

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

AN EXPLORATION OF ATTITUDES OF PRE-ADOLESCENT
BOYS TOWARDS SUNDAY SCHOOL

BY
CLEMENT OUKO

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Christian Education

THE
BV
1475.9
.095
2007

JULY, 2007

**NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

**AN EXPLORATION OF ATTITUDES OF PRE-ADOLESCENT BOYS
TOWARDS SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**BY
CLEMENT OUKO**

A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Christian Education

Approved:

First Reader:

Dr. Richard L. Starcher

Second Reader:

Prof. Victor B. Cole

External Reader:

Mary Getui

Prof. Mary Getui

July, 2007

Student's Declaration

**AN EXPLORATION OF ATTITUDES OF PRE-ADOLESCENT BOYS
TOWARDS SUNDAY SCHOOL**

I declare that this is my original work and has not been
submitted to any other College or University for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate school of Theology or the Examiners

(Signed)  _____
Clement Argwings Ouko

July, 2007

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a grounded theory study investigating the attitudes of pre-adolescent boys towards the traditional Sunday school. The first chapter focuses on the background and significance of the study. The second chapter contains a brief interaction with literature related to the topic of concern. The focus in this chapter is on the definition of the term attitudes and the link between attitudes and behaviour.

The third chapter justifies the research model and deals exhaustively with the methods and procedures that I used to investigate the attitudes of boys to the traditional Sunday school. Chapter four summarizes the findings of the field interviews, namely the strong polarity of the boys' attitudes and the surprising ambivalence towards their teachers. These findings are in turn related to the main aspects of attitudes using relevant literature on the subject. This chapter concludes with a proposed theoretical model to account for the boys' attitudes. Chapter five, the concluding chapter, contains pertinent recommendations arising out of the findings of the research and some suggestions for further research.

To

Allan Ger Ouko 1959-2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge with profound gratitude the contribution of the following people: Dr Lois Semenye for encouraging me to embark on this long journey; my brother Edward R. Ouko for his generous contribution towards the purchase of a desktop computer; my late cousin James Edwin Rakwar Oduol for encouraging me to finish the task; Dr. Suraja Raman, the Head of Educational Studies for demonstrating the meaning of the term ‘grace’ time and time again; my readers Dr. Richard Starcher and Prof. Victor Cole for the valuable input, and last but not least, my dear wife Lilian Mwende, for being there for me. To God be the glory.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
3. METHODS AND PROCEDURES	19
4. DATA ANALYSIS	27
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	48
REFERENCE LIST	51

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Rokeach's model illustrated using one's attitude to politics	10
2. The components of beliefs	10
3. From attitudes to behaviour	11
4. A schematic diagram of the theory of planned behavior	13
5 A general illustration of the ABC tripartite model	14
6. From attitudes to behavior: Rokeach's model	41
7. A schematic diagram of the theory of planned behavior	42
8. A specific illustration of the ABC tripartite model	43
9. A theory of the boys' attitudes towards Sunday school	47

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Origin and Importance of Sunday School

Robert Raikes of Gloucester pioneered the Sunday school concept in England in the 18th century. The idea rapidly spread in Protestant churches. In North America, the work of the American Sunday School Union, founded in 1824, made a great impact through the production of curricular materials (Wilhoit 1987). Many of the early Sunday schools grew into churches, a phenomenon particularly marked in the area that came to be known as the “Bible Belt”.

Since its late eighteenth century inception, the Sunday school has remained an important component of the socialization process of the church (Reed and Prevost 1993). Through this socialization process, children grow up to become adults who know and effectively practise their faith.

This study is an exploration of the attitudes of pre-adolescent boys towards the traditional Sunday school programmes. Attitudes being an important component of behaviour (Rokeach [1968]; Kenrick [1999]; Feldman [2001]), positive attitudes are likely to lead to more active involvement in Sunday school, which will in turn ensure the success of the Church’s socialization process.

Research Problem

Teaching pre-adolescent boys is a daunting challenge. Up to the age of ten, the attendance patterns, levels of participation and even behaviour of boys and girls are generally similar. In many instances from then on, the teachers with whom I have had occasion to interact report a marked variation between the genders. The boys start to play truant or prefer to join the youth programmes targeting those in the late teens. When they attend class, their behaviour presents problems. The boys either distract the class or are reluctant to participate in group activities.

Discussions that I have held with parents, church leaders and curriculum developers confirm this observation. These discussions also point to a variety of explanations, for example, the gender of the teacher, the curriculum, class size and composition and, finally, the psychological and social stage of development of the boys.

Boys are believed to prefer male teachers. A curriculum that does not encompass much physical activity easily bores the boys. Some classes are too large for the boys to receive adequate attention. As pre-adolescents, the boys may not enjoy being with girls, a situation that changes dramatically a few years down the road.

In all of these discussions, the perceptions of the boys themselves receive scant attention. The reason for this glaring omission is unclear. Hearing the views of the boys will thus shed much light on the actual attitudes governing their behaviour.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to explore the attitudes of pre-adolescent boys at the Nairobi Pentecostal Church towards Sunday school. Three semi-structured interviews each involving groups of ten to fifteen preadolescent boys

were carried out in late March 2007 at Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Central, in an effort to understand and explain their behaviour.

Ethical Issues

Given that the boys are legally minors, two ethical issues impose themselves. The first is that of gaining access to them. The second is that of respecting their privacy and that of their families. Guarding the actual identity of the participants, a requirement for all interview processes, is the third ethical issue.

Research Questions

Grand Tour Question

What attitudes do pre-adolescent boys at NPC Central hold toward Sunday school?

Sub Questions

- a. What draws the boys to Sunday school?
- b. What repulses the boys from Sunday school?
- c. How do the boys relate to the teacher?
- d. How do the boys relate to each other?
- e. What Sunday school activities do the boys really like?
- f. How often are these activities carried out?
- g. How do the boys perceive their parents' reaction when the teachers report that the boys were absent?
- h. How do the boys perceive their parents' reaction when the teachers report that the boys misbehaved?
- i. How interested do the boys think their parents are in Sunday school?

Definition

For purposes of this study, attitudes may simply be defined as “overall evaluations of some aspect of the world” (Kosslyn and Rosenberg 2001, 676). These evaluations in turn provide the motivation for acting in definite ways.

Delimitations

This study was carried out over a period of two successive Sundays on the 18th and 25th of March 2007 at the Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Central. The study focused on discovering the present attitudes of preadolescent boys aged 10 to 12 years, rather than on the evolution of their attitudes over time. The study did not include girls. In addition, the study did not focus on asking the boys for a justification of their present attitudes.

Limitations

At the pre-adolescent stage of development, formal thought is only beginning to develop (Klausmeier 1984). The boys’ perception of certain aspects of their world may thus be expected to be limited to the concrete and directly observable. However, some exceptions to this general rule were observed, as will be detailed below. Sunday school is a part of the church, a place where the boys are generally expected to be on their best behaviour. Sunday school is also a place where the boys may fear to express themselves fully, especially to a relative stranger. In practise, the boys were quite free with their opinions.

Significance

Curriculum developers, by knowing areas of greatest appeal to the boys, stand to benefit from an understanding of this phenomenon. Teachers will learn how to better involve the boys in the classes. For instance, they will know how to modify their classroom activities in order to take into account the preferences of the boys.

By learning the effect of their level of interest in Sunday school on their sons, parents will be motivated to take greater interest in this important part of their sons' development. Some may even volunteer to teach. Finally, Sunday school administrators will know which policies to adopt, for instance in the area of class size and gender composition, in order to improve the boys' attitudes towards Sunday school and to ensure successful transitions into the youth ministries of the church.

Ultimately, a better understanding of this phenomenon will indicate the best ways of helping the boys be consistent, willing and active participants in Sunday school, thus laying a solid foundation for their future spiritual development.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Role of Literature in a Qualitative Study

Rather than guiding the study, the literature in this study has been used inductively as a basis of comparison with the findings of the study. This approach is in line with the third usage of literature in qualitative studies that Creswell (2003) has outlined.

The main area of comparison between the academic literature and the findings of the study is the nature of attitudes and the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. Other areas are the nature and purpose of Sunday school, the developmental stage of the boys, and the teaching process in Sunday school. Last of all is the impact of the formal school system.

The Nature of Attitudes

Although the definition and nature of attitudes has received considerable attention amongst psychologists and sociologists, consensus is difficult to find in the literature. The reason for this is that “attitude has been used as an explanatory concept in diverse areas of investigation” (Fishbein and Ajzen 1980, 1). Coming to a broad consensus was also made difficult by the fact that different fields sought to study attitudes for different purposes and in different contexts. For example, psychoanalysts were interested in how the subconscious influences attitudes, while sociologists used

the complex cultural factors influencing behaviour to investigate attitudes (Rokeach 1968)The Definition of the Term Attitude

Gordon Allport's 1935 definition has acquired the status of a classic: "An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (quoted in Bordens and Horowitz 2002, 158). This definition suggests that attitudes are private, are formed through learning and are related to behaviour (Bordens and Horowitz 2002).

Succeeding generations of theorists have modified this definition, leading to a certain consensus within the different fields of inquiry. For example Krech and Crutchfield (1948) define attitude as "an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world" (quoted in Fishbein and Ajzen 1980, 9). Rokeach (1968, 112) defined an attitude as a "relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner."

Fishbein and Ajzen (1980, 6) define attitude as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object". Feldman (2001, 328) defines attitudes as "learned predispositions to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner to a particular person, object or idea", thus only adding the words "object or idea" to Fishbein and Ajzen's (1980) definition.

This definition is the consensus definition favoured by social psychologists. Feldman calls this the "attitudes as evaluations" approach to defining attitudes, the other approaches being the "attitudes as memories" and the ABC tripartite model approach to formulating a definition of attitudes (Feldman 2001, 330). This last approach is more an explanation of how attitudes function (Feldman 2001). Reference

has already been made to Kosslyn and Rosenberg's (2001, 676) simple definition of attitudes as "overall evaluations of some aspect of the world" as the working definition of this study.

Aspects of Attitudes

Attitudes are learned or acquired, have consistency, and are predispositions. These aspects arise from the different definitions cited in the preceding section.

Attitudes Are Learned

Attitudes are learned over time and form a relatively permanent part of a person's overall personality. Attitudes are part of man's total cognitive system (Rokeach 1968, 110). Attitudes are considered to be learned as they are assumed to constitute the residues of experience that influence the behaviour of an organism. In effect, this means that "predispositions to respond in consistently favourable or unfavourable ways are assumed to be the result of past experience" (Fishbein and Ajzen 1980, 9).

Classical and operant conditioning

Classical and operant conditioning and observational learning are the three main ways in which attitudes are learnt (Kenrick et al. 1999). Classical conditioning is the process through which people associate new objects or events with feelings about previously experienced events (Ibid.) Operant or instrumental conditioning is the process through which people learn by being rewarded or punished (Ibid.)

Observational learning

Observational learning is the process through which people learn by watching others get rewarded or punished (Ibid.) Feldman (2001) considers observational learning to be a derivative of operant conditioning.

Attitude formation

Some authorities such as Bordens and Horowitz (2002) use the broader term attitude formation. This term includes attitude learning and other ways of acquiring attitudes such as mere exposure, direct personal experience, the effect of the media, the effect of textbooks, and the role of genetics (Bordens and Horowitz 2002, 167-171).

The Consistency of Attitudes

Consistency of attitudes may be stimulus-response consistency, whereby a person is observed to consistently perform the same response or set of responses in the presence of a given stimulus object. For this reason, this same response reflects an attitude towards an object. Consistency may also be response-response consistency, whereby the same object elicits the same response from a subject. However, this consistency must be measured along a given dimension. Lastly, evaluative consistency occurs when a subject's responses towards a given object remain relatively consistent over time (Fishbein and Ajzen 1980).

Attitudes Are Predispositions.

Attitudes are “latent or underlying variables assumed to guide or influence behaviour” and can thus only be inferred. How the predispositions behind attitude are understood is at the heart of definitions of the term (Fishbein and Ajzen 1980, 8).

Relating Attitude and Behaviour

An earlier view was that attitudes consist of beliefs, which in turn affect behaviour (Rokeach 1968). A more recent view uses the theories of attitude structures (Bordens and Horowitz 2002) and of planned behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 1980). The more recent theory focuses on one aspect, behavioural intentions, of Rokeach's (1968) theory.

From Attitudes to Beliefs

According to Rokeach (1968), attitudes are made up of various beliefs (see fig 1). A belief is “any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase ‘I believe that’” (Rokeach 1968, 113). Beliefs have cognitive, affective and behavioural components. The cognitive component of an attitude is in turn made up of the descriptive, evaluative and prescriptive components (see Fig 2).

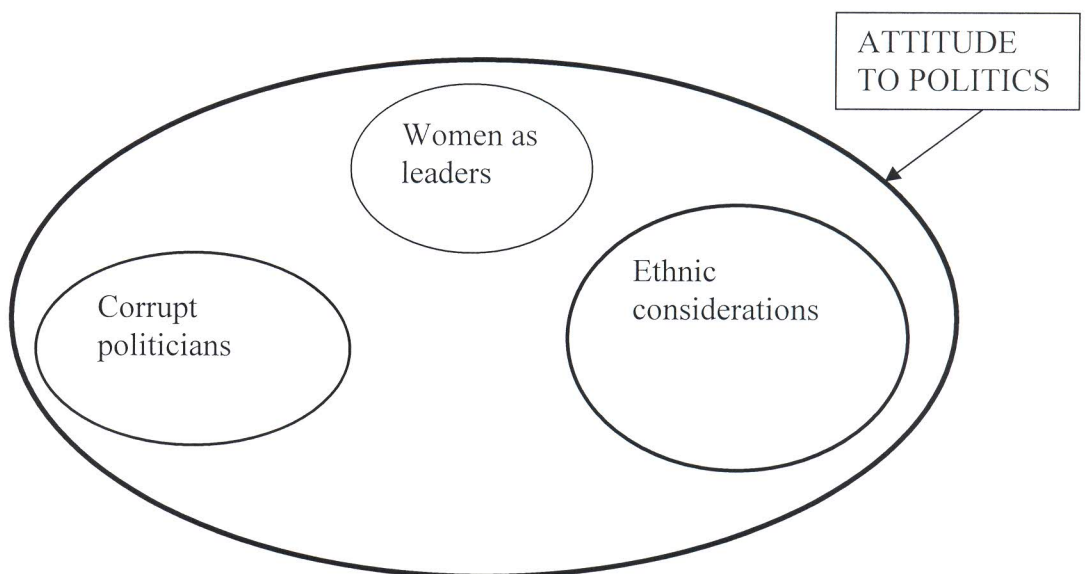


Figure 1: Rokeach's model illustrated using one's attitude to politics

From Attitudes to Beliefs

According to Rokeach (1968), attitudes are made up of various beliefs (see fig 1). A belief is “any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase ‘I believe that’ ” (Rokeach 1968, 113). Beliefs have cognitive, affective and behavioural components. The cognitive component of an attitude is in turn made up of the descriptive, evaluative and prescriptive components (see Fig 2).

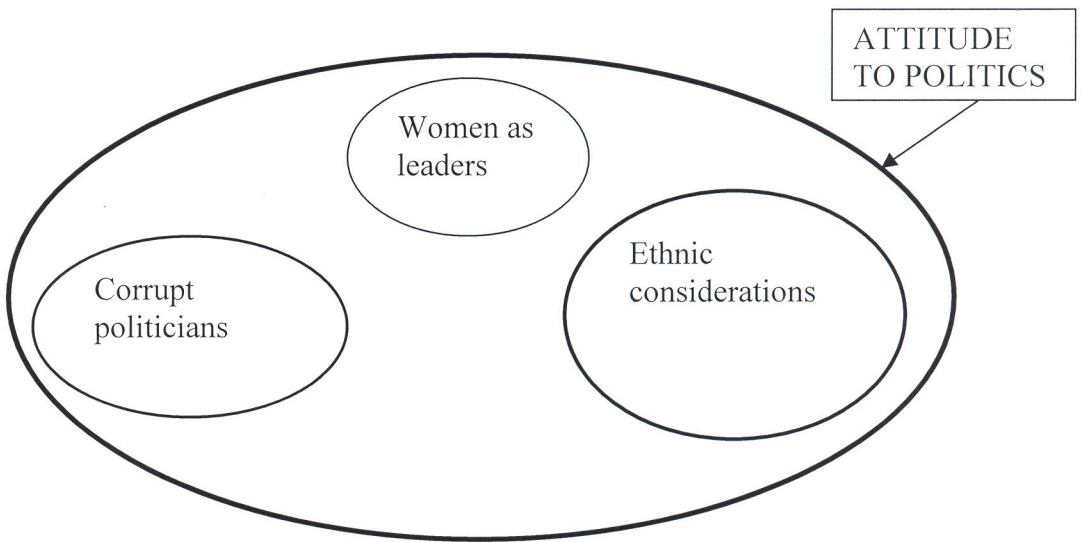


Figure 1: Rokeach’s model illustrated using one’s attitude to politics

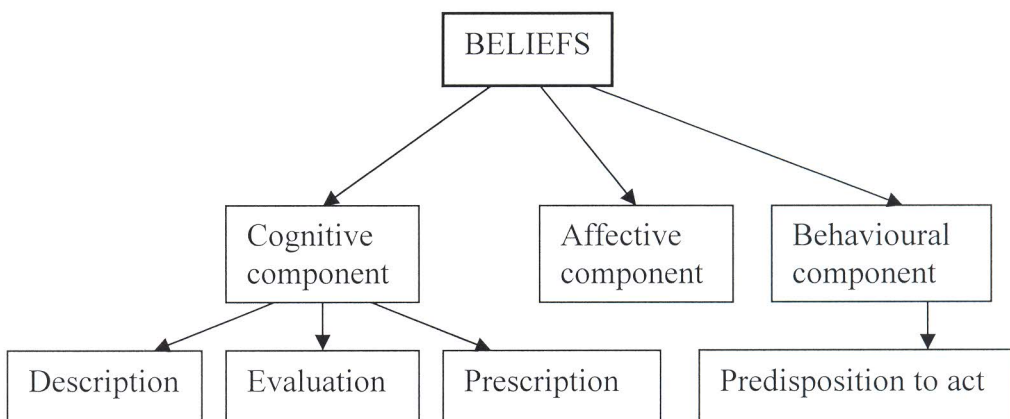


Figure 2: The components of beliefs

The descriptive component “describes something as true or false,” while the evaluative component “describes something as correct or incorrect.” Finally, the prescriptive component “recommends a certain course of action or state of existence as desirable” (Rokeach 1968, 113-4). A particular attitude will bring together the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of its corresponding set of beliefs.

From Attitudes to Beliefs to Behaviour

Attitudes relate to behaviour in that they are a predisposition to act. This predisposition arises from the behavioural component of the beliefs that make up an attitude (see Figure 3).

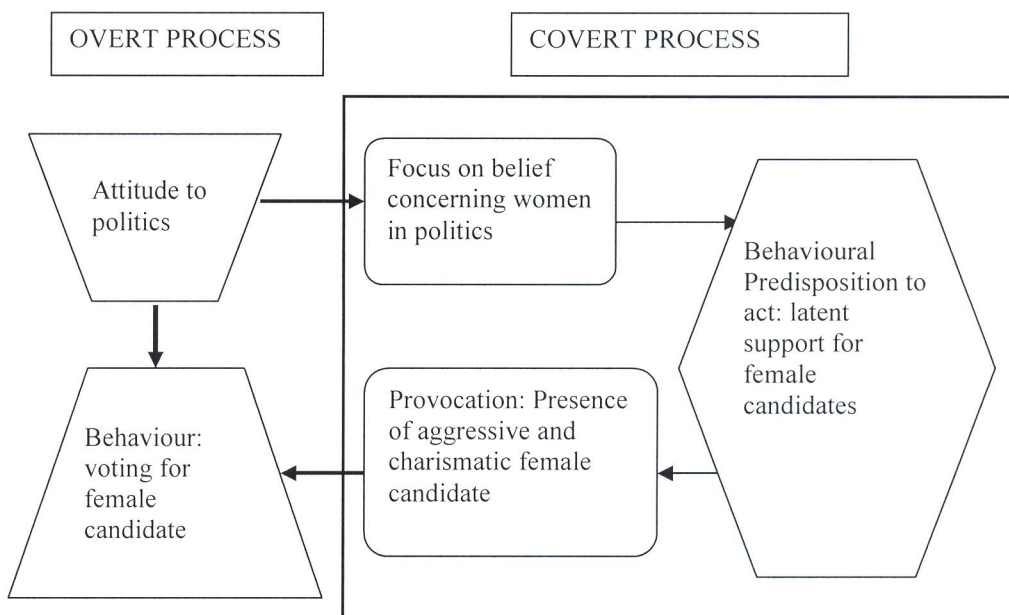


Figure 3: From attitudes to behaviour

LIBRARY
 KROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
 SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
 Box 24696

Provocation beyond a certain point will cause an individual to act on their beliefs. The action that an individual will take in such an instance will depend on the interplay of the attitude object and the context of that individual's interaction with the attitude object. Finally, attitudes influence behaviour in that individuals will also act in order to maintain their attitudes (Rokeach 1968).

Attitude Structures and the Theory of Planned Behaviours

The theory of attitude structures relates different components of attitude (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). The theory of planned behaviour is an attempt to show exactly how attitude structures can therefore be used to explain the attitude behaviour link.

Attitude structures

Attitudes structures consist of four interconnected components: cognitions, affective responses, behavioural intentions and behaviours (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). Bordens and Horowitz thus use the term "attitude structures" (2002, 176), for what Rokeach (1968, 114) termed "beliefs", with one important distinction. Rokeach considers intention to be a part of the behavioural component of belief, while Bordens and Horowitz adopt the term behavioural intention as an integral part of the attitude structure. In addition, behavioural intentions intervene in between affective responses and behaviours (Bordens and Horowitz 2002).

However, for purposes of analysing attitudes, one often starts with cognitions. Cognitions are what one thinks about a person, situation or object. Affective responses are what one feels emotionally about a person, situation or object. Cognitions and affective responses in turn lead to behavioural intentions, what one would like to do. Behavioural intentions that are strong enough eventually lead to action (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). Although these four elements exist in dynamic relationship, with a

change in one element leading to a change in another, the affective element tends to dominate attitudes (Bordens and Horowitz 2002).

The theory of planned behaviour

Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) refine this explanation in the theory of planned behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour itself arises from the earlier theory of reasoned action developed by the same researchers. The theory of planned behaviour is thus a theory of attitudes stating that “people are relatively thoughtful creatures and are aware of their attitudes and behaviour” (Bordens and Horowitz 2002, 176).

Behaviour follows from attitudes in a reasoned way according to the theory of planned behaviour (see Figure 4). If a person thinks that a particular behaviour associated with an attitude will lead to positive outcomes (attitude towards the behaviour), that other persons will approve (subjective norms), and that the behaviour can be done readily (perceived behavioural control), then they will readily engage in the behaviour (Bordens and Horowitz 2002).

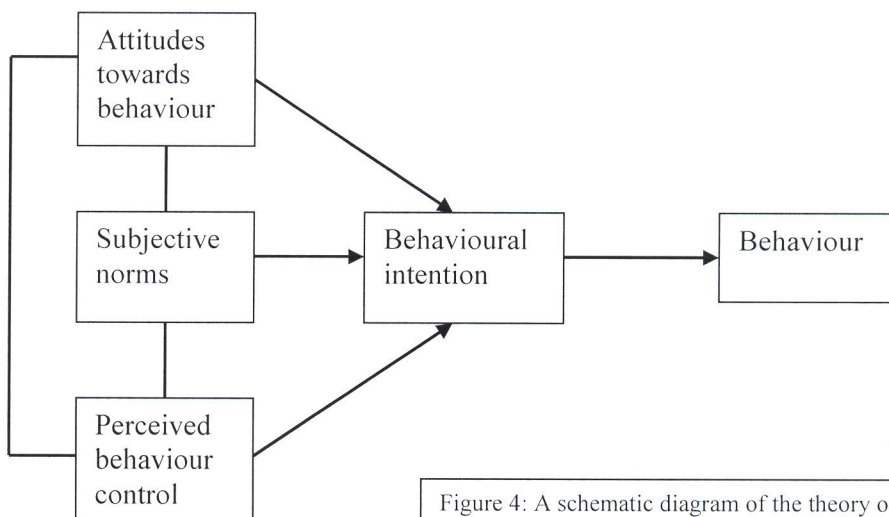


Figure 4: A schematic diagram of the theory of planned behaviour. Reproduced from Bordens and Horowitz, 2002.

The Tripartite Model

This model holds that cognition, behaviour and emotions are integral parts of attitudes (Feldman 2001). Its explanatory power lies in the fact that it does not hold

that all behaviour is a part of attitudes, but rather that some of our behaviour can be explained by the attitudes of which it is a part. A person who believes that certain ethnic communities produce better leaders than others (cognition) will develop certain emotions at the thought of candidates from the ethnic communities not viewed as endowed with leadership ability and will end up voting for a candidate from the ethnic communities viewed as capable of leading (behaviour).

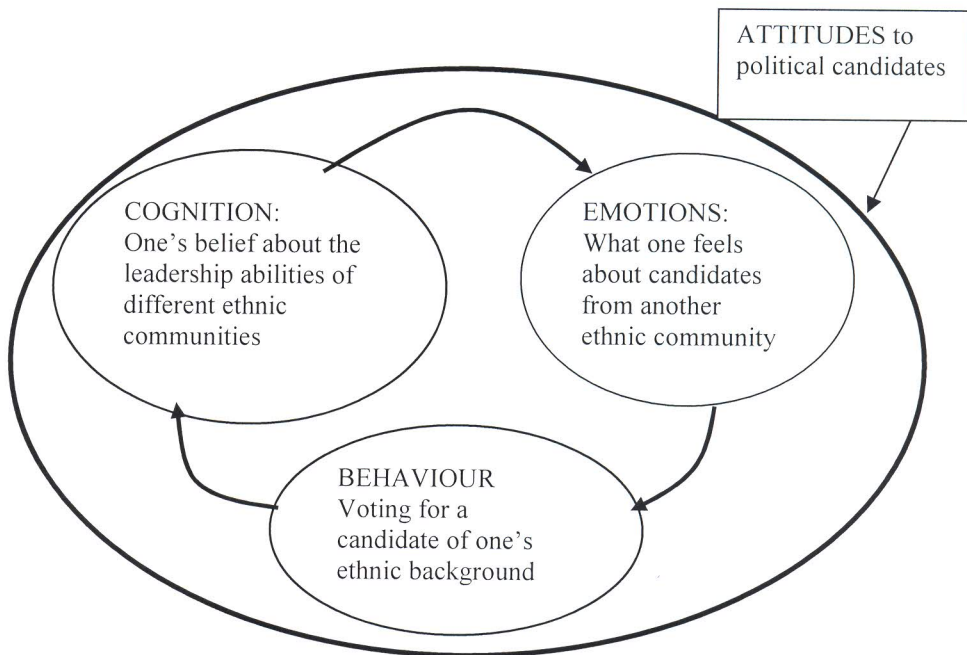


Fig. 5 A general illustration of the ABC tripartite model

Conclusion

This study will aim at discovering the opinions of the boys with regard to the different components of Sunday school. In line with the three models outlined above, what they believe about Sunday school, their underlying behavioural intentions and cognitive and the affective dimensions of attitudes will be points of emphasis in the attempt to explore their attitudes.

The Nature and Purpose of Sunday School

In order to fully understand the nature and purpose of the Sunday school programme, one has to set it in a wider context. Christian education as a whole provides this wider context.

A Definition of Christian Education

Pazmiño (1988) has defined Christian education as follows:

The deliberate, systematic, and sustained divine and human effort to share or appropriate the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills sensitivities, and behaviors that comprise or are consistent with the Christian faith. It fosters the change, renewal, and reformation of persons, groups and structures by the power of the Holy Spirit to conform to the revealed word of God. (Pazmiño 1988, 81)

Christian education is thus the socialization process that the church provides for its members. For historical reasons, much of the focus of Christian education has been on children.

The Purpose of Christian Education

According to Wilhoit (1991), the purpose of Christian education is to “help people discover God’s meaning for life.” The learner is thus at the heart of all programmes as the focus is on the learner discovering personal meaning in God’s word as they connect it with their lives in faithful Christian living (Wilhoit 1991). Central to faithful Christian living is obedience to God’s command to love him by “giving oneself wholly [heart, soul, and strength]” in obedience to him (Pazmiño 1988, 19). In addition, classes are thus to be a place where learners feel at ease and have a sense of belonging to a caring community (Wilhoit 1991).

The teacher’s role arises out of the purpose of Christian education. The teacher is thus to facilitate the discovery of personal meaning in God’s word. This facilitation is done as the teacher instructs the learner and provides an example that calls the

learner to “understanding, growth, and obedience in relation to God’s revealed word” (Pazmiño 1988, 19).

The Developmental Stage of the Boys

Pre-adolescent boys are at various stages of transition in their intellectual, moral and faith development. Intellectually, they are advancing from Piaget’s stage of concrete operations to the stage of formal operations. Their mental abilities are therefore not limited to the concrete and observable. They can reason hypothetically (Wilhoit and Dettoni 1995).

Morally, the boys are moving from Level 1 Preconventional to Level II Conventional Moral reasoning (Wilhoit and Dettoni 1995). At the Conventional Stage, the boys are starting to look to important figures such as parents, teachers and so on to determine what is morally right. In terms of spiritual development, the boys are moving from Mythic/Literal Stage Two faith to the Synthetic/Conventional Faith of Fowler’s Stage Three (Wilhoit and Dettoni 1995).

All of these transitions mean that the boys’ attitudes are likely to be paradoxical. Assuming that the boys’ development is not arrested in any way, their attitudes will reveal elements of the stage they are coming from and the stage that they are heading to.

Teaching Pre-Adolescent Boys

The boys’ reaction to the way that they are taught is likely to hinge on two key factors. The first is the way teaching is conducted, while the second is the role of creativity in the classroom.

Teaching Avenues

Habermas and Issler (1992, 267) have recommended what they called “conditioning avenues” of consequence learning as being most appropriate for children. This form of learning is closely linked to the informal learning of socialization, and requires that the children see the faith that is taught lived out in the lives of their teachers and caregivers.

Teachers and caregivers living out their faith is of vital importance for the pre-adolescents, who are also starting to acquire critical thinking ability. They can thus start to assess the motives, the intentions and, the actions of their teachers and caregivers.

Using Creativity

Holding the attention of the boys while at the same time ensuring their active participation requires creativity on the part of the teacher, and a broader environment in which creativity is fostered. LeFever (1985) has given eight conditions that foster a creative environment. These conditions are exposure, vision on the part of those nurturing the children, equal access to cultural opportunities, moderate stress in terms of a challenge from minority groups, cultural differences, tolerance, modelling, and the honouring of those who are creative.

In discovering the background of the boys, attention will be paid to the extent to which these factors are present. This will help assess their attitude to innovation in the classroom.

The Impact of the Formal School System

The traditional Sunday school bears many similarities to the formal school classroom. The students normally sit in rows facing the teacher, who is the centre of

attention. Activity is directed by the teacher. This similarity means that any negative associations that the formal school has will be carried over to the Sunday school.

Datta (1984, 94) has spoken of the “rigid authoritarianism” that marked the classroom environment in most English speaking countries of Africa. Pupils thus lack spontaneity and rarely take initiative. This rigid authoritarianism arises from traditional modes of authority, vestiges of which can still be seen in urban areas, and breeds a certain level of resentment and a fear of authority in the pupils. Pre-adolescent boys are likely to be chaffing under this yoke, and seeking ways of throwing it off. Their attitudes may reveal this.

Conclusion

The available literature covers a broad range of aspects of attitudes, of Sunday school and of the psycho-social and faith development of pre-adolescents. This wide variety of information is of value in two ways. In the first instance, the information is useful in formulating questions that seek to probe the perceptions of pre-adolescent boys towards Sunday school. In the second instance, the information will be of help in assessing the relative worth of the responses given by the pre-adolescent boys, and in identifying patterns within these same responses.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This study explores the attitudes of pre-adolescent boys towards the traditional Sunday school programmes. The topic is of interest because many church workers have noted that boys of this age play truant, pose control problems when present in class or lie concerning their age so as to join the youth classes. This thesis explores this topic using a qualitative, grounded theory research model (Creswell 2003).

Why Qualitative Research?

There are two reasons for using qualitative research methods. The first is the advantage offered by the socially constructed knowledge claims of qualitative research. The second is that this study is making an attempt to shed further light on a topic of interest and concern, rather than seeking to test pre-existing theory.

Socially constructed knowledge claims hold that meaning is based on the perceptions that participants in a study have of their world. This is in line with Kurt Lewin's phenomenological perspective, whose basic premise is that "social behaviour is driven by each person's subjective interpretations of events in the social world" (Kenrick et al. 1999, 10). The phenomenology of the boys, their unique perspective given their experiences and stage of development is thus the basis for understanding their attitudes (Kenrick et al. 1999, 10). Youth and children's workers and pastors

give various reasons to explain the attitudes of pre-adolescent boys to Sunday school. In all of about five seminars that I have facilitated with these workers, no mention has been made of the actual views of the boys themselves. This study will thus seek to draw out these views.

Elements of Grounded Theory

Creswell (2003) has mentioned five traditions of inquiry within qualitative research. These traditions are narrative, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory and case study. This study uses grounded theory as a strategy of inquiry.

Definition and Assumptions

Cresswell (2003, 14) has defined grounded theory as a “general, abstract theory of a process, action or interaction **grounded in the views of the participants**” (emphasis mine). A key assumption of grounded theory is the validity of socially constructed knowledge claims. A second assumption is that theories should be “‘grounded’ in data from the field, especially in the actions, interactions and social processes of people” (Creswell 1998, 56).

Objectives

The objective of a grounded theory study is to “generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical scheme of a phenomenon, that relates to a particular situation” (Creswell 1998, 56). The generation or discovery of the theory is the culmination of a process of gathering and analyzing interview data, making field visits, developing and interacting with categories of information, and finally coming up with theoretical propositions.

By focusing on one aspect of the complex question, this study is seeking to provide a valuable building block in the process of explaining the boys’ behaviour.

The particular value of this explanation lies in the fact that it will be based on the viewpoint of the boys.

The Researcher's Perspective

In a qualitative study, the background and experience of the researcher come into play. This influence covers all key elements of the study, namely the choice of a topic, the actual approach of the study and, finally, the way the data collected will be analyzed. My university studies and subsequent work experience naturally lead me to carry out a study of this nature.

University Studies

I majored in Education and French. I am thus inclined to favour the use of discussion and more intimate interaction in data gathering and the use of literary skills in reporting findings.

Work Experience

As a high school teacher, I taught an age group slightly older than the one I intend to study for slightly over four years. My experience suggested that attitudes play a predominant role in shaping classroom behaviour and academic performance.

I have subsequently worked for close to eight years as a curriculum developer and publisher, producing Christian education materials for all age groups. I am thus fascinated by insights derived from the perceptions of the real consumers of the products we produce.

Preliminary Procedures

Gaining access to suitable participants was the principle preliminary procedure. This was followed by the search for a suitable time and place for the interviews.

Gaining Access to Suitable Participants

The main concern here was the age of the participants. In aiming to reach out to pre-adolescent boys two sets of what Seidman (1998, 37) has called “formal gatekeepers” were encountered. The first were the church leadership and administration. The second were the class teachers. These gatekeepers control the Sunday school programme in which the boys are enrolled. They are also responsible for the boys for the duration of their participation in Sunday school every week.

Dealing with the church leadership

The church leadership was contacted by numerous telephone calls and at least two letters. Up to three formal visits were made to the church. In the course of these visits, initial contact was made, the purpose of the study explained and permission obtained to get into direct contact with the teachers. Questions concerning the nature and purpose of the study were raised by the Pastor in charge of the children’s ministries. These questions were answered verbally in the course of two formal meetings.

The pastor in charge of children’s ministries initially contacted the teachers to inform them of my impending visit. On the first visit, the teacher who was expected to teach, and who had earlier been contacted by telephone, did not turn up. I therefore used the occasion to observe the class and gather some valuable initial impressions. I was however introduced to the class members.

Contacting and interviewing participants

Actual contact with the participants was made on a subsequent weekend. This involved asking the teacher to release about a third of the boys present at the 10.30 am Sunday school class. I then went with group to a nearby room for purposes of carrying out the interviews. This first session lasted about 20 minutes. There was unfortunately not enough time to interview the other boys, who were interviewed on the subsequent Sunday. On the subsequent Sunday, I interviewed all the boys present in the 8.30 am class, which is much smaller. These boys were quite reserved.

One boy who had attended the first week's interview also turned up for the second session with the boys of the 10.30 class. This session turned out to be the most fruitful, given that it was the third interview. At this stage, mastery of the questions was higher and follow up questions were easier to ask. In addition, a certain expertise had been acquired in handling the audio tape recorder. Instead of holding it myself and letting the boys speak up, I actually let them pass it from respondent to respondent. This left me free to ask follow up questions and to give feedback to their answers.

Data Collection and Recording Procedures

The main method of data collection was group interviews, as outlined above. The three interviews lasted a total of one hour, with the third interview being the longest. The use of interviews offered several advantages for both myself and the boys.

The Advantages of Interviews for the Researcher

Bringing together the experiences of different boys enabled me to accomplish three ends. Firstly, I became a part of the boys' experiences as I found out their

subjective understanding. Secondly, I was enabled to integrate the meanings of individual boys into a larger whole. Finally, the process of interviewing fundamentally affirmed the worth of the boys (Seidman 1998).

This was the first time that anyone had actually sought out their views. Meeting the challenges posed by the unpredictability and complexity of humans, and of the time required to achieve a reasonable degree of subjective understanding were well worth the rewards.

The Advantages of Interviews for the Boys

Interviews enable people to relive their experiences (Seidman 1998). Through retelling their experiences, I enabled the boys to start to make sense of their experiences in Sunday school. The boys expressed their “subjective understanding” (Seidman 1998, 5) of their experiences in accordance with their level of intellectual development.

A good number of the boys showed great self-confidence and mastery of expression. This greatly facilitated their being interviewed by a relative stranger. In addition, a small minority revealed an ability to reflect on their own attitudes and motivations. In general, the use of a group setting enabled them to overcome their inhibitions. Hearing others talk served as a prompter to self-expression.

Data Recording

Seidman (1998) has recommended tape-recording and transcription as the most reliable means of working with people’s words. This is of course one step below video recording. The three interviews were transcribed verbatim, complete with pauses, hesitations and stammers. This form of recording enabled me to reflect on views expressed by the participants. The audio tapes also included any unusual reactions by the other boys to what one of their own has said, and chorus answers.

Data Analysis

Two principle methods of data analysis used are open and axial coding. These two methods are the first of three main procedures for data analysis in grounded theory studies (Creswell 1998).

Open Coding

Open coding consisted of a keen examination of the transcriptions of the interviews. I listened keenly to the interviews as I transcribed them, a process that took several hours. Working with the transcriptions, I coded each of the interviews. The data was then re-examined, with a view to seeing if there was any overlap in the codes.

I then re-examined the data several times, seeking to develop a basic mode of organization. This mode of organization consisted of groupings of topics that seem related to each other. A final examination of the data enabled me to bring together material belonging to each of the categories. The purpose of this exercise was to develop broad categories or themes that run through each of the interviews.

Axial Coding

A point of saturation was reached at which further analysis of the text did not yield further information in terms of properties or sub themes of the categories (Creswell 1998). Three central themes of interest were then identified and analysed in the light of the categories suggested by the review of the literature concerning attitudes.

Development of a Theoretical Model

The final step in data analysis was development of a theoretical model. The basis of the theoretical model is patterns in the relationships of the different categories

of axial coding to the central phenomenon. This theoretical model aims to be both descriptive and explanatory in nature.

Validation

Validation in qualitative research mainly concerns the accuracy of the findings of research from various standpoints. The main method of validation used was clarification of bias. This is one of the three methods that Creswell (2003) suggests.

Two likely sources of bias in this study are my current position as the publisher of the curriculum used to teach the boys over the years, and my interaction with the leaders, teachers and pastors. A deliberate attempt was made not to ask any questions relating to the published curriculum, and to instead focus on ‘generic’ classroom activities. Secondly, leading questions concerning areas that pastors and leaders had pointed out, such as the gender of the teacher, were avoided.

Conclusion

This grounded theory study was built on two central aspects. The first aspect involved giving voice to carefully selected participants while taking cognizance of their age. The second was the discovery of different facets of their attitudes as they relate to a central series of themes. Careful attention to these central aspects has to a large extent enabled the objectives of the study to be attained.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

It is just like normal school but you are taught the Bible.
There are some people who come here just to meet other people so that they can bully them.
My parents are interested because they think that Sunday school helps me a lot.

Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyse the boys' responses and to answer four key questions. The first question concerns the attitudes that the boys hold. The second question concerns the origin of the attitudes. The third question centres on the link between the boys' attitudes and their behaviour. Answering the fourth question seeks to draw out the functions of the attitudes held by the boys.

What Attitudes Do the Boys Hold?

The private nature of attitudes raises questions about how valid attitude surveys can be. In addition, areas that evoke the most detailed responses, in the absence of time for reflection, are a pointer as to the most direct attitudes held by their boys.

The Private Nature of Attitudes

As attitudes are private (Bordens and Horowitz 2002), finding out what people think is first and foremost a matter of asking them to state their thoughts and feelings towards given objects or people. In this study, open-ended questions were asked in

oral group interviews. Virtually all the boys had a good command of English, the language of the interviews. The Reliability of the Answers Given

Although the presence of their peers could have influenced their answers, the boys seem to have answered “straight from the heart” as it were. The transcripts of the interviews, with their characteristic pauses and hesitations, confirm this. The expression of surprisingly deep spiritual insight and levels of self-awareness also confirm the spontaneous, genuine nature of the answers given.

Concerning self-awareness, the boys often spoke of what Sunday school did for “children”: “Sunday school is more educative. It is used to educate children a lot about Jesus Christ.” In the same breath, the boys spoke of what Sunday school was preparing them for as adolescents or even young adults. The boys thus evoked the transitional stage from pre-adolescent to adolescent that they were in, without using the term. Their responses are thus a reliable guide to their attitudes.

Pointers to Actual Attitudes

The boys are just starting to develop abstract thought patterns as they transition from Piaget’s concrete operational to the formal operational stage (Wilhoit and Dettoni 1995). For this reason, the attitudes that the boys express are largely explicit, rather than implicit. An explicit attitude is one “operating via controlled processing about whose existence, cognitive underpinnings and relation to behaviour we are aware” (Bordens and Horowitz 2002, 160). In other words, an explicit attitude can be verbalized, explained and justified. Implicit attitudes are attitudes that affect behaviour automatically, without conscious thought and below the level of awareness (Bordens and Horowitz 2002).

Lastly, the actual attitudes of the boys can most easily be evoked from the responses that contain the greatest detail. A case in point is what the boys perceive as their parents attitudes to Sunday school:

My... parents think Sunday school is nice, but sometimes they're are not so sure about letting me go there, because sometimes I don't remember the memory verses or anything so when they ask me what I learnt I don't remember so clearly so they usually ask me whether... I can, I go to the main service with them or not. I always say...I want to go to the Sunday school because It's a free time and I get to interact with my age mates.

Nevertheless, the occasional chance succinct expression occasionally crops up.

Using this criterion, it can be stated that the boys' attitudes centred on what the boys liked and disliked of Sunday school, their expectations of Sunday school and their perception of their parents' attitudes to Sunday school.

Attitudes Expressing a Liking for Sunday School

Three reasons emerged for positive attitudes to Sunday school. The first is a liking for Sunday school because of what it offered, either immediately or by way of preparation for life. A second was a liking for Sunday school because of what it was. A third was a liking for Sunday for the concrete reason that its core activities were enjoyable.

The potential benefits of Sunday school

The potential benefits of Sunday school ranged from the short term benefit of improved grades in Christian Religious Education in the secular school system to conversion, baptism and church membership. The potential benefits cited by the boys reveal a certain level of insight: "I come to Sunday school because God said that we come to his presence...to worship him." Another observed that "I like Sunday school because it teachers me more about Jesus in my level of learning...in my own way of understanding."

Yet another boy cited Sunday school as preparation for service in church ministry, specifically Sunday school. Still another spoke of the socialization benefits of Sunday school, stating that “It [Sunday school] gives us life skills in life, because now when we are big, we will need all these things which we have been taught when we are small.” Finally, character formation, specifically learning how to get along with others, was mentioned as a benefit of Sunday school participation.

Sunday school as a good idea

Several boys said that they liked Sunday school just because it was a good idea, something nice. Several volunteered a concrete reason for liking Sunday school. These reasons for liking Sunday school were varied. For some, it was that it afforded them the opportunity to learn the word of God. For others, the activities of Sunday school such as singing or answering questions were an attraction. Others simply liked Sunday school because the Vacational Bible School, VBS, was a part of Sunday school.

For some, Sunday school was viewed favourably because they liked its core activities such as singing, listening to Bible stories, and learning memory verses. The Bible drill appealed to the boys’ competitive spirit, especially as boys and girls would be pitted against each other. Some of the boys strongly felt that Sunday school would be that much more fun if it included outings to engage in sports, with the teachers as referees.

Attitudes Expressing a Dislike for Sunday School

Dislikes centred on the difficult relationships the boys had with each other, both inside and outside of class. They also centred on the actual nature of the Sunday school experience.

Difficult intra-class relationships

Several of the boys cited the mistreatment they suffer at the hands of other boys, both inside and outside the classroom: “In Sunday school, some people hate each other. Now... when you come to Sunday school they are like...they want to fight with you, because they don’t know you.” Another stated that “What I don’t like about Sunday school is that some people keep playing games with you...when they sit behind you and keep poking your head.”

Inside the classroom two forms of mistreatment were being laughed at and the example of provocation already cited. The reasons the boys laughed at each other ranged from their mode of dress and peculiar conduct to reaction to their attempts at classroom participation. One boy reported being laughed at for not being able to say his name and lacking a place to sit. The boys also spoke of the superficial nature of their relationships, an aspect that they blamed on the large class sizes.

The actual nature of Sunday school

One boy cited a recent curriculum change as a source turn-off from Sunday school. Another spoke of the stuffy crowded atmosphere in the classroom. Another cited the difficulty of learning new songs. Finally others mentioned boredom and the stress from teacher centred learning as a factor making him dislike Sunday school.

Attitudes Influenced by their Parents

Questions about their perception of their parents’ attitude to Sunday school elicited numerous detailed responses from the boys. These responses show the importance of the parental example and the extent of parental interest in Sunday school.

Parents as an example

The religious life of the parents, encompassing both what they said and did had had a marked influence on the boys. The effect of their parents' regularity in church attendance was viewed positively, as this meant that the boys would also be able to attend Sunday school regularly: "I think they are interested because all of the time they come to church even if...they don't have petrol in the car they...they have to come to church."

Parental interest in Sunday school

The boys were also marked by their parents' interest in Sunday school:

I know my parents are interested in Sunday school because they keep on asking me the things which we have learnt and I always tell them and they think Sunday school is good for me because it will help me in my CRE exams.

One boy spoke of how he always shared what he had learnt in Sunday school with his parents. Another said that Sunday school was important to his parents as the application of what he had learnt would make him better. One spoke with pride of how he always got to share memory verses with the adults in the home Bible study in which his family participated.

In the boys' view, improved grades in CRE in the formal school system were the main reason for parental interest in Sunday school. The fact that the boys also cited this as one of the reasons for their liking Sunday school reveals the extent of parental influence on their attitudes.

Parental reaction to reported misconduct

The boys did not seem to feel that their parents would take reports of their misconduct in Sunday school very seriously. In the first place, they did not perceive it as likely that their parents would ever get to know of their misconduct, given the distant teacher-parent relations. In the second place, in the unlikely event that their

parents would hear of their misconduct, it would not be treated very seriously. This lack of consequences explains in part the increasing tendency to misbehave by mistreating other boys. Perhaps this lack of consequences is in contrast to the gravity attached to misconduct in the formal school system. This is paradoxical, considering Sunday school's concern with what is of eternal value.

An Example of an Ambivalent Attitude

Overall the boys had surprisingly little to say about their relationships with their teachers, with the little they said revealing ambivalence:

Sir...Sometimes good...sometimes bad. Sir, because sometimes we don't know that we are supposed to enter a class, especially us the boys, like now...like another Sunday teacher shouted at us because...we had not entered class. We did not know that we were supposed to enter the class...so it's good...bad...medium.

This ambivalence could be due to several factors. The first of these is the teacher-centred nature of instruction, cited by some as a source of stress. The second reason was the teacher's inability to firmly deal with boys who were mistreating others in class. Thirdly, there were risks inherent in a good relationship with the teacher, which meant that the teacher could actually end up coming to visit and reporting on the boys' conduct.

Finally, there is the possibility that the boys feared that the teachers would get transcripts of the interviews, and would thus be in a position to take any sort of action against those who expressed negative views. The fact that the boys were saying their names as they answered makes this a very real possibility.

Conclusion

Thomas Kinderman in Valsiner and Connolly (2003) identifies two main functions of schooling. The first of these is the socializing aspect of knowledge transmission. The second is learning to get along with teachers and peers (Valsiner and

Connolly 2003). Attitudes in these two domains featured prominently in the responses given. The boys compared Sunday school to regular school and emphasized the positive benefits of the knowledge that they were receiving.

Concerning relationships with peers, the boys cited learning to get along with others as a key benefit of Sunday school, and were greatly dismayed at the mistreatment that they often received. In this regard, their responses underscored the importance of Sunday school as a “relationship domain”, that is a context in which key relationships are played out (Valsiner and Connolly 2003, 423). The only real surprise was their ambivalent attitude to their teachers, and the relative brevity of their responses to questions in this area.

Where Did the Attitudes Come From?

The attitudes that the boys hold have several sources. Two primary sources are motivation and learning. Other sources, cited by Bordens and Horowitz (2002) are direct personal experience, and the effects of genetics, the mass media and school textbooks.

Attitudes Arising from Motivation

The boys showed a remarkably individualistic orientation in their attitudes to Sunday school. A person with an individualistic orientation has a tendency to think of oneself as an individual and to give priority to one’s personal goals (Kenrick et al 1999, 44). Sunday school is a means to a desired end. In concrete terms, this desired end includes a means to improved grades, knowledge of Jesus and God, conversion and baptism, better character and values, being in God’s presence, and finally skills to help in later life should one decide to serve in Sunday school.

Sunday school as a means to improved grades

This was underscored when one respondent cited revision of something that would later come in an exam as a benefit of interacting with a teacher in a home visit. Learning the names of the prophets in Sunday was also cited as a benefit as the same information could be required in Christian Religious Education. Improved grades in CRE in turn lead to better grades in the public exams, thus opening the door to admission to a better secondary school. This is an important consideration in Kenya's highly competitive educational system.

Sunday school as a means of knowing God and Jesus Christ

For several of the respondents, Sunday school was a means to knowing about God, God's word and about Jesus Christ. What is more, this knowledge of God was perceived as being provided in a way that the boys could understand, in a way suited to their age level:

I like Sunday school because it teaches me more about Jesus in my level of learning...in my own way of understanding.

Sunday school is more... is educative, it is used to educate children...it teaches children a lot about Jesus Christ in a way they can understand.

Sunday school and conversion

One boy cited what he had learnt in Sunday school as having contributed to his salvation. He was now eagerly looking forward to being saved. Another said that Sunday school taught one "...how to be born again if you have never been born again." Still another stated that he came to church because he liked "...to... learn the word of God and to know more about God and to get saved."

Sunday school and character and value formation

The boys acknowledged that Sunday school was a means to learn "how to control our temper" and how "to be a better person". In addition practising the things that they were learning about Jesus Christ would make them better people. Sunday

school was also viewed as a source of knowledge of “how to associate with other people in the church” and a means of learning how to be God fearing. Finally, Sunday school “...gave Christian values to live on.”

Sunday school as a way of being in God’s presence

One boy said he liked Sunday school because it enabled him to obey God’s command to come into God’s presence. The same boy further clarified that the purpose of coming to God’s presence was to worship him. This act of worship was entirely voluntary as we have a choice of either worshipping God or not worshipping him.

Sunday school as means of acquiring useful skills

One of the boys cited the learning of what he called “skills in life”, things that they would need when they were big, as an advantage of Sunday school. When pressed to explain what he meant by “skills in life”, he stated that Sunday school was a source of new songs which he could later teach other children

Conclusion

A diversity of motives underlies the attitudes that the boys hold. These motives affect different aspects of the boys’ existence. Where these motives are tied to central aspects of the boys’ lives, these motives will result in stronger attitudes, because attitudes towards central aspects of a person will influence behaviour more than attitudes towards peripheral aspects of a person (Kenrick et al. 1999). For example a boy who considers his relationship with God to be a central aspect of his personhood will have a positive attitude towards Sunday school, which he considers to be key component towards developing his relationship with God. As one of the boys attested, “I will learn a lot and God would bless me in a lot, so that’s why I got saved and now

I'm going to be baptized." Such a boy will then exhibit behaviours consistent with this attitude such as good class conduct, regular attendance and active participation.

Learning as a Source of Attitudes

Attitude acquisition is a part of learning. Principles of learning, particularly classical and operant conditioning thus shed light on how a particular stimulus can lead to a given attitude (Feldman 2001). Both forms of conditioning operate during the course of one's socialization to form attitudes.

Operant conditioning

In operant conditioning, attitudes are acquired by rewarding a person for a given attitude with a view to maintaining or strengthening that attitude (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). This is the main method by which the boys' parents, their primary socialisers, have inculcated positive attitudes towards church in general and Sunday school in particular.

In addition, a boy who is always being commended for answering questions well will always desire to contribute in class. Such a boy will have a positive attitude towards his teacher and to Sunday school in general.

Classical conditioning

Attitudes are learned by classical conditioning when a stimulus (the conditioned stimulus) comes to summon a response that it previously did not evoke to form an attitude. The response that was previously not evoked was originally aroused by what is called the unconditioned stimulus, i.e. one which is naturally evoked when a subject is exposed to it (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). One possibility of this having occurred concerns the boy who described Sunday school as stuffy. In his case, Sunday school is the conditioned stimulus, while stuffiness is the unconditioned stimulus.

Another is that of being repeatedly confronted by other boys while going to or coming

from Sunday school. For the many boys who reported this, the dread and humiliation associated with such aggression comes to be associated with Sunday school.

Attitude acquisition by observational learning

Attitude formation can occur through watching what people do and whether they are rewarded or punished, then imitating their behaviour (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). Kenrick et al. (1999, 49) refers to this learning as “ongoing cognition”.

The boys have constantly observed others being mocked or laughed at for the slightest reason, with no consequences. This behaviour has thus come to characterize all of their interaction, and they all view it as inevitable, however deplorable they make it out to be. Attitude-formation by observational learning is most common amongst younger children (Bordens and Horowitz 2002).

Direct Personal Experience

Direct personal experience has great power to create and change attitudes (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). Attitudes formed in this way are likely to be strongly held and to affect behaviour (Ibid.). The lifelong-openness model suggests that direct experience retains its power to create and change attitudes throughout the human lifespan, in contrast to the impressionable years model (Ibid.). The experience of being laughed at and being victims of aggression had led to the negative attitudes that the boys held.

The Heritability Factor

This factor is an indicator of the degree to which genetics explains variations in behaviour or any given characteristic among people (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). According to Kenrick et al. (1999) genes influence our temperament, patterns of arousal and emotionality.

Bordens and Horowitz (2002) cite aggressiveness as an example of a trait that affects how one thinks, feels and acts in a variety of situations. Many of the boys cited themselves as victims of the aggressive behaviour of others. This is hardly surprising as attitudes that have a high heritability factor tend to be strong. This strength is measured by the subject's reaction when the object of the attitude is encountered and by resistance to changing the attitude (Bordens and Horowitz).

Heritability interplays with culture in determining attitudes when it comes to male/female differences. Boys tend to be socialized to not to show certain emotions, such as warmth, and to be tough (Kenrick et al. 1999). This may explain the relatively distant relations that the boys enjoy with each other and the relative mistreatment of each other.

Also of particular interest is the way boys tend to be what LeFever has called tactile-kinesthetic learners. This means that they prefer to have movement and lots of physical activity incorporated in their learning activities. The boys were very excited at the suggestion of games being made a regular part of Sunday school.

The Effect of the Mass Media

Attitudes to violence and gender are strongly influenced by what is portrayed in the mass media, especially television (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). For the boys interviewed, a third attitude, the attitude to academic success, is likely to be indirectly influenced by the mass media in Kenya.

The prestige associated with exceptional academic performance, raised to near cult status by the coverage of national examination results in the mass media—the last week of December for the primary school examinations and mid to late February for the secondary school examinations—is certainly a contributory factor in their viewing school performance as being important.

One is hardly surprised to hear the boys say that they view Sunday school positively as it would lead to good or improved performance in CRE one of the myriad of subjects that they have to tackle. However, in the high stakes game that is Kenyan educational system, every little bit counts.

The Effect of Textbooks

School textbooks, especially in subjects like history and social studies, have a significant effect in shaping attitudes (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). This is because such books tend to promote the socialisation of the young according to the values of the society's dominant groups.

How do the Attitudes Held Impact their Behaviour?

The approach I take to exploring the link between attitudes and behaviour is influenced by the phenomenological perspective of Kurt Lewin (Kenrick et al. 1999). This approach justifies the use of the theories that focus on internal processes to explore the attitude-behaviour link.

The Phenomenological Perspective

The phenomenological perspective is one of the five main branches of social psychology. The other branches of social psychology are the socio-cultural, the evolutionary, the social learning and the social cognitive perspectives (Kenrick et al. 1999).

Kurt Lewin pioneered the phenomenological perspective in the 1930s and 1940s. The basic premise of this perspective is that "social behaviour is driven by each person's subjective interpretations of events in the social world" (Kenrick et al. 1999, 10). Lewin termed the unique individual viewpoint as the individual's phenomenology. The phenomenology of the boys, their unique perspective given their experiences and stage of development is thus the basis for understanding their attitudes

(Kenrick et al. 1999, 10). Analyzing what is within people helps see the interplay between their perspective, their attitudes and their behaviour.

Three Approaches to the Attitude-Behaviour Link

Rokeach (1968), Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) and the ABC tripartite model described by Feldman (2001) explored the attitude-behaviour link. This link is essentially an internal process, and it underscores the importance of the attitudes that the boys hold.

The Rokeach model

According to Rokeach (1968), beliefs are the building blocks of attitudes. A particular belief is made up of cognitive, affective and behavioural components (Ibid.). The behavioural component contains the predisposition to act. This predisposition will become an actual behaviour when an individual is provoked (Ibid.).

The boys believe that Sunday school will help them in various ways. This knowledge in turn causes them to want to come to Sunday school, even when they have the choice of joining their parents in the main church service. The boys thus come to Sunday school predisposed to answer questions. The teachers' questions provoke the boys to actively participate in class (see Figure 6).

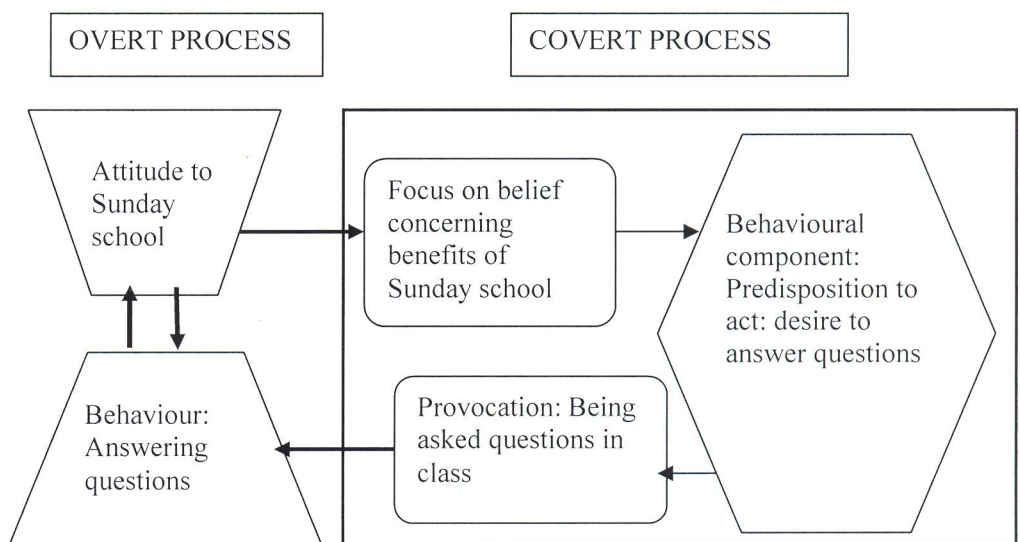


Figure 6: From attitudes to behaviour: Rokeach's model

The theory of planned behaviour

This theory holds that the link between attitudes and behaviours is a “conscious, reasoned link as people are rational and conscious of both their attitudes and behaviour” (Bordens and Horowitz 2002, 176).

Thus if a person thinks that a particular behaviour associated with an attitude will lead to positive outcomes (attitude towards the behaviour), that other persons will approve (subjective norms), and that the behaviour can be done readily (perceived behavioural control), then they will readily engage in the behaviour (quoted in Bordens and Horowitz 2002).

For example, a boy may view conversion, baptism, and church membership as positive outcomes of Sunday school (Figure 7). Subjective norms in this case mean that others, particularly his parents, will approve of these outcomes. Perceived behavioural control means that Sunday school is accessible and an active participant in Sunday school can easily be baptised. Such a boy will easily participate actively in Sunday school, in line with his positive attitude to Sunday school.

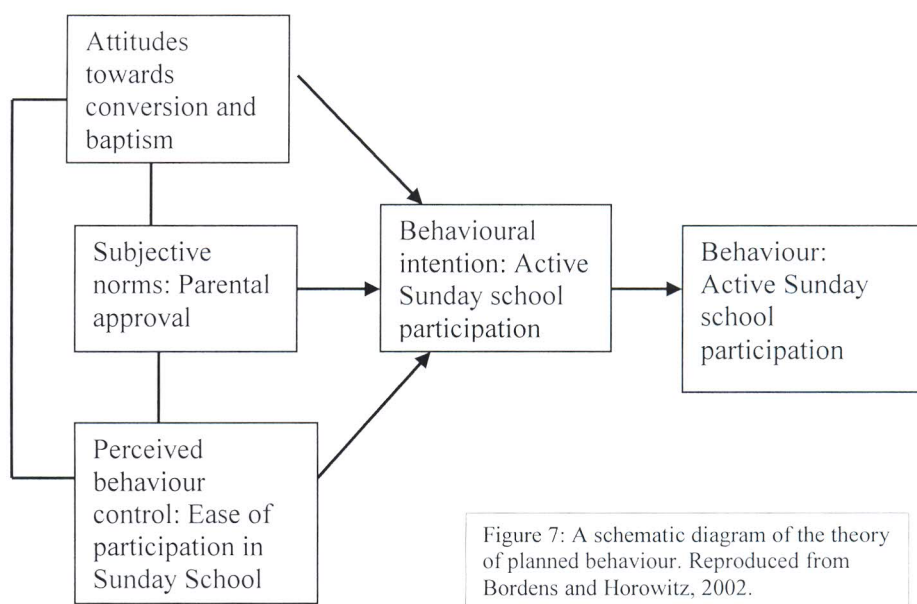


Figure 7: A schematic diagram of the theory of planned behaviour. Reproduced from Bordens and Horowitz, 2002.

The ABC Tripartite Model

This model holds that attitudes are made up of cognitions, behaviour and emotions (Feldman 2001). Its explanatory power lies in the fact that it does not hold that all behaviour is a part of attitudes, but rather that some of our behaviour can be explained by the attitudes of which it is a part.

A boy who believes that Sunday school is important (cognition), will be willing to constantly volunteer to answer questions (behaviour), which will in turn lead to his feeling good about himself and about his relationship with his teacher (emotion). This is illustrated in Figure 8.

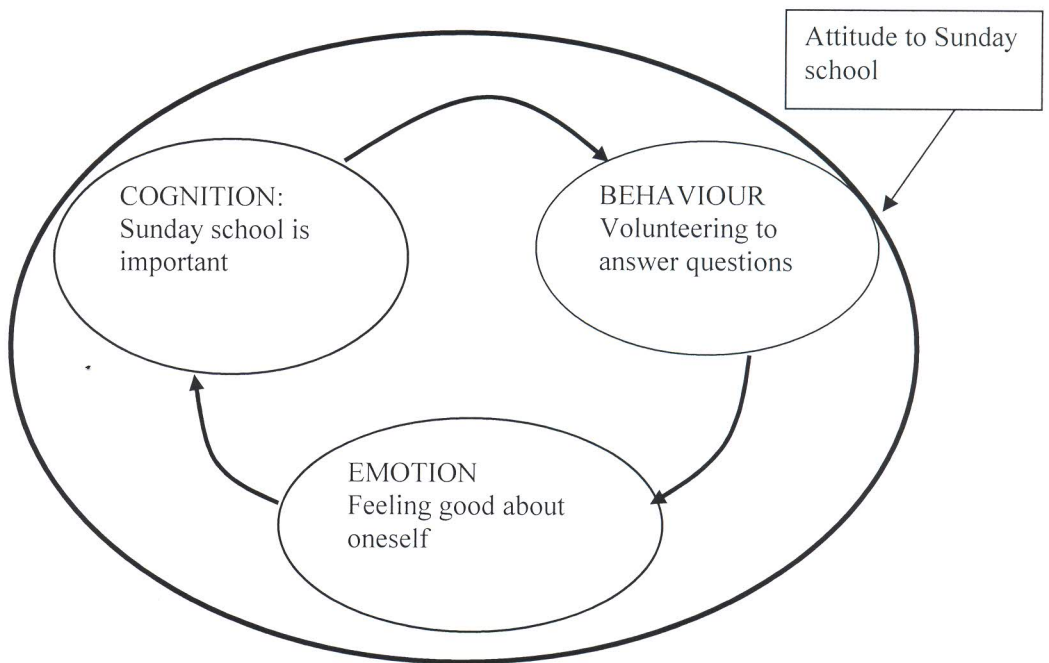


Figure 8: A specific illustration of the ABC tripartite model

What Is the Function of the Attitudes that the Boys Hold?

Bordens and Horowitz list seven functions of attitudes (2002). These are badge-value, directive, summary, utilitarian, knowledge, value expressive and ego-defensive functions.

The badge-value function

This function means that attitudes are a statement of what we would like others to think of us. Feldman (1998, 335) terms this the self function of attitudes. Having a positive attitude to Sunday school would enable the boys to be viewed positively by their parents and even the interviewer. The consideration of the interviewer's opinion arises as I was an adult who had taken the time and trouble to accord them the chance express their views and was actually listening to the boys. This had in turn evoked a certain affinity on the boys' part towards me.

The directive function

Attitudes direct our future feelings and thoughts about the objects of those future feelings and thoughts (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). This happens as attitudes act as a store of mental representations, that is the sum total of one's experiences (Kenrick et al. 1999, 49-50). The boys who found the classroom atmosphere stuffy or Sunday school boring are likely in the future, when they have a real choice, to opt out of Sunday school altogether.

The summary function

Attitudes summarize our feelings, thoughts, intentions and behaviour. Attitudes thus help us to provide ready answers when asked questions about persons, objects or situations (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). This is well illustrated by the extensive answers that the boys gave when speaking of the mistreatment that they had suffered at the hands of the other boys.

The utilitarian function

Attitudes serve a utilitarian function when they enable us to value objects that promote goal attainment (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). Several goals cited by the

boys were improved performance in CRE, improved character and interpersonal relationships and finally salvation and eligibility for baptism

The knowledge function

Attitudes serve a knowledge function by helping us to “make sense of the world” (Bordens and Horowitz 2002, 164). By having a positive attitude toward Sunday school, the boys were starting to make sense of its socialization function. They acknowledged this function as a vital element of their existence as they learnt how to relate to others and acquired good values.

The value-expressive function

Attitudes serve a value-expressive function, helping us to clarify and express our values (Bordens and Horowitz 2002). The attitudes that the boys held towards Sunday school helped them to clarify the value they attached to formal schooling, to their relationships to their parents and to peer relationships.

The ego-defensive function

Attitudes serve an ego-defensive function when they help protect us against our fears and anxieties. One latent fear that the boys could have is the residual fear, more associated with younger children, of being rejected by their parents. The boys could thus have compensated for this fear by stating responses that would have met the approval of their parents or the figure representing their parents, in this case the interviewer.

Theory Statement

The boys’ largely explicit attitudes are based on the largely implicit attitudes inculcated by the boys’ parents. These explicit attitudes are polarised on the extremes of either liking Sunday school or disliking Sunday school. Sunday school is liked as it contributes to good marks in CRE, character formation, and religious education in

addition to consisting of activities that the boys like and being a likely avenue to conversion and baptism. Sunday school is disliked due to the poor intra-class relationships, teacher centred learning and overcrowded classrooms. In between these two extremes is ambivalence to teachers. These attitudes are the product of diverse motivational factors, learning and direct experiences, and the influence of the mass media. Finally, the attitudes impact the boys' behaviour largely by acting on either their cognition or emotion, and have largely utilitarian and value-expressive functions (see Figure 9).

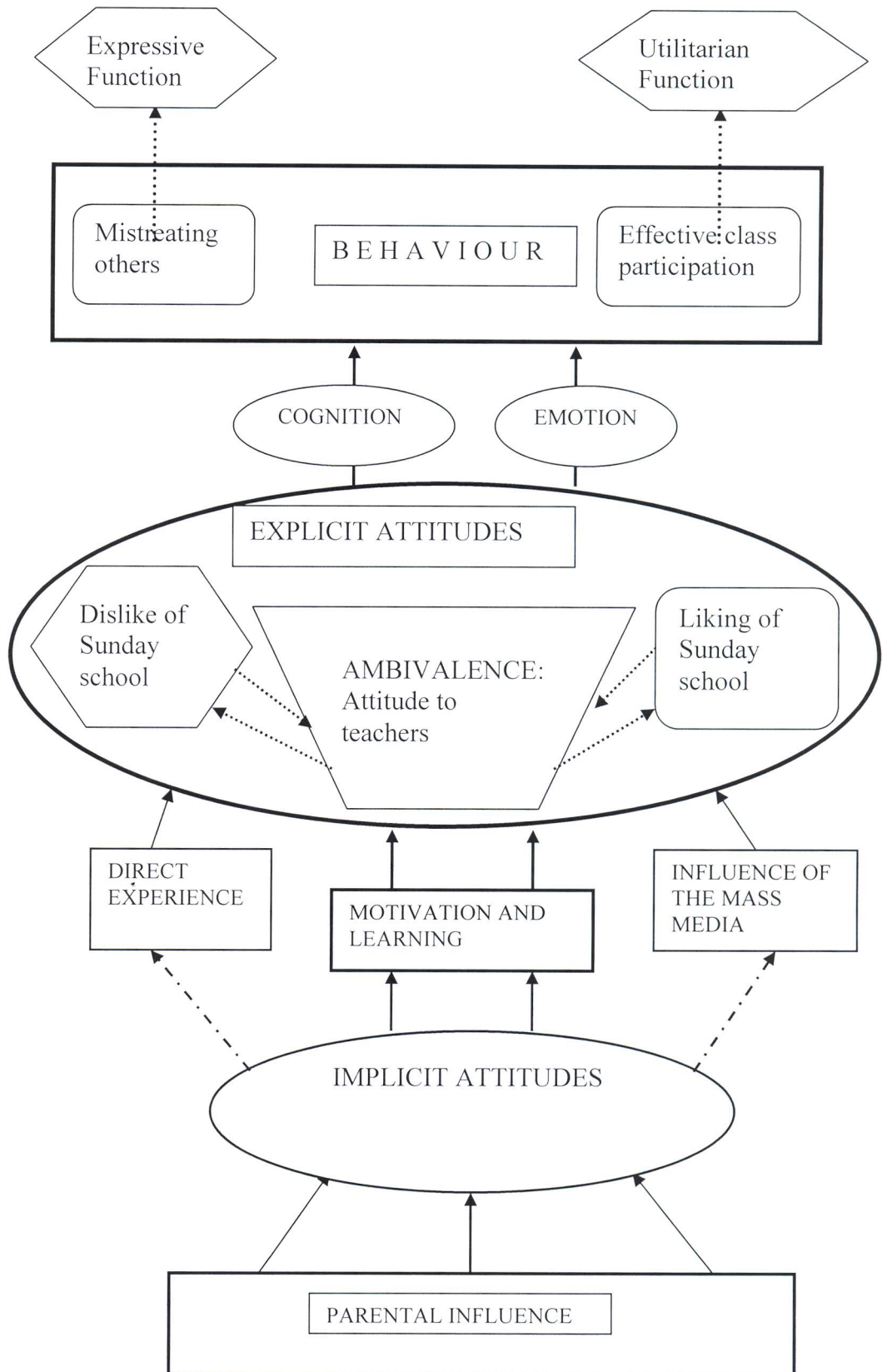


Figure 9: A theory of the boys' attitudes to Sunday school

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Main Findings

Several clear themes emerge from the analysis of the data. The first is the existence of a large body of attitudes towards two key elements of Sunday school, that is Sunday school as socialization and the peer group interaction. Surprisingly, attitudes towards teachers did not emerge as important theme. Secondly, there is a marked like/dislike polarity in attitudes towards Sunday school itself, its programmes and its participants. Thirdly, key expectations of Sunday school, especially those related to good performance in CRE and value and character development are time bound along a relatively short time horizon. Hence the boys anticipate the fulfilment of these expectations in the short term. Linked to this is the fourth trend, namely that Sunday school was spoken of as something done for or by children. These themes form the basis for recommendations for possible changes in the administration of Sunday school at Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Central, and for further study.

Recommended Changes in Sunday School Administration

These changes touch upon addressing the general Sunday atmosphere, the parent-teacher relations and curriculum issues. Some of these areas are the subject of ongoing efforts and only require more emphasis.

Improvement of the Atmosphere in Sunday School and at Church

Greater effort should be made to improve relationships amongst the boys. This will involve changes both inside and outside of class.

1. Getting the boys to know each other's names, perhaps through smaller class sizes and the use of games and other activities.
2. The development, in conjunction with the boys and their parents, of a code of conduct governing class conduct. This code will also detail measures to be taken against indiscipline.
3. Outside of class, this will involve greater vigilance by the existing marshals or supervisors who should be available should any boy want to report harassment.

The Administration of the Curriculum

1. There is a need to continuously use curricula that are adapted to the age level of the boys, their interests and their learning styles.
2. Any changes made to the curriculum are to be explained well in advance to the boys.
3. Lastly, the boys should be allowed to have some input in the choice of curriculum, including the classroom activities, whose range has to be expanded beyond the current teacher-centred activities. This must go hand in hand with the adoption of a code of conduct, as learner-centred approaches demand high levels of discipline.

Closer Parent-Teacher Relationships

1. The parents should be encouraged to get to know their sons' teachers better by visiting the class occasionally so as to meet the teacher after the class has been dismissed.
2. The children's ministry should organize an annual meeting at which teachers and parents interact. This can be done at the end of the year.
3. The parents should be co-opted as volunteers in leading the VBS.

Areas of Additional Inquiry

Further research needs to be done on other dimensions of the boys' attitude, namely their relationships with the girls, their expectation of the educational ministries of the church as they move beyond the Sunday school/VBS stage and the effect attitudes to the formal school have on attitudes to Sunday school. There is also need to address the same questions to a similarly diverse group of girls of the same age.

Conclusion

This large cosmopolitan church has succeeded in the task of inculcating positive attitudes towards Sunday school in the boys. This result has been achieved by teamwork on the part of parents, teachers and the general Sunday school administration. The clouds on the horizon, illustrated by the poor intra-class relationships, can easily be dealt with by the inclusion of a new set of players in the team effort—the boys themselves.

REFERENCE LIST

- Bordens, Kenneth S. and Irwin A. Horowitz. 2002. *Social psychology*. 2ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Creswell, John W. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, John W. 2003. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. 2d ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Datta, Ansu. 1984. *Education and society: A sociology of African education*. London: Macmillan Publishers.
- Feldman, Robert S. 1998. *Social psychology*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Fishbein, M and Icek Ajzen. 1980. *Belief, attitude, intention and behaviour. An introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.
- Gangel, Kenneth O and Howard G Hendricks (eds). 1988. *The Christian educator's handbook on teaching*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- Habermas, R. and Klaus Issler. 1992. *Teaching for reconciliation: Foundations and practice of Christian educational ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Kenrick, Douglas T, Steven L Neuberg and Robert B Cialdini. 1999. *Social psychology, unravelling the mystery*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Kosslyn, Stephen M. and Robin S. Rosenberg. 2001. *Psychology. The brain, the person, the world*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Klausmeier, Herbert J. 1984. *Educational psychology*. 5th ed. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
- LeFever, Marlene. 1985. *Creative teaching styles*. Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries.
- Morgan, David L. 1997. *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Qualitative Research Methods Series 16. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mugenda Olive M, and Abel G Mugenda. 1999. *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press..

- Pazmiño, Robert W. 1988. *Foundational issues in Christian education: An introduction in evangelical perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Reed, James E. and Ronnie Prevost. 1993. *A history of Christian education*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman.
- Rokeach, Milton. 1968. *Beliefs, attitudes and values: A theory of organization and change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc. Publishers.
- Seidman, Irving. 1998. *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. 2d ed. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Valsiner, Jaan and Kevin J. Connolly (eds). 2003. *Handbook of developmental psychology*. London: Sage Publications.
- Wilhoit, James C. and John M. Dettoni, eds. 1995. *Nurture that is Christian: Developmental perspectives on Christian education*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- Wilhoit, Jim. 1991. *Christian education and the search for meaning*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Wilhoit, James C. 1987. 'The Illusion of Change in Curriculum'. *Christian Education Journal*. Volume VIII, no 1: 25-29. Scripture Press Ministries: Elgin, IL.