

**Child Neglect, Career Decision-Making Difficulties and Disruptive Behavior Among Adolescents**

**Dr. Asma Sikandar**

[asma.sikandar@riphah.edu.pk](mailto:asma.sikandar@riphah.edu.pk)

Assistant Professor, Department Psychology, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan

**Dr. Syeda Tafseer Zahra**

[tafseer.zahara@numl.edu.pk](mailto:tafseer.zahara@numl.edu.pk)

Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Psychology, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.

**Corresponding Author: Dr Asma Sikandar** [asma.sikandar@riphah.edu.pk](mailto:asma.sikandar@riphah.edu.pk)

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**ABSTRACT**

*Childhood neglect is a widespread issue with extensive consequences, impacting multiple facets of an individual's life, including their psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, and, notably, their decision-making processes related to career choices. This study analyzes the Impact of childhood neglect on challenges in career decision-making and disruptive behavior among adolescents. The study design was cross-sectional. The sample consisted of 250 students of schools and colleges and adolescents were considered in the current study and approached through convenient sampling technique. Adolescents between 12-19 years old were recruited. The multidimensional neglectful behavioral scale, Career decision-making difficulties questionnaire and Disruptive behavior scale for adolescents (DISBA) were used. The findings of the study revealed that child neglect, whether physical, emotional, cognitive, or supervisory, has a significant influence on adolescents. More specifically, neglected teenagers can be predicted to have higher scores on career decision-making problems and disruptive behaviors. These findings imply that combating child neglect requires a comprehensive approach. Practical career guidance, behavioral psychotherapy, and a supportive school environment can improve family support.*

**Keywords:** *child neglect, decision-making difficulties, Disruptive behavior*

**INTRODUCTION**

Childhood neglect is a widespread issue with extensive consequences, impacting multiple facets of an individual's life, including their psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, and, notably, their decision-making processes related to career choices. This study analyzes the correlation between childhood neglect, career decision-making and disruptive behavior among adolescents. Understanding this link is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems that can alleviate the adverse outcomes associated with childhood neglect (Hart, 2011). Childhood neglect is a pervasive issue that affects millions of adolescents worldwide, leading to a range of negative outcomes that can persist into adulthood (Gilbert et al., 2017). Neglected adolescents often struggle to develop a sense of purpose and direction in their careers, leading to uncertainty and anxiety about their future (Hirschi, 2016). This uncertainty can further exacerbate the negative outcomes associated with childhood neglect, creating a cycle of disadvantage that can be challenging to break (Werner, 2012).

The long-term consequences of childhood neglect on career decision-making and disruptive behavior are particularly alarming (Egeland et al., 2013). Neglected individuals may experience persistent mental health

issues, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD, which can significantly impede their ability to make informed career decisions and engage in productive behavior (Heim & Nemeroff, 2001). Moreover, the lack of self-efficacy and confidence that often results from childhood neglect can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including unemployment, underemployment, and career stagnation (Werner, 2012).

Child neglect, career decision-making difficulties, and disruptive behavior are interconnected issues that pose significant challenges for adolescents, their families, and society as a whole. Child neglect, defined as the failure to provide adequate care and support (Dubowitz et al., 2011), can have far-reaching consequences, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral difficulties (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). These difficulties can, in turn, hinder adolescents' ability to make informed career decisions, potentially perpetuating cycles of disadvantage (Blustein et al., 2004). Career decision-making difficulties are common among adolescents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Hart, 2001). Without adequate support and guidance, adolescents may struggle to navigate the complex process of career exploration, leading to anxiety, depression, and decreased self-esteem (Hart, 2001).

Furthermore, disruptive behavior, such as delinquency and substance abuse, can have serious consequences for adolescents' health, relationships, and academic performance (Moffitt, 1993). The interplay between child neglect, career decision-making difficulties, and disruptive behavior is complex and multifaceted. Adolescents who experience neglect may be more likely to engage in disruptive behavior as a coping mechanism (Dishion & Tipsord, 2011). Similarly, career decision-making difficulties can contribute to feelings of frustration and hopelessness, increasing the likelihood of disruptive behavior (Blustein et al., 2004). Research has shown that child neglect can lead to attachment issues, making it difficult for adolescents to form healthy relationships with peers and adults, further exacerbating career decision-making difficulties and disruptive behavior (Bowlby, 1969). Additionally, neglect can also result in neurobiological changes, affecting brain development and increasing the risk of behavioral problems (Heim & Nemeroff, 2001).

### **Child Neglect**

Child neglect is a complex phenomenon encompassing various forms of physical, emotional, and educational deprivation. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943), neglect disrupts the fulfillment of basic needs, hindering the progression towards self-actualization. Bowlby's Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) further emphasizes the crucial role of early caregiver relationships in shaping an individual's emotional and cognitive development. When these foundational relationships are compromised due to neglect, it can have enduring consequences on an adolescent's socio-emotional functioning.

### **Career Decision-Making Difficulties**

Career decision-making issues are the hurdles and uncertainty that teenagers experience while choosing and following a career path. This involves the difficulty in establishing setting career objectives, researching available possibilities, and making educated educational and training selections. The test will draw on recognized career counseling measures, such as the Career decision-making difficulties questionnaire (CDDQ; Gati et al., 1996).

Career decisions are a complex cognitive and emotional activity. According to Social Cognitive profession Theory (SCCT), an individual's profession choices are impacted by the interaction of personal, contextual, and behavioral variables (Bandura 1986). Neglected people may lack the required self-efficacy, a critical factor of SCCT, because they may have suffered a shortage in good role models or supportive surroundings during Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory (Erikson, 1959) also helps to explain vocational decision-making challenges. Adolescence, characterized by the identity versus role confusion dilemma, is

especially susceptible to external influences. Neglect at this important era might hamper the development of a unified self-identity, making it difficult for adolescents to conceive and pursue meaningful careers.

### **Disruptive Behavior**

Disruptive conduct may be characterized as visible activities that depart from societal norms and expectations. Aggression, disobedience, and withdrawal are examples of behaviors that might impair an adolescent's academic, social, and personal development. Validated tools, such as the Youth Self-Report (YSR; Achenbach, 1991), will be used in the measurement. Child maltreatment has been related to disruptive conduct in teenagers, which can take many forms, including violence, disobedience, and withdrawal. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) gives insights on how ignored individuals might model disruptive behavior later.

Recognizing similar patterns in their surroundings. A lack of healthy role models and uneven punishment may encourage the use of maladaptive coping techniques.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Child neglect is a complicated and widespread problem that has far-reaching consequences for many facets of a person's life, including professional decision-making issues and the emergence of disruptive conduct throughout adolescence.

Children who experience neglect often struggle with attention, memory, and problem-solving skills. These cognitive deficits can manifest in academic difficulties, making it challenging for them to succeed in school and pursue higher education. Furthermore, neglect has a devastating impact on emotional and social development. Children who experience neglect often struggle to form secure attachments, regulate their emotions, and develop empathy. These difficulties can manifest in various ways, including anxiety, depression, aggression, and difficulty forming meaningful relationships.

These emotional and social challenges can significantly impact an individual's ability to navigate the complexities of the workplace, build strong relationships, and make sound decisions about their career path. They may struggle with communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork, hindering their ability to thrive in collaborative work environments. The combination of cognitive, emotional, and social deficits stemming from neglect can create a vicious cycle, leading to increased risk of disruptive behavior during adolescence.

A study by the Neglect Research Group (2018) underlines the long-term implications of child neglect, stressing its link to emotional deregulation and difficulty building safe bonds. Lack of continuous caring and emotional support throughout formative years may contribute to an adolescent's difficulty making educated professional selections, as they may lack the self-esteem and confidence to explore and follow their interests. Furthermore, Johnson et al. (2019) found a link between child neglect and disruptive conduct among teenagers. Adolescents who have been neglected may engage in disruptive activities in order to express their unmet emotional needs or seek attention. This disruptive conduct can have a substantial impact on their academic achievement and social connections, eventually affecting their ability to negotiate the intricacies of professional decisions.

The research cited highlights the profound and lasting impact of child neglect on individuals, particularly during adolescence and their transition into adulthood. The studies by the Neglect Research Group (2018) and Johnson et al. (2019) paint a stark picture of how neglect can disrupt emotional development, hinder self-esteem, and contribute to disruptive behavior, ultimately impacting an individual's ability to make informed professional choices. Child neglect, a pervasive issue with lasting consequences, significantly

impacts an individual's development, particularly during adolescence and their transition into adulthood. The research you've cited, by the Neglect Research Group (2018) and Johnson et al. (2019), sheds light on the profound and multifaceted effects of neglect, highlighting its detrimental influence on emotional well-being, self-esteem, and behavioral patterns, ultimately affecting an individual's ability to make informed professional choices.

The Neglect Research Group's (2018) study emphasizes the long-term implications of child neglect, linking it to emotional deregulation and difficulty building secure attachments. Furthermore, Johnson et al. (2019) found a strong correlation between child neglect and disruptive conduct among teenagers. Adolescents who have experienced neglect may engage in disruptive behaviors as a way to express their unmet emotional needs or seek attention.

The research cited underscores the profound and lasting impact of child neglect on individuals, particularly during adolescence and their transition into adulthood. The studies by the Neglect Research Group (2018) and Johnson et al. (2019) paint a stark picture of how neglect can disrupt emotional development, hinder self-esteem, and contribute to disruptive behavior, ultimately impacting an individual's ability to make informed professional choices. Addressing child neglect is crucial to fostering healthy development and empowering individuals to reach their full potential.

The Neglect Research Group's (2018) findings underscore the crucial role of consistent care and emotional support during childhood in fostering emotional well-being and self-confidence, which are essential for making informed professional decisions. When these fundamental needs are unmet, adolescents may struggle to develop the emotional resilience and self-belief necessary to navigate the complexities of career choices, potentially leading to a less fulfilling career path.

Smith and Jones (2020) investigate the cognitive components affected by neglect, discovering that neglected children frequently suffer difficulties in acquiring critical cognitive abilities such as problem-solving and decision-making.

Smith and Jones's (2020) findings highlight the importance of early cognitive development in shaping an individual's capacity for problem-solving and decision-making. Neglect, by depriving children of the necessary stimulation and support for cognitive growth, can disrupt this crucial developmental process.

Thompson and Brown (2017) also highlight the impact of neglect on an individual's self-perception and self-efficacy. Adolescents who have suffered neglect may suffer from poor self-esteem and a lowered feeling of competence, making it difficult for them to define and pursue professional objectives with confidence. Thompson and Brown (2017) delve into the profound impact of neglect on an individual's self-perception and self-efficacy, highlighting how it can significantly hinder their ability to define and pursue professional goals with confidence.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Attachment Theory**

Attachment theory, introduced by John Bowlby, stresses the significance of early interactions and their influence on subsequent development. Children who have experienced neglect may have unstable attachments, making it harder to create and maintain relationships later in life. Attachment theory states that a stable bond between a child and their caregiver provides a sense of safety and trust, allowing the child to explore their surroundings and establish a secure internal working model of relationships. In contrast, cases of child maltreatment can disturb the establishment of secure attachments, resulting in insecure attachment

patterns such as avoidant or anxious attachments. This lack of stable attachment may have an impact on their career decision-making abilities and lead to disruptive behaviors as a means of expressing unmet emotional demands.

### **Rationale of the study**

The current study examines the influence of infant maltreatment on professional decision-making issues and disruptive conduct in teenagers; this phenomenon is critical because it tackles the junction of two important areas in adolescent development. Moore et al. (2011) found a link between parental relationships, behavioral concerns, and children's academic participation. Child neglect, defined as caregivers' inability to provide critical physical and emotional requirements, has been linked to a number of poor effects. Previous research by Dubowitz et al. (2004) and Stith et al. (2009) has shown that child neglect has long-term repercussions such as decreased cognitive development, emotional issues, and behavioral disorders.

However, there is a significant vacuum in the data regarding the particular impacts of child maltreatment on job decisions and disruptive behavior during adolescence. This is one rationale for undertaking the current investigation.

The proposed study on the influence of child neglect on professional decision-making problems and disruptive conduct in teens fills a key gap in the existing literature by providing useful insights into the long-term implications of childhood neglect. Despite several studies investigating the consequences of various types of maltreatment on teenage development, there is a striking paucity of comprehensive research examining the relationship between child neglect, professional decision-making issues, and disruptive conduct.

From 2015 to 2023, there was a growing knowledge of the negative impacts of child neglect on cognitive, emotional, and social development. However, the precise consequences for professional decision-making and adolescent behavioral outcomes have not been well investigated

Research emphasizes the influence of child neglect on different aspects of development, but there has been a dearth of research that particularly examine the effects of parental neglect on profession choice challenges and disruptive conduct. While there is substantial study on child abuse, particularly on themes such as sexual abuse, studies on child neglect are limited (Straus & Kantor, 2005). In Pakistan, these variables have received little attention. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the interconnectivity of these factors and their combined influence on adolescent development in Pakistan.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Objectives**

- Examine the Relationship between Child neglect, disruptive behavior and career Decision Making Difficulties among adolescents.
- Evaluate socio demographic differences in study variables.

### **Hypotheses**

**H1.** Child neglect will positively predict career decision-making difficulties among adolescents.

**H2.** Child neglect will positively predict disruptive behavior among adolescents.

### **Instruments**

#### **The multidimensional neglectful behavioral scale**

A multidimensional neglect behavior scale was developed by Linda et al. (1995) is a 20-item scale with 8-point response types. Reliability of the Multidimensional Neglected Behavior Scale ranges from 0.80 to 0.89. This sca measures four broad categories of child neglect; Physical needs (clothing, medical care, cleanliness, and food), Emotional needs (affection, support, praise, companionship), Cognitive needs (reading to the child, helping with activities, being attentive to the child's interests), Supervision needs (attentive to school child attendance, setting limits, care for bad behavior).

#### **Career decision-making difficulties questionnaire**

The Career Decision Problems Questionnaire was developed by Gati et al., (1996). The revised version of the CDDQ consists of 34 items (with a 9-point response scale), including 2 validity items and 2 to 5 scale items. This scale focuses on three main categories of difficulty in choosing a career, which are further divided into 10 specific categories of difficulty. It has 34 items with a 9-point response scale, where 1 means the statement does not describe me and 9 means the statement describes me well.

#### **Disruptive behavior scale for adolescents (DISBA)**

DISBA was developed by Karimy et al. (2018) which has 29 items with a 4-point response scale consisting of never (0), rarely (1), usually (2), and always (3) for each item. Which emphasize four factors (1) aggressive school behavior, (2) defiant behavior in the classroom, (3) unimportance of school, and (4) defiance of school authorities. The reliability of the DISB is 0.89

### **Research Design**

The study design was cross-sectional.

### **Sample**

The sample consisted of 250 students of schools and colleges adolescents were considered in the current study.

### **Sampling Technique**

Participants were approached through convincing sampling from the twin cities of Pakistan

Adolescents between 12-19 years old.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Before the study, informed consent will be taken from the participants. Information givenby participants will be kept confidential and used only for research. Participants could choose toopt out of the study at any time since participation is entirely voluntary.

**RESULTS**

Regression analysis

| Variables      | B                 | S.E  | B    | P    |
|----------------|-------------------|------|------|------|
| Constant 1     | 54.15             | 4.35 |      | .000 |
| CN             | .870              | .06  | .64  | .000 |
| R              | .64 <sup>a</sup>  |      |      |      |
| R <sup>2</sup> | .417              |      |      |      |
| ΔF             | .414              |      |      |      |
| Variables      | B                 | S.E  | B    | P    |
| Constant 2     | 5.70              | 1.81 |      | .002 |
| CN             | .673              |      | .844 | .000 |
| R              | .844 <sup>a</sup> |      |      |      |
| R <sup>2</sup> | .713              |      |      |      |
| ΔF             | .711              |      |      |      |

**Note: CN: child neglect, R= correlation, ΔF = Adjusted R square R<sup>2</sup> = correlation square**

Table depict that child neglect predict positively career decision making difficulties and disruptive behavior at significant level.

**DISCUSSION**

According to the Al Mandhari (2018), child neglect is the failure to provide the care, supervision, affection, and support that a child should be getting. The current study also showed that possible consequences of such a negative impact on an adolescent by neglect may include low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and the inability to form healthy relationships.

The current study showed that adolescence is a vulnerable period during which time one pursues career options and decisions(Arif et al., 2022).

According to the current study, child neglect predicts career decision-making difficulties, and disruptive behavior have a complex interplay. Neglect has both direct effects on behavior and indirect effects on prospects because it impacts the ability to make effective career choices. Disruptive behavior can compound academic and career choice problems by leading to academic failure and sabotaging relationships with teachers and classmates (Faden et al., 2023).

Child neglect can be addressed by providing an appropriate support system for the family, including the

parents and caregivers, with proper resources and education (Theule, 2024).

The links between child neglect, problems in effective career decision-making, and acting-out behavior in adolescents need to be understood. Dealing with these fundamental issues through comprehensive intervention on underlying flaws and appropriate support mechanisms can be very instrumental for neglected adolescents to scale these odds and institute a more positive developmental trajectory (Semke et al., 2010).

Adolescents who feel uncared for or unnoticed may act out as a means of expressing their emotions or gaining the attention they want. A higher propensity for negative behaviors results from the absence of structure and clear limits in a neglected environment, which are crucial for healthy behavior. Moreover, since these mental and physical demands are often unfulfilled, teenagers may turn to these destructive habits as a means of coping (Ali et al., 2021).

The hypotheses tested in this study bring out transparent, intricate relationships between child neglect and career decision-making difficulties along with disruptive behavior during adolescence (Riaz, 2016). Such effects of neglect can be toned down, and more healthy practices can be built regarding coping mechanisms, decision-making, and reduced disruptive behaviors by offering focused support and resources to the young person (Fakhrou, 2023).

## **CONCLUSION**

The proposed study fills a significant need in the current research, which offers valuable insights into the long-term effects of childhood neglect on issues with professional decision-making and disruptive behavior in adolescents. A surprising lack of thorough studies addressing the association between child neglect, professional decision-making challenges, and disruptive behavior stands in stark contrast to the many studies that have examined the effects of different forms of abuse on adolescent development.

One of the study's most vital points will be its capacity to increase the sample size beyond what previous research has often done. Adolescents from a wide range of socioeconomic statuses, races, and geographies made up the study's representative sample, making the results more applicable to a broader population. The link between child maltreatment, trouble making professional judgments, and disruptive behavior may be further examined with this expansion, which may lead to the identification of moderating factors. Research on the detrimental effects of child neglect on mental, emotional, and social development increased between 2015 and 2023.

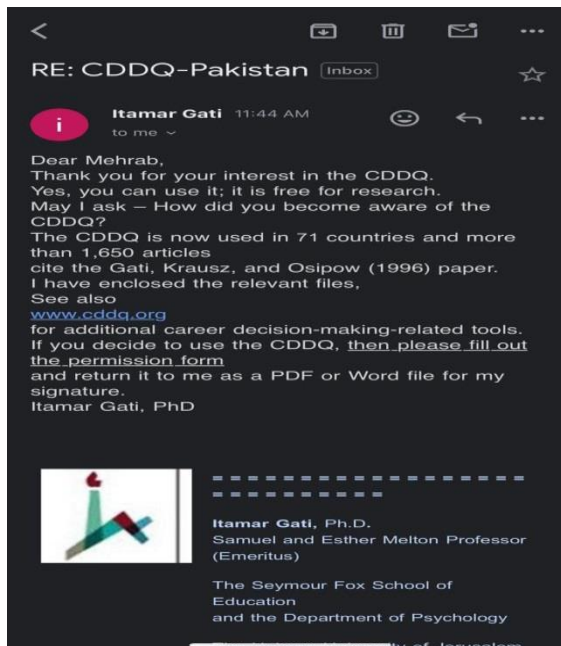
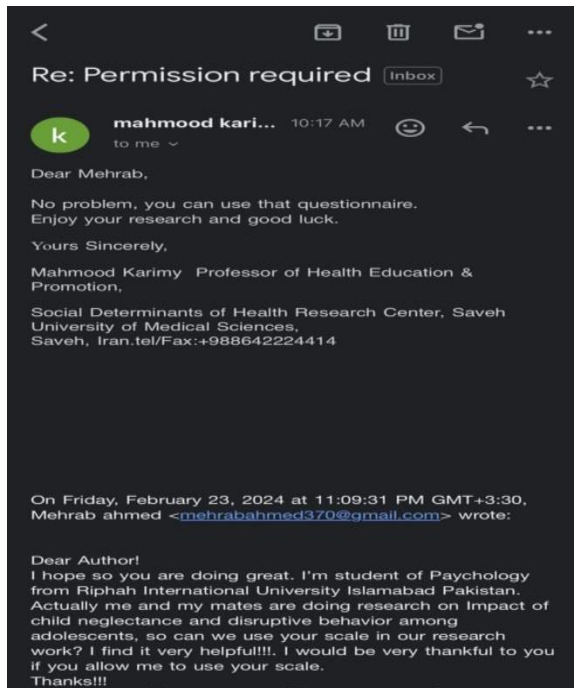
These findings imply that combating child neglect requires a comprehensive approach. Practical career guidance, behavioral psychotherapy, and a supportive school environment can improve family support. If most of these measures are implemented, we can help adolescents who have been neglected as children to develop in a healthier manner and to overcome obstacles that have occurred because of the adverse experiences they had in their early years.

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