

# Effect of Anti-Social Behavior on Academic Performance of Secondary Students in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This paper examines the effect of anti-social behavior on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria. Character plays a significant role in human life, and negative behaviors among students often lead to poor academic outcomes. In many cases, such behaviors have resulted in the expulsion of thousands of secondary school students across the country. Anti-social behaviors such as vandalism, loud and disruptive conduct, verbal abuse, drug use, and damage to public property are increasingly common among students in Nigerian secondary schools. These behaviors are not only detrimental to school environments but are also a root cause of mass failure in both internal and external examinations. Each year, numerous students are expelled from their schools due to anti-social conduct and other related offenses. For example, in the previous academic year, twenty students were expelled from three secondary schools in Lagos State alone. Similar incidents have been reported in several other states across Nigeria, highlighting the widespread nature of this issue.*

**Keyword;** vandalism, loud and disruptive, verbal abuse, drug use of dealing in public spaces and damage properties

## INTRODUCTION

Antisocial behavior refers to actions that show a lack of consideration for the well-being of others. In other words, it is behavior that goes against the accepted standards of social conduct within a society. In Nigeria, thousands of secondary school students exhibit antisocial tendencies such as violence, vandalism, loud and disruptive conduct, verbal abuse, drug use or dealing in public spaces, and destruction of property. These behaviors hinder academic progress, often leading some students to drop out, while others complete their studies without earning certificates.

According to Adeniyi (2025), Antisocial behavior can be defined as negative character traits that contribute significantly to the academic failure of many secondary school students. Similarly, Gonzalez (2024) conducted a study on students' participation in school activities and its relationship with antisocial behavior, academic performance, and adolescent well-being. The study

found evidence that student participation had no significant role in improving overall life satisfaction.

Goke (2022) Explained that Antisocial behaviors typically start during childhood and adolescence and can take many different forms, such as aggressiveness, theft, vandalism, pyromania, and destruction of both public and private property. Hans Eysenck (2020) linked anti-social behavior to personality traits, especially high levels of psychoticism, extraversion, and neuroticism. He believed individuals with these traits are more prone to criminal and anti-social behaviour due to lower levels of conditioning and conscience.

Albert Bandura (1973) Suggested that anti-social behaviour is learned through observing and imitating others, especially when such behaviour is seen to be rewarded. Robert Merton (1938) Stated that individuals may resort to anti-social or criminal behaviour when they are unable to achieve societal goals through legitimate means, leading to innovation (including deviant actions). Travis Hirschi (1969) Proposed that anti-social behaviour arises when individuals have weak bonds to society (e.g., lack of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief in social norms). David Farrington (1996) Defined anti-social behaviour as acts that harm or lack consideration for the well-being of others. He emphasized early risk factors such as family criminality, poor parenting, and school failure. Toson John (2003) Defined : “Anti-social behaviour is acting in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household.”

### **Effects of Anti-Social Behaviors on Academic Performance of Secondary School students in Nigeria.**

Antisocial behavior can have a significant negative impact on students' academic performance. Here are some of the main effects:

**Disruption of Learning Environment;** Students displaying antisocial behavior (e.g., aggression, defiance, bullying) often disrupt the classroom environment, making it harder for both themselves and their peers to concentrate and learn.

**Poor Relationships with Teachers and Peers ;** Antisocial students may struggle to build positive relationships with teachers and classmates, leading to social isolation or conflict. This can reduce their engagement and motivation to perform well academically.

**Lower Academic Engagement; These** students often show a lack of interest in school activities, are frequently absent, or may even drop out. Low engagement directly correlates with poor academic outcomes.

**Increased Disciplinary Actions;** Suspensions, detentions, and other punishments take time away from learning and can contribute to falling behind academically.

Emotional and Behavioral Problems; Antisocial behavior is often linked to underlying issues like anxiety, depression, or trauma. These emotional challenges can further impair concentration, memory, and overall academic achievement.

**Negative Academic Self-Concept;** Continuous failure or negative feedback from teachers can lead students to believe they are not capable of succeeding, further reducing their performance.

### **Causes of Anti-Social Behavior Amongst Secondary School Students in Nigeria.**

Apparently, evident shows that there many factors are causes of anti – social behavior in Nigeria such as following;

**Family Background ;** indeed, thousands of the students are involved anti-social behavior which can be traced to their family background , because parents have contributed a lot of up -bring of children but there is problems such as broken home, separation or petty of the children definitely, it may resulted to the problem of anti- social characters whereby they will lack of moral and respect which common in the life of thousands of teenagers mostly in secondary schools in Nigeria. Similarly, some inherited bad characters from their parents once the parents have bad characters such as vandalism, loud and disruptive, verbal abuse, drug use of dealing in public spaces and damage properties .Even , the broken home contributed to the bad characters amongst the anti- social gangs in our society.

**Peer Group;** Yet, teenagers acquire bad characters fast among themselves. However, they believed that it is time to be independent, so that they too are fully mature persons through this they would involve in anti- social behavior. For instance, in Nigeria majorities of secondary joined bad gangs which affected their academic performance, even reduce their life span . Yet, thousands of students were step down while others were dismissed through their bad behavior while some completed their studies without certificates in many secondary schools in Nigeria.

**Environmental factor;** Similarly, where children brought up reflected in the life. Meanwhile, if a child bring up in bad environment definitely this will contribute to his or her characters and also way to approach at all times . For instance, in Lagos state there particular places, if child bring up there , definitely such has been labeling , yet it possible of child mighty associate with anti-social behavior which may difficult for community to accommodate control such as vandalism, loud and disruptive , verbal abuse , drug use of dealing in public spaces and damage

properties .Thus, living in areas where there is many anti- social children definitely it would contributed to high crime, poverty or employment among the people.

**Education / School Issues ;** Repeated failure at school always cause the anti- social behavior amongst secondary school students in Nigeria. Yet, majorities of the students performed woefully are engaged with anti – social children in most of the secondary schools , thus they have low self - esteem and frustration. Similarly, the authority wry to give them capital punishment because their gangs .

**Substance Abuse;** Drug abuse rampant among secondary students in our country, this is another cause of anti – social behavior among teenagers , even many teenagers are lure of taking alcohol or edicts drugs which use can reduces inhibitions and increase aggression , some use substance to cope with emotional pain or stress. Meanwhile, hard drugs contributed to untimely death of thousand of secondary students in Nigeria. While some are dismissed because of bad characters such as disobedient, Examination Malpractices, stealing, trance and robbery. e.t.c.

**Lack of Positive Role Models ;** Yet, it is difficult for the anti- social students to play positive role in society , because they always have negative impact to the any society which them belong . Meanwhile, anti –social students always thinking negatively . Consequence, always complain bitterly on the actives of the bad characters . Similarly , anti- social students do not obey the rules and regulations in the schools . They are disobedient, dishonest , lack of respect and cause troubles in the school premises and outside schools.

Most importantly , majorities of them dismissed from the school while others struggling to complete their studies with poor results. In addition, thousand s of secondary students today have bad evolved gangs which hindering their performance excellent in all post primary education in Nigeria.

### **Characteristics of Anti- Social Behavior**

**Disrespect For Others;** Indeed, anti- social behavior secondary students do not have respect for their teachers and elders personals . Moreover, they always believed that they are superior than others because they are edicts to drug abuse . similarly , they always ignoring rules ,laws, or social norms even they acting in selfish or harmful ways to the others In a society. In additional ,anti- social behavior always behave abnormally in any society.

**Aggression and Intimidation ;** Yet, they are used to aggressive and intimidation all the time. Even, they do not care to take another person life serious .Similarly, they always threatening or

intimidating others, especially vulnerable people, yet they always try to control or scare others at the time without fear and favour. Consequently, thousands of the students in secondary schools in Nigeria are cause distraction in schools which may affect killing innocent students, even their teachers at any point at time.

**Damage of Property;** The intention of anti-social behavior Student is to vandalise the property or breaking things on purpose to achieve their aims and objectives. Thus, they always disrespect for the public or private spaces because of their egocentrism in many secondary schools in Nigeria were descriptive by the gangs without anybody can stop them unless police. Similarly, they have fly-tipping and illegally dumping rubbish.

**Disruptive and Noisy Behaviour ;** Yet, it rampant among the abnormal students always disruptive and noisy to affect the innocent people at any places where they are dwelling. Moreover, these anti social behavior gangs are not useful in that particular a place they resident then people will complain bitterly about them. For instance, a particular place in Lagos called ‘‘Oju Elegba’’ indeed many were relocated there because of the attitudes of the anti – social children dominated there. Similarly, there many places in Nigeria where many innocent relocated because of activates these groups of people.

**Lack of Empathy or Remorse;** anti- social behavior children do not feel bad about causing harm or inconvenience in any particular organization, yet they often repeats harmful behavior which makes the people to neglect them in any particular society. Apparently, teachers always neglect them in order to avoid their problems which can totally disorganized the schools.

**Social Withdrawal or Negative Peer Influence ;** Anti- social behavior children always avoid positive social connections in their secondary schools in Nigeria. Meanwhile, they always emphasis on the evils habits which contributed to their total failure on their studies. Similarly, anti social behavior children may seek out groups that promote bad behavior just like the gang members to cause evils. Yet, antisocial behavior have been changed thousands of teenagers in secondary school over in Nigeria to the members of Army Robbery, stealing, and others bad characters.

**Risky or Illegal Acts ;** Anti- social behavior students are edict of substance drug alcohol and drugs in public which affects their academic performance, even majority of the gangs always neglected to attend the lesson but they are lured in social media where they are learning bad characters. Yet, it common to they to engage in petty crime, shoplifting, trespassing, breaking curfews or ignoring community rules.

## **Curbing Antisocial Behavior Among Teenagers Requires a Combination of Preventive Measures, Supportive Interventions, And Consistent Boundaries.**

**Build Strong Relationships;** Parental involvement to Teens with supportive, involved parents are less likely to engage in antisocial behavior. Similarly, they should know the friends their at all time . Mentorship Connecting teens with positive role models or mentors can encourage healthy behavior and decision-making.

**Early Intervention ;** identify and address behavioral issues early on through counseling or school support systems. Indeed ,children always need counseling to modified their behavior . Schools and communities should have programs to flag and support at-risk youth before problems escalate.

**Promote Emotional Intelligence ;** Teach conflict resolution, empathy, and emotional regulation through school curriculums or extracurricular programs. Social-emotional learning (SEL) helps teens manage anger, frustration, and peer pressure more effectively.

**Encourage Positive Peer Groups ;** Help teens get involved in sports, clubs, arts, or volunteering to surround them with constructive influences. Peer influence is powerful—positive groups can reduce risk behaviors significantly.

**Community and School Involvement;** Schools should have clear, fair behavior policies and foster a sense of belonging. Community programs that provide safe, engaging spaces after school can reduce the time teens spend unsupervised.

## **CONCLUSION**

Antisocial behavior among secondary school students has a deeply negative impact on academic performance, not only for the individuals involved but also for the school environment as a whole. Effective intervention strategies are therefore crucial to identify, address, and prevent these behaviors, ensuring better academic and life outcomes for all students.

There is clear evidence that antisocial behavior is common among teenagers in secondary schools in Nigeria. Therefore, the Federal and State Ministries of Education should promulgate laws that discourage and penalize antisocial behavior among secondary school students. In addition, strict disciplinary measures should be introduced to deter those who attempt to influence innocent students into joining such groups. By doing so, the school environment will become safer and more conducive to LEARNING.



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