

"Understanding Antisocial Behaviour in UK Teenagers: A Systematic Review of Cyberbullying, Substance Abuse, and Aggressive Acts"

Student Name: Jhanvi Shivabhai Chauhan

Student ID: 2024302691

Student email: 2430269@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Programme Name: M sc Health And Social Care In Practice

1. Introduction

- Adolescent antisocial behaviours like substance misuse, cyberbullying, and violent acts are increasing in the UK (Picoito et al, 2021).
- These behaviours negatively affect mental health, academic performance, and social relationships, often persisting into adulthood (Fitzsimons and Villadsen, 2021).
- Digital technology, peer pressure, and socio-environmental stressors have contributed to the rise of such behaviours (Vannucci et al, 2019).
- Understanding the extent, causes, and impacts of these issues is vital for developing effective methods for prevention and intervention (Picoito et al, 2021).

2. Prevalence

Cyberbullying:

- Around 19% of UK teenagers report experiencing online bullying behaviour (ONS, 2020).
- Approximately 16% admit to engaging in cyberbullying behaviours (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2024).

Substance Abuse:

- The NHS England Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Survey (2024) found that 13% of 15-year-olds reported drug use and 9% had taken drugs in the past year.
- 37% of 15-year-olds had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months; 6% reported regular smoking (NHS England, 2024).

Aggressive Behaviour:

- The Youth Endowment Fund (2023) reported over 14,298 recorded incidents of violent offences committed by individuals aged 10–17 in England and Wales.

These figures indicate that antisocial behaviours are prevalent and multifaceted, affecting a significant portion of UK adolescents.

3. Research Question, Aim and Objectives:

Aim:

To examine the prevalence, contributing factors, and patterns of cyberbullying, substance abuse, and aggressive behaviour among UK teenagers.

Research Questions:

What are the prevalence and risk factors of cyberbullying, substance abuse, and aggressive behaviour among adolescents in the UK?

Objectives:

1. To identify the prevalence of cyberbullying, substance abuse, and aggression among UK teenagers.
2. To explore individual, social, and environmental factors associated with these antisocial behaviours.
3. To assess the short- and long-term consequences of these behaviours on adolescents' mental health and social functioning.
4. To evaluate intervention strategies and policy measures aimed at reducing antisocial behaviour among UK teenagers.

(LSS London, 2023)



(Medical Press, 2017)

4. Rationale of the Research

- Despite numerous studies, integrated data comparing cyberbullying, substance abuse, and aggression among UK teenagers remains limited (Farrington, 2021).
- The post-pandemic environment has altered patterns of youth behaviour, requiring updated evidence (Halford et al, 2022; Reid et al, 2022).
- Understanding overlapping risk factors can help in designing unified prevention strategies across schools, communities, and digital spaces (Coutinho et al, 2025).
- This research is original in synthesising data from multiple domains of antisocial behaviour and linking them to mental health and policy responses (Throuvala et al, 2021).
- The study aims to address urgent national concerns around youth wellbeing, digital safety, and social inclusion.

5. Research Impact

- This research aims to raise awareness among young people about the personal, psychological, and social consequences of antisocial behaviours, while promoting the development of resilience, empathy, and positive coping strategies to prevent future engagement in harmful activities (Otto et al, 2021).
- Informs evidence-based strategies for mental health promotion and substance abuse prevention (O'Connell, 2023).
- Results will offer integrated, up-to-date data to inform the development of cohesive youth justice reforms, digital safety legislation, and school-based behaviour management policies that effectively address modern antisocial challenges (Muser et al, 2025).
- The research will enhance interdisciplinary collaboration by equipping educators, counsellors, and healthcare providers with practical knowledge and shared frameworks for addressing antisocial behaviour holistically within both clinical and educational settings (Baylis, 2023).

References:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance (2024), <https://www.antibullyingpro.com/support-and-advice/articles/in-depth-facts-and-statistics-on-bullying-and-cyberbullying-behaviour>
- Baylis, M., (2023). Police Decision-Making Processes When Addressing Antisocial Behaviour Among Young People in England and Poland. *Unpublished Mphil thesis. University of Huddersfield.*
- Coutinho, L., Lencastre, J.A. and Tomás, A.M., (2025). Cyberbullying: A Comparative Analysis Between the Results of a Scoping Study and a Questionnaire Applied to Students. *Frontiers in Computer Science*, 7, p.1506046.
- Farrington, D.P., (2021). Youth crime and antisocial behaviour. In *The social child* (pp. 353-392). Psychology Press.
- Fitzsimons, E. and Villadsen, A., (2021). Substance use and antisocial behaviour in adolescence. *no. February*, pp.1-8.
- Halford, E., Dixon, A. and Farrell, G., (2022). Anti-social behaviour in the coronavirus pandemic. *Crime science*, 11(1), p.6.
- Muser, J., Whitten, T., Virgara, J., Connell, N. and Tzoumakis, S., (2025). Can universal school-based social and emotional learning programs reduce early antisocial behaviours? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, p.01650254251361872.
- NHS England (2024), <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/smoking-drinking-and-drug-use-among-young-people-in-england/2023>
- O'Connell, M., (2023). Assessing Patterns of Anti-Social and Risky Behaviour in the Millennium Cohort Study—What Are the Roles of SES (Socio-Economic Status), Cognitive Ability and Personality?. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(1), p.46.
- ONS (2020), Online bullying in England and Wales: year ending March 2020. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/onlinebullyinginenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2020>
- Otto, C., Kaman, A., Erhart, M., Barkmann, C., Klases, F., Schlack, R. and Ravens-Sieberger, U., (2021). Risk and resource factors of antisocial behaviour in children and adolescents: results of the longitudinal BELLA study. *Child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health*, 15(1), p.61.
- Picoito, J., Santos, C. and Nunes, C., (2021). Emotional and behavioural pathways to adolescent substance use and antisocial behaviour: results from the UK Millennium Cohort Study. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, 30(11), pp.1813-1823.
- Reid, J.A., Chennaveille, T., Gardy, S.M. and Baglivio, M.T., (2022). An exploratory study of COVID-19's impact on psychological distress and antisocial behavior among justice-involved youth. *Crime & Delinquency*, 68(8), pp.1271-1291.
- Throuvala, M.A., Griffiths, M.D., Rennoldson, M. and Kuss, D.J., (2021), May. Psychosocial skills as a protective factor and other teacher recommendations for online harms prevention in schools: A qualitative analysis. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 6, p. 648512). Frontiers Media SA.
- Vannucci, A. and McCauley Ohannessian, C., (2019). Social media use subgroups differentially predict psychosocial well-being during early adolescence. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 48(8), pp.1469-1493.