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Behavior Management among Early Adolescent and Its Implication to the Church in Africa

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Abstract
Behavior management is skills and strategies that help in modifying prosocial behaviors of students with an aim of creating a positive teacher-student relationship. This article aims at first, assessing the choice and use of the strategies that help in managing early adolescents' feelings in classroom. Secondly, addressing early adolescents' developmental needs and transitional issues that cause them to be involved in risk-taking behaviors. In Kenya, several cases of school unrest been reported for over a period of years. This has become a major concern to several stakeholders on the future of the students and their learning process. My intention is to examine these behavior management strategies and their implication African community, with a greater emphasis to the church in Africa.

Keywords: *Behavior management, behavior management techniques, early adolescent, church in Africa*

1. Introduction
Behavior management from a classroom perspective is putting a working system in place that helps in regulating and guiding students' social behavior so as to obey the school rules and regulations. This will result in creating a favorable learning environment for all students. According to Agesa (2011), academic excellence, emotional and social development in school for all students depends majorly on behavior management. Proper learning and achieving of education goals is enhanced by well-behaved students. Therefore, the teachers and educators ought to ensure that a conducive learning environment is created for the learning process to take place.

The early adolescent goes through several transitions from the onset of puberty that might cause disorganization, bad attitude, rebellion, early experimentation and risk-taking behaviors. According to Scheer, et al. (2007) who cited Hall (1909) attributes this drastic change of behaviors to pubertal changes; a period of breaking away from one's childhood and preparing for adulthood. This is a time when many adolescents try to establish their own identity and autonomy as they become comfortable with their sexuality. On the same note, Myers (2005)quotes Piaget, who believes that the minds of the early adolescents have not fully developed to allow them make rational decisions - they are in a very volatile state. This might also affect the teachers, parent and other primary caregivers who respond to their needs and behaviors. This may cause them to react to circumstances rather than deal with the situation at hand. It is therefore, important to understand their developmental milestones and how they affect them.

2. Early Adolescent Developmental Milestones and Its Effect on Behavior
The early adolescents normally have a growth spurt, though it may vary from different people and gender. The growth spurt involves a "rapid skeletal growth which might begin from ages 10 to 12 in girls and 12 to 14 in boys and is complete at around age 17 to 19 in girls and 20 in boys" (Gentry and Campbell 2002, 7). The bodies of adolescents change overnight, while the process of sexual maturation may take a longer period. They start to experience weight gain; for the boys, they have increased muscles development, while girls have increased body fat. There are hormonal change takes places, which activates the development of secondary sex characteristics that support their fertility. In girls, there is menarche and breast bidding, and in boys, enlargement of testes, voice changing and facial hair among other key changes. On the same note, there is growth of pubic hair and increased production of oil, and sweat glands activity which might produce acne on both gender (Rufffin 2009; Gentry and Campbell 2002).

This physical development and changes majorly affect the early adolescent. They might become clumsier because of the growth spurt, recurrently sleep extended hours. The girls may become overly sensitive about their weight and body image, feel awkward about demonstrating affection to the opposite sex parent and may become inquisitive about sex.

2.1. Brain Development in Adolescence
Brain development is one of the major developments that happen during early adolescent stage. It affects their perceptions, thought and thinking patterns and thus affecting their behavior. According to Thill (n.d.) who bases her argument

from Piaget's theory argues that the brain of the early adolescent is not developed until at age 20 years. At this age the prefrontal cortex that is "responsible for planning, organization and risk assessment" has not fully matured, thus causing the early adolescent to be disorganized, and less effective. On the same note, the early adolescent is not able to access the amygdala, which is a part of the brain in the temporal lobe, which has not fully developed. This is the part that is influential to fear, and emotional regulation. According to Woolfork (2007), inability to access it, leads to anger, mood swings, and fuels conflict and risky behaviors.

Ruffin (2009), basing his argument on Piaget's theory, says that though the early adolescents has the above deficiencies, they are also developing advanced reasoning skills, abstract thinking skills, and ability to think about thinking in a metacognition process. These changes affect the early adolescent and they reveal it by "demonstrating a heightened level of self-consciousness" (Ruffin 2009), believing that their experiences are unique, and no one has ever experienced the feelings and emotions that they are going through. At the same time, develop a personal fable where they believe that they are unique, and they experience too, what befalls another adolescent cannot happen to them and thus engage in risk-taking behaviors.

2.2. Transitional Period

During the pubertal stage, there are many transitions that take place in an adolescent and some of them might not be evident since they are internal. During this transitional period from childhood to adulthood, apart from the growth spurt that occurs, appearance of secondary sexual characteristics and fertility is achieved, there are other profound psychological changes that take place. Since the adolescent may seem not to understand the hormonal changes taking place, the changes might contribute to turbulence and stress that they might experience.

According to Lerner et al. (2003, 6:275) the pubertal changes might influence adolescents' emotions and behavior patterns, such as fears, anxiety, dilemmas and struggles on several issues. Additionally, as they form their self-identity, they are struggling in their social world with issues such as responsibility and adult-like ambitions (Scheer, Gavazzi, and Blumenkrantz. 2007). These struggles sometimes cause the early adolescent to become anxious and fearful due to societal pressures and demands. It's worthy noting that the changes are occurring simultaneously from within and without. The turmoil experiences, anxiety and pressure may sometimes cause them to make irrational decisions. If the adolescents are not correctly handled and guided, these issues may make or break them. This is where the adults in the society takes center stage, since the early adolescents are not growing in isolating of the rest community, to intentionally mentor and guide them (Ge, Conger, and Glen, 2001).

2.3. Risk-Taking Behaviors in Adolescent

During the puberty stage, the adolescents engage in risk-taking behaviors. According to Ajidahum (2011), the adolescence period is said to be a period of a lot of anxiety and stress and too much experimentation. A number of these issues are related to their development and growth. As part of their developmental milestones, there are two major things that are attributed to risk-taking behaviors and experimentations: adolescent egocentrism and the amygdala. According to Woolfork (2007), amygdala is a part of the brain that regulates fear, moods and emotions. During this stage, the adolescent has no ability to access the amygdala that causes him to fear. While adolescent ego-centrism, is a belief that they are unique and is majorly controlled by two major beliefs: imaginary audience, personal fable and illusion of invulnerability. Thill (n.d.) explains that the imaginary audience makes them believe that someone is constantly watching them, while the personal fable, they believe that their experiences are unique to them. This in turn leads to illusion of invulnerability, where they believe that misfortunes only happen to others and not them.

The combination of the effect of amygdala and adolescent ego-centrism is dreadful. This causes their reasoning to be distorted and disillusioned. The fact that they have no fear and they still believe that nothing bad can happen to them, and that their experiences are only unique to them. Additionally, they believe that whatever happened to the others cannot happen to them. This is what is termed by Landicho et.al (2014), as risky behavior. This is fueled and influenced by cognitive immaturity and failure to access risks, costs and benefits of engaging in certain acts. The aftermath of their behavior mostly turns out to be life-threatening and dangerous to them and/or those around them (Thill n.d.).

2.4. Social Development: Adolescent Peer Relationship

Peer relationships are normally a source of affection, sympathy, understanding and a place for experimentation to adolescents. According to Zitzmann (2017), the quality of peers' relationship when interacting with each other, it may contribute to cognitive growth and development of each other. This is affirmed by Howard (2004), when he says that peers can influence each other on almost everything; what they wear, how they talk, walk, who are their friends, whether to engage in deviant behaviors or not and other behaviors that are informed by the peers. "everything from what an adolescent chooses to wear to whether or not an adolescent engages in drug related or other delinquent behavior" The other side of the coin is the negative peer relations that are "due to peer rejection, possessiveness and low self-esteem, peers engage in negative socialization as a way of seeking attention. This informs the kind of allegiance that they have in their cliques. The young people form cliques that seem hard to break, for fear of rejection. In these cliques, the early adolescents share several things, Muzi (2000), itemizes them as similar backgrounds, physical characteristics, and interest. The cliques encourage each other to conform and in most cases, they promote hostility and intolerance towards outsiders.

3. Theoretical Assumptions of Behavior Management

There are several theoretical assumptions as developed and believed by different theorist. They argue different on how behavior is acquired depending on their perspectives. This paper will only discuss two theories that seem to relate to the subject matter. These are social learning theory and Bowen's Family systems theory. These theoretical assumptions will guide this study in trying to see what strategies can be used among the early adolescent in managing their behavior.

3.1. Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory was developed by Albert Bandura with the knowledge and principles of classical conditioning and operant conditioning theory. According to McLeod 2016, Bandura brought in a new perspective of observational learning in a social context. He believed that as children grow in a social environment, they are surrounded by different people whom they observe and emulate their behaviors. With all the actions and behavior patterns that they see they have a choice of emulate or not, since they evaluate it on the basis of the consequences of that particular behavior.

However, at the adolescent stage, their condition might be slightly different, due to ego-centrism and in ability to access amygdala, they might not have the ability evaluate the consequences of their actions. They might be interested in themselves and making a statement of the whole situation, since they want to appear "cool," do not fear anything, and they believe that they are unique. At the same, they may want to emulate and worship "heroes" in their lives and they adore celebrities. In so doing they develop fantasies with media characters and would always want to be identified with them. This causes them to observe behaviors and attitudes of those particular people that they adore and some would go to the extreme of dressing, talking or even walking like them. A number of youths in the society find their dressing styles from the internet, watching music videos and movies. Girls would have desire to be like the top models and thus they start fantasizing about their body image and dressing (Seifert and Sutton 2009; Muzi 2000; Campbell 2007).

Unlike classical conditioning, in the social learning theory, a person has control over his behavior and has the ability to choose, or emulate the observed behavior (McLeod 2016). A case in place is the wave of school unrest in the Kenyan schools. Vicarious learning seemed to be taking place in among students in several secondary schools. Every time a strike happened in one school, after a few days, the media would record an increase in school strikes.   Africa News (2016) reported that arson attacks in the Kenyan schools begun with one school but "in a span of three months, 113 secondary schools had been partially destroyed."   The most amazing thing is that the students were on session during the second term of the year, with no contact with the rest of the student. But I presume that they were able to watch what others are doing on television and acted the same way.

3.2. Bowen's Family Systems Theory

Bowen family systems theory is a natural systems theory of relationship systems and defines the family as an emotional unit that regulates its members. According to KC Centre for Family Systems (2009) the Bowen's theory holds that an individual is part of the broader family relationship system and describes how the process between individual members profoundly affects and guides a person's functioning. The complicated system of exchanges between family members leads to the family being a resource and/or to the development of symptoms. Theory provides a way of accounting for vast variations in individuals and families.

Therefore, the way adolescents' behavior is very much informed by the family functions; number of siblings, relationship with parents and siblings, size of the family, emotion relationship with other member of the family, and whether there are any unresolved issues in the family. If the adolescent is coming from a loving and emotionally stable family, there is a likelihood that the adolescent might not have conduct issues, unlike one who comes from a dysfunction family.

According to Bowen's theory the family influences and attachment dictates an adolescent's behavior, although there are so isolated cases in each family. Abdullah and Rahman (2015), argue that, a family's past and present reaction on their adolescent influences their behavior. There is a need of all family members to be engaged in nurturing and teaching the adolescent, the family traditions, beliefs and customs so to understand and uphold their family values and ethics.

3.3. Comparative Analysis of the Theories

Below is a table with a comparative analysis of the theories: social learning and Bowen family Structure theory.

Descriptions	Social Learning	Bowen Family Structure
The learner	Active	Active
Key component	Observation	Interactions
Acquire new behavior by	Observation and modeling	Emotional connectedness
Result Measured by	Frequency of the response	Frequency of the response

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of the Theories
Source: Mcleod 2016; KC Centre For Family Systems 2009; Mahto And Hawkins 2006

4. Causes of Misbehavior among Adolescent

Misbehavior is common among the adolescent in several countries. Library research shows that disruptive behaviors and behavior management have become a major concern for teachers and educators in schools. In South Africa for instance, De Klerk and Rens (2003) point out that the major cause of indiscipline in the absence of value system that is rooted in a specific perspective. They argue that effective and efficient valued system need to be anchored in the word of God. This explains the remarks of the CEO of Kenya Film Classification Board in Kenya, based in Kenya, who blamed misbehavior to moral decay and bad role models in the community. In China, Shek and Liang (2017) found out from the longitudinal study that hopeless among the adolescent was a major factor of misbehavior. While according to Ajidahum from Nigeria, he describes the major causes of indiscipline adolescents as poverty, divorce, and peer pressure.

Relevant studies were done in Kenya too. Anayo (2014), who was examining the strategies adopted by teachers in disciplining students in Langata, found out that after the ban of corporal punishment, students seem not to correct themselves after teacher use minor corrective measures given to them. Ogada and Haumara (n.d), reviewed literature and out that in Kenya, students are overworked, stressed and working under too much pressure to perform. When the pressure becomes too much, they react by misbehaving. According to Mbuthia (2013), she sought to find out the perceived factors that influence deviant behavior and she found out that it was due to socio-economic factors and socio-psychological factors. The itemized major causes to deviant behaviors were drug abuse, premarital sex and alcohol use.

4.1. Behavior Management Techniques among Adolescent

The aim of every teacher and educator is to achieve their set expected learning outcomes. To successfully achieve the educational goals for every day, Lacaze, McCormick and Meyer (2012) state that the teacher should plan and in advance and organize the teaching schedule to ensure that he is equipped with a variety of strategies that will manage behavior appropriately and excel.

There are several techniques for managing behavior that have been used in Kenya, especially corporal punishments, however, this paper wants to look at how to manage behavior using positive discipline in schools. According to Power and Stuart (2005), positive discipline can be achieved by eliminating corporal punishment and ensuring there is respect for child's dignity. This will enhance a child's motivation and meet his developmental needs and maximize on a child's interactive participation. Additionally, "assure fairness and justice, promote solidarity and develop pro-social behavior, self-discipline and character" (Power and Stuart 2005).

Positive discipline focus on the child's' future, unlike punishment. UNESCO report of Bangkok 2006, gives us a detailed difference between discipline and punishment and it is tabulated below:

Discipline	Punishment
Giving children positive alternatives	Being told only what not to do
Acknowledging efforts and good behavior	Reacting harshly to misbehavior
Rules are follow because they are discussed and agreed upon	Rules are followed because of threats
Consistency and firm guidance	Controlling, shaming and ridiculing
Positive, respectful of the child	Negative and disrespectful of the child
Physically and verbally non-violent	Physically and verbally violent and aggressive

Table 2: Comparison between Discipline and Punishment
UNESCO Bangkok, 2006

As teaching is age-related, discipline too should be age-related. The reasons behind this are because, they are some actions and behavior patterns that are accepted in some age groups while not at others. Therefore, discipline ought to be dealt with on case by case issue; however, there should be basic guidelines, policies rules and regulations that govern the entire school.

During the early adolescence stage, the adolescents are very sensitive with their growth spurt, struggling with forming their identity and autonomy and societal pressures and demands, and yet they need their time alone which might be full of with mood swings. According to UNESCO (2006), for teachers it is important to understand the developmental milestones and what they are going through and show that you care. On the same note, model mutual respect, and avoid shaming, ridicule and nagging them, and avoid teasing or insults. Additionally, as a teacher it is very important to call a student by name to get their attention and let them know that you are directing a question to them. Above all,co-work with other stakeholders. For example, use performance contracts between the adolescent, parents and the teacher for monitoring the students' behavior and academic work. For any achievement, do not forget to use positive reinforcement; reward and acknowledge efforts consistently.   However, one should avoid quick rewarding, since the adolescent might put their emphasis on the reward rather than the behavior and might turn to be a bribe.

5. The Implication of Behavior Management to the Church in Africa

The church in Africa has been a symbol of unite for her people. For some time, people have looked at the church as a blameless and upright organization that is led by the chosen people of God. Though over the years, the moral fiber of the church has eroded, the church can still reclaim her position by being the role model that can be emulated by the society. Christ ordained the church for the core of reconciling men to God (2 Corinthians 5:18). When it comes to reconciliation it is not only about the spiritual being, but the distorted image of God (Genesis 1:26-28), corrupted knowledge (Colossians 3:10) and righteousness with God (Ephesians 4:23,24). Therefore, the church should bring her people together not only for spiritual purposes but to add knowledge and ensure there is academic excellence not as the key end result of education. But ensure that there is holistic achievement of goals; the attitudes, perceptions, skills and cognitive abilities for holistic community participation and engagement. This therefore, means that, the society will have modified behaviors; distinct characters that emulate Christ, as they work towards their academic achievements.

The church has a moral authority of nurturing her people for the sole purpose of modifying behavior through teaching and social interaction. This will have great implication to the church in Africa today, as stated below:

The people will gain knowledge and understand of their role to the society, while the church takes its rightful place of teaching and nurturing them. Having regained the uncorrupted knowledge of God, the people will have a clear understanding God's ideal structure of a community and understanding of the word of God. This will guide in nurturing, guiding and harnessing behavior as the adolescents are empowered with values, beliefs, ethics and knowledge as they make right decisions and be ". . . thoroughly equipped for every good work . . .." (2 Timothy 3:18). The bottom line of all this will be to create a Christ-based culture with biblical values and ethics. Their belief systems, norms and traditions will be guided to have respect for God and one another. At all times each one will always count the other person as the best and look for their best interests.

Additionally, the church will have people who have positive relationship, where there is dignity of life and respect for humanity as stated by Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa (2012). They argue that ever African society embraced ubuntu (Humanness) and it as part of people's way of life. They describe ubuntuas the "capacity by African cultures to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining a community with justice and mutual caring" (Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa 2012). The church in Africa can tap into this philosophy and reinforce the biblical principles given by God on respect for humanity and living together harmoniously (Psalms 133). These are basic principles of living that promote harmony among people who live together, and they promote a favorable leaning environment and harmonious living.

Africans are highly community–oriented, and they thrive in working together. There is a Swahili saying that says umoja ni nguvu (there is strength in working together). This means that a one-man army cannot defeat the enemy; everyone needs other people to combat the enemy -encourage collaboration and team work. This means that the church in Africa cannot do away with misbehavior among the adolescent all alone. There is a need of working with the parents, society, government, religious bodies and the adolescent too, so as to combat the problem.

On the same note, a number of people in Africa are embracing the attitudes of affluence and individualism due to urbanizations. These are becoming the best killers of community values and ethics in Africa since Africans are very communal and they thrive best in a community life. Many families are rarely having time with the extended families but only the nuclear unit. This affects the social interactions of the children with their grandparents, uncles, aunties, elders and the community at large. It might lead to a breakdown of transmission of social values and norms to the adolescents through the family and community, which becomes a major threat to the community life and church in Africa.

6. Conclusion

Managing of behavior is very important, for it promotes and creates a conducive learning environment and promotes a healthy relationship in the entire community. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the community to nurture and model good behavior that can be emulated by the adolescents every day. However, that does not mean that they do not have a responsibility over their actions and behavior. The spirit of ubuntu should be the guide factors for all and be embraced by all for harmonious living, mutual respect, support and well-being of everyone in the community.

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