991), 225–234. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(14\)61131-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61131-4)
- Bland, V. J., Lambie, I., & Best, C. (2018). Does childhood neglect contribute to violent behavior in adulthood? *Clinical Psychology Review*, 63, 68–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2018.06.001>
- Caldwell, M. F., Smith, R. M., & MacDonald, D. (2021). The Long-Term Effects of Child Neglect on Adolescent Behaviour: Implications for Intervention. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 62(5), 598–607.
- Cohen, A., Marey-Sarwan, I., & Gross Manos, D. (2024). Youth perspectives of neglect signs and help-seeking. *Behavioral Sciences*.
- Erickson, M. F., & Egeland, B. (2002). Child neglect. In J. Briere et al. (Eds.), *Child abuse trauma*.
- Gubbels, J., Assink, M., & van der Put, C. E. (2023). *Protective factors for antisocial behavior in youth: What is the meta-analytic evidence?* *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 53(2), 233–257.
- Ikenna, M. (2022). Religious response to violence, abuse and neglect against children. *International Scholar Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 45–60.
- Lansford, J. E., Dodge, K. A., Pettit, G. S., Bates, J. E., Crozier, J., & Kaplow, J. (2007). A 12-year prospective study of the long-term effects of early child physical maltreatment on psychological, behavioral, and academic problems in adolescence. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 161(4), 361–368.
- MDPI Brain Sciences. (2025). *Neural correlates of antisocial behavior: The victim's perspective*.
- Onayemi, O. M., & Hapunda, G. (2023). Socio-ecological drivers of vulnerabilities of children. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 1203510. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1203510>
- OpenAccessPub.org. (n.d.). *Antisocial behavior*. Retrieved from Human Psychology.

Pelajar, S. N. S., & Yusof, W. (2025). Neglect of children's rights amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Al-Qanatr: International Journal of Islamic Studies.

PubMed. (2025). *Antisocial Personality Disorder*. Retrieved from National Library of Medicine.

Stahmer, A. C., Leslie, L. K., Hurlburt, M., & Barth, R. P. (2016). Developmental and behavioral needs of children in child welfare. *Pediatrics*, 138(5), e20161118.

StatPearls. (2025). Child abuse and neglect. NCBI Bookshelf. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK459146 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK459146>)

Toro, R., García-García, J., & Zaldívar-Basurto, F. (2020). *Antisocial disorders in adolescence and youth: A systematic review. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(9), 3036.

Tough, S. C., Waddell, C., & Boyle, M. H. (2022). Childhood Adversity and Mental Health Outcomes in Adolescence: The Role of Emotional and Psychological Neglect. *Psychological Medicine*, 52(2), 349-357.

Turney, K., & Wildeman, C. (2016). Mental and physical health of children in foster care. *Pediatrics*, 138(5), e20161118. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-1118>

Widom, C. S., & Maxfield, M. G. (2001). An update on the cycle of violence. National Institute of Justice.

Wildeman, C., Emanuel, N., & Leventhal, J. M. (2014). The prevalence of confirmed maltreatment among U.S. children. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 168(8), 706-713. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2014.410>