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**Introduction**

‘Behavior’ is one word that troubles or puzzles many researchers, psychologists, and other mental health professionals to date. Researchers are still researching why humans do the things that they do, especially the maladaptive behaviors that create chaos and uncertainty for many people in the world. For that reason, behavior modification finds its place in many studies to try and solve that puzzle, that so many previously tried to solve but to no avail. Behavior modification can be a powerful means to help make change positively among people, enhancing general well-being, and influencing habits by using reinforcement approaches and specific interventions. It can be also identified as a methodical approach that involves understanding, identifying, and altering behaviors (Hassan, Oladipo & Owoyele, 2022) effectively to get the desired results.

We live in a speedy changing and challenging world for many people, which can take a toll on people’s well-being and comportment, either negatively or positively. Because we are humans with diverse personalities and qualities, many individuals have ideal and excellent behaviors that permit us to handle various events smoothly, however than not, so many of us own at least some maladaptive conduct that could be enhanced. It will all depend on each person's desire to make the change. Within this global village that we live in, there is no doubt that most of us are interested in understanding the most effective way to help individuals adjust to undesirable behaviors (Thompson-Bramwell & Mauzard, 2022).

For that reason, many behaviorists developed theories and contributed considerable views into how practical the principles of those theories are to modify behaviors. Additionally, clinicians, parents, marketers, educators, and many others developed a great interest in this subject, and for decades’ psychologists also found behavior modification a topic for further discussion. It is found to be a powerful tool in psychology that utilizes punishment, cognitive methods, and reinforcement to modify unwanted negative behaviors. When one understands its uses and principles, the unfolded conflicts between people and countries across the globe will result (Molloy & Bearer, 2024) in more satisfying well-being among the current and coming generations.

The primary goal of behavior modification is to eradicate or decrease maladaptive conduct (Scott, Jain, & Cogburn, 2023). Therefore, it is important to understand the gradations of behavior modifications if we want to achieve desired results, it can be in the context of education and psychology. This raised concerns about, how might we efficiently help individuals change undesirable behaviors and be taught new behaviors (Thompson-Bramwell & Mauzard, 2022). This essay will outline the concepts of behavior modification, and look at the effectiveness of behavior modification in different settings and contexts; for example, education, psychology, individual life, work, and community as well as in therapeutic interventions. It will highlight the concepts and functions of Applied Behavior Analysis to foster individual growth also how to help enhance general well-being.

**Summary of the topic.**

* ***The Scope of Behavior Modification***

Behavior modification relates to the procedures we can use to attempt to increase or decrease certain reactions or behaviors to enhance social relationships (Gitimoghaddan et al, 2022), and most times we frequently and unconsciously use it in our everyday lives. It is important to identify the target behavior (Scott, Jain & Cogburn, 2023), then implement the punishment or reinforcement strategy, as well as monitor progress. The aim behind modifying behaviors is not necessarily about how and why certain behavior occurs, but rather focuses on altering the behaviors. There exist many ways that we can use to accomplish that. Many theories were developed for behavior modification, as those theories supported the notion that certain behaviors are learned and, therefore, can also be unlearned (Vijayalakshmi, 2019).

Modification denotes the process of altering and adjusting something (Vijayalaskshmi, 2019) to enhance its functionality, appearance, or suitability for a particular purpose. This can be practical to objects, concepts, or organisms, often including changes that may enhance performance or adjust to new situations whilst keeping the initial structure or ideas. Behavior modification can be used in different settings and contexts in society, such as; guardians, educators, and parents may use it in teaching children wrong from right, and therapists may use it to encourage good and healthy conduct among their clients. Additionally, some studies show that many residential homes use behavior modification agendas to help young people address behavior problems. One study proved otherwise, it shows that there is a success of reoffending with adult offenders and conduct issues after receiving treatment through behavior modification. One of the programs used in the homes is ‘teaching-family homes’; is related to the social learning theory apparent from extreme behaviorism. These homes use family-style techniques in their treatment to make children feel the home atmosphere while away from their biological homes.

Behavior modification is effective at whichever age, however, typically it will start to hold a significant impact throughout adolescence and childhood. WHY? Children’s patterns and routines are more flexible and malleable while still developing. There is something called self-control when it comes to behavior modification. Self-control is the basis of ethical behavior, and this starts very early in the childhood stage when children should learn the rules that we are not able to do whatever we want or temps us at any particular moment. Various behavioral guidelines exist that people need to follow in society, therefore, children should be taught how to contain themselves, because they are the future generation. Self-control is teachable but needs the willpower to maintain.

Like any other topic behavior modification has its criticism. The critics debate that modifying behavior can overgeneralize people's behavior, it can lead to superficial modifications or ignoring fundamental issues. Some people believe it may be manipulated, authoritarian, intimidating, destabilizing autonomy as well as individuality. Thus, other critics argue that relying only on external recompenses may not nurture intrinsic inspiration. Moreover, among the many concerns to behavior modification, is that it can bring possible negative outcomes on mental well-being and self-esteem. It has been seen that behavior modification may also bring fears of not addressing the root causes of people’s behavior, as well as it may keep societal disparities and injustices alive. In addition, studies show that once an individual is placed under certain pressure he or she may show signs of immoral behavior even after acquiring the morality level.

Therefore, can we say that we can rely on or depend on it for long-lasting effects? Or, are there any ethical issues when implementing behavior modification methods in different aspects of day-to-day life? As mentioned previously behavior modification as Scott, Jain & Cogburn describe it, may focus on adjusting certain behaviors without taking into consideration of individual’s feelings or thoughts, although many therapists can focus on the thinking processes that may affect behaviors. As behavior modification focuses mainly on using reinforcement approaches, observable behaviors, aimed at specific targets, and emphasizing monitoring progress and consistency, it holds some characteristics for its effectiveness in daily life below:

* ***The Characteristics of Behavior Modification***
* Define the problem behavior that one can measure.
* Alter the person’s current living environment with the treatment techniques, to help the person function better.
* The justifications and techniques will be precisely described.
* In everyday living, these techniques can be applied.
* These methods rely on the ideologies of learning based on respondent conditioning and operant conditioning.
* There should be scientific evidence that demonstrates a specific method responsible for certain behavior changes.
* All partners involved in the process of the behavior change program must be accountable.

 In conclusion, behavior modification (Vijayalakshmi, 2019) suggests tailoring approaches, making possible positive changes, promoting self-awareness, and fostering continuing individual growth and development. However, challenges are no exception that create space for further research; when people resist change, limitations in generalizing, dependence on outside reinforcements, and the possible ethical considerations that may arise when it comes to the implementation of behavior modification techniques. For that reason, many theorists found the urgency to delve into this subject matter; to find solutions to many societal problems, and to understand human behaviors in their natural environment.

**The Historical Concepts of Behavior Modification**

Maladaptive behaviors, poor mental health, learning difficulties, and low school performances created an immense hunger in the theoretical world to introduce behavior modification approaches in the hope of addressing these various needs to regulate behaviors and promote well-being using evidence-based programs targeting self-improvement. Edward Thorndike during the year 1911, was identified as the first person to use the terminology behavior modification derived from the operant conditioning theory of B.F Skinner (Hassan, Oladipo, & Owoyele, 2022) and it was from then on that it was referred to ways to increase adaptive behaviors by using reinforcements as well as decrease unwanted behaviors using punishments or extinction (Gitimoghaddan et al, 2022). Furthermore, in the early 20th century behavior modification tracks back to the work of Skinner based on the principles of operant conditioning, and Pavlov’s classical conditioning, which further led to the modern behavioral therapy approaches.

* ***Understanding Classical and Operant Conditioning***

To obtain effective outcomes, it is important to understand the difference between the two condition approaches. Firstly, operant conditioning by Skinner underlines the importance of shaping occurring behaviors using consequences such as punishments and reinforcement to smooth the progress of behavior and learning changes. It also highlights the examination of different settings that influence either by shaping or affecting people’s behaviors (Hassan, Oladipo, & Owoyele, 2022). Secondly, classical conditioning by Pavlov focuses solely on involuntary answers to stimuli, it is an unconscious learning technique used to modify maladaptive behaviors (Thompson-Bradwell & Mauzard, 2022).

Behavior modification can be classified as behavior therapy which is currently recognized as Applied Behavior Analysis, which emphasizes the experiential root of modifying behavior. However various authors considered it in the wider scope, as well as incorporated other categories of behavior-changed methods. Gitimoghaddan et al (2022) suggested alternative programs for adolescents as well as their parents, it is derived from such intensive Applied Behavior Analysis that is based on a treatment ideal for young individuals.

* ***The concept of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)***

The behavior modification approach is grounded on the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) concerning treatment. The process of ABA is to apply systematic interventions that are based on the principles of learning theory, to improve social behaviors that are significant to a meaningful level, and to show that the mediation used is responsible for improving the behavior in real-life circumstances. It could help individuals to make significant changes in their lives. Behavior Analysis (BA) is a science that is based on pure evidence. This science will help individuals understand the way people’s environment can affect behavior as well as how people learn, therefore, the ideologies of BA may be used as the foundation of ABA. This process consists of analyzing and assessing reasons behind individuals engage in the behavior that they do. Thus, knowing the reasons why people engage in such behaviors, will determine the best way to teach the person better ways to get access to similar reinforces as well as getting needs met. Thus, this raises these questions; what are we doing to have a meaningful effect? And, are the specific behavioral goals, really what society wants?

ABA may be implemented to help an individual enhance their existence by acquiring skills and reducing behaviors that may cause people to receive many forms of abuse, rejection, or punishment amongst others. So, the most important key when addressing any behavior that is identified for change; must be clearly described in measurable and observable terms. It is vital to know what the behavior looks like at the same time what is not included. Additionally, it is equally important to collect important information through different means either through direct or indirect methods. In Functional Behavior Analysis; the direct method involves gathering information by direct observation (what we see and hear), whereas, the indirect method is gathering information from other sources, such as other people, or family members who know the person well, interviews with other people familiar, example; employer, friends.

 The behavior that needs or is selected for change must be important for the person too. The ever-decreasing prevalence of maladaptive behavior among young people and children worldwide placed interventions for higher demands. For decades the ABA has rested at the front position of these interventions. Therefore, various government bodies recommended the ABA, such as Canada and the United States (Gitimoghaddan et al, 2022). Many studies show good effects of the ABA, showing increased positivity, improved social skills, and adaptive behaviors as well as communication, it also shows a decrease in behavior problems with 88% improvements. However, there is a lack of research on the scientific evidence of the pertinence of ABA, and this might conclude a knowledge gap concerning the subject matter. As previously mentioned, this question will always be at the forefront of any nation; ‘Why do people behave in the way they do?’ The reasons why people do certain behavior is known as the function of the behavior. Accordingly, there are four functions of behaviors, and all actions may happen as a result of one of these functions: sensory, attention, escape, and tangible. Explanation is given below on the four functions of behaviors in Figure 1.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Function of behavior** | **Meaning of the functions** |
| **Sensory**  | May engage in a behavior to relieve itch or pain, when alone and makes the person feel good. |
| **Escape**  | Is avoiding doing something or stopping something; could be to get out of class or maybe go somewhere else or get someone to go away. |
| **Attention**  | To gain attention from someone else could be physical or vocal orientation. The attention can be good (hugging) or bad (telling off). |
| **Tangible**  | To access something one can hold or do, such as an item, food, or activity. |

**Theories in Behavior Modification**

In line with the above functions, modifying behavior may involve the analysis of the behavior by understanding why such behavior occurs or keeps repeating itself in the first place. This comprises Antecedents, Behavior, and Consequences. This concept is very easy to understand; antecedent is what happened before the behavior (trigger), behavior is the main response, and consequence means the result that happens after the behavior has occurred. Comprehending all the functions of behavior will facilitate and determine interventions, which should be precise and individualized to the person receiving treatment (Scott, Jain & Cogburn, 2023).

Various theories on behavior modification focus mainly on changing unwanted behaviors by employing punishment, reinforcement, or other methods. Behavior modification is seen as an immense concept that needs a complete understanding of the whole process by tailoring interventions, consistency, and monitoring the development are the keys. Behavior is the thing we can see or hear, not what we assume or perceive. Thus, behavior modification depends on these two concepts of conditioning: operant and classical conditioning (Vijayalakshmi, 2019).

It did exist a prominent psychologist known as B.F. Skinner is well known for his specialty, behaviorism. Skinner believed that all behaviors can be shaped through their consequences, which are either punishment or reinforcement. His research was based on operant conditioning (Gitimoghaddan et al, 2022), which embraces the change of behavior through punishment (discouraging unfavorable behaviors) and reinforcement (encouraging wanted behaviors). He believed that the environment has a role in shaping behaviors, and Skinner’s theories had a great influence on education and psychology. Consequently, Skinner rejected the idea that internal motivations and thoughts as prerequisites to explaining behaviors, he had a firm belief that only understanding and observing the causes of individuals’ behavior is important.

Today, his ideas continue to be applied and studied within different fields to modify and understand behaviors worldwide. While Albert Bandura’s social learning theory highlights the role of observation and imitation, cognitive-behavioral approaches also integrate thoughts and beliefs, suggesting that modifying thought patterns can lead to behavioral changes. Overall, these theories underscore the importance of environmental factors and personal agency in shaping behavior and promoting lasting change; after all, we are all hoping and waiting for that time when changes in maladaptive behavior occur and can have long-lasting effects, many people in the world are waiting for this moment to happen where people can live in peace and harmony where disputes, wars, and mental ails no longer exist.

**Behavioral therapy**

Behavioral Therapy (BT) is used to treat various mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression (Sanabria et al, 2023), and panic disorder, as well as other conditions like; phobias, substance use disorder, eating disorder, and bipolar among others. It is based on the concept that while behavior can be learned, it can also be unlearnt (Obibuba, 2020) in both children and adults. This type of therapy is aimed at identifying possible maladaptive behaviors and helping to change them: look at current issues and find ways to change them. Various techniques are used in Behavioral Therapy:

* **Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy:** It is used to treat mental illnesses in children and young people and information is gathered through play.
* **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** The treatment is based on how thinking processes and individual beliefs may influence personal behavior and moods. It aims at focusing on current issues and ways to resolve them. In the long term, it builds better behavioral actions and thinking to achieve personal growth.
* **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT):** It is based on human language and mental development, including a behavioral examination by a clinician.
* **Aversion Therapy:** This type of therapy may be used in the treatment of alcohol and substance use. This technique involves teaching individuals to relate stimuli (triggers) which is pleasant but not healthy with very unpleasant stimuli (something that causes discomfort) as; the therapist might teach an individual to relate a drug with a hurtful memory.
* **Conversion Therapy:** This kind of therapy is used to attempt individual to change their sexual orientation through specific interventions (Drescher et al, 2016).

According to Sanabria et al (2023), many studies showed that CBT is very effective in treating depression, results reported significantly a significant reduction of symptoms of depression in participants, and it is also effective in treating people experiencing emotional distress. To date anxiety and depression have the highest rate worldwide and are mostly diagnosed as mental disorders in individuals. Therefore, we can say that the mental disorder is striking and needs the researcher’s attention. While there is great demand for effective strategies to manage certain mental conditions, and to help improve the overall health of people affected, this question is raised; is there a possibility to scrutinize the different types of behavioral therapies to suggest whether one is more effective than the others?

In psychology Behavior therapy (BT) is essential for many reasons:

1. **Evidence-based practice:** To ensure that whatever the intervention, it is grounded towards research to enhance its effectiveness and reliability.
2. **Empowerment**: BT will encourage the individual to take control of their own choices and actions, which will improve general well-being and mental ability. It will foster self-regulation as well as self-awareness.
3. **Adaptability and flexibility:** The different techniques may be adapted to different populations which may include adults, children also people with inabilities to make them adaptable in therapy settings.
4. **Skills development:** BT approaches may teach different skills, for example; educational performance, and social connections.
5. **Treatment for Disorders**: It helps people to develop better habits, by providing effective ways (strategies) to address behavior issues, phobias, ADHD, anxiety, and others.

When people are not at peace, they may develop certain traits of mental health illnesses such as anxiety, depression, and panic disorders, they may also create deficits in social skills like, lack of confidence in public settings, and social situations which can result in sexual orientation or disorders. These can have a toll on their well-being causing people to be maladapted and diverge from social standards (Ong’Ayon, 2018).

**Personal opinion and analysis of the course concepts.**

* ***The Use of Behavior modification in the world***

As challenges augment in our societies across the globe, so does the essential need for behavior modification. We believe that when people in the world can adapt their behaviors, many issues can be addressed, like mental well-being, climate change, and social inequalities, as well as creating a sustainable and positive future for everyone. We might proclaim that world leaders have failed to gather their people together in love, respect, and harmony, especially when we see in the world news every day the increase in wars, disputes, violence (Obibuba, 2020), global warming, and criminality amongst others, and we see these issues keeps repeating itself generation through generations. However, some world leaders seek for their people to change their behaviors, as they sometimes express interest in the possible abuses of behavior modification methods. Moreover, they show great concerns about the infringement it may bring on an individual’s freedom, corrosion of autonomy, and the manipulation of civilization at large, its impact on mental well-being, the continuance of power dynamics, and individualism. However, does that mean that world leaders are doing enough to seek to weigh the advantages of behavior modification together with safeguarding all human values and rights? It could be suggested that more research delve into this matter.

* ***Behavior Modification concepts in Different Contexts***

Obibuba (2020) claims that human behavior is determined by the following: biological factors – the age and sex of the individual and how the person interacts with other people, cultural factors refer to the type of culture the individual belongs to, and the situational factors are based on the environmental challenge the person face in life (Obibuba, 2020). Thus, makes personal behavior either unusual, unacceptable, common, or acceptable. Many times we wonder about so many theories that exist thus, maladaptive behaviors are still on the rise; Thompson-Bramwell & Mauzard (2022) questioned whether these theories are effective enough in modifying people’s behavior as many studies suggest they are.

 It has been observed that behavior modification works in different contexts of people’s lives across the globe, for example, many studies investigated the role of behavior modification within the fitness program context to promote healthy lifestyles. According to Dolezal et al (2019), the results showed that there was an increase in changed behaviors for a better lifestyle in the participants; stress reduction, participants felt relaxed and slept better. In another study examining the reduction of screen time behaviors in children, the result showed a reduction in children using technology gadgets. In education, a study examined how teachers perceived the use of behavior modification to reduce truancy in school. The results revealed that participants had positive responses to modifying behavior approaches (Obibuba, 2020). The behavior modification approaches can be used in various other contexts such as; drug misuse, bed-wetting, and smoking amongst other unsociable behaviors. However, there are many people’s activities that may need further studies, such as worrying, eating, loving, sleeping, problem-solving or even dying (Hassen, Oladipo & Owoyele, 2022).

In the middle of all these crises in societies regarding maladaptive behavior, lies an individual. The experiences of many individuals in life are influenced by various external and internal factors, such as domestic violence, abuse, and others. It is with doubt that it will stay the main focus that many people will remain the highlight of our attention for many years to come. Regardless of the many studies and research, maladaptive behaviors worldwide keep rising to the extreme that sometimes goes beyond man's expectations and understanding.

Hassan, Oladipo & Owoyele (2022) state that individuals become the way they are by what they learn and that maladaptive behavior can be adapted to make it more adaptive, as well as human deficits can be modified by employing appropriate learning practices; because feelings, actions, and thoughts are produced through unconditioned stimulations. Hence, behavior modification becomes very effective only when people are consistent, motivated as well as supported. The most important component that enhances the success of changing behaviors in the long term are as follows:

* Personalized plans or goals,
* positive reinforcement (Obibuba, 2020) and
* clear targets.

Many studies have shown that using behavior modification can help to handle maladaptive actions in children and other adults, however, maladaptive behaviors do not just affect intellectual performances but can lead to the destruction of property, and even individuals can lose their lives (Ong’Ayon, 2018). Modifying behaviors focuses on rewards when behaviors are desirable, and punishment for undesirable behaviors in adults, children, and young people. There are four components relating to behavior modification. Many parents or guardians seem to use some or parts of the components when it comes to disciplining their children. These components are as follows:

* Positive punishment
* Positive reinforcement
* Negative punishment
* Negative reinforcement

These components may help a great deal in addressing many behavior issues. For its effectiveness, one must understand these concepts for each component. Before the implementation of behavior modification techniques, clear goals are required, again we see consistency and an individualized method are crucial. First, identify the target behavior, second, establish measurable and specific objectives, then select the appropriate punishment or reinforcement approaches. One must monitor regularly and necessary adjustments made based on individual needs and progress for long-term achievements. Ong’Ayon (2018) believed that when people holding maladaptive behaviors gain better coping skills to deal with their problems, the probability of a change in their behaviors exists.

 This process goes way beyond the individuals, there are other people involved such as the stakeholders; they can promote sustainability and enhance individual motivation to maintain the change required, parents, social workers, counselors, siblings, and family members. As we have seen previously, to modify behaviors there must be reinforcement and punishment. Let us explore them separately.

* ***Positive Punishment***

It has been observed that punishment can be used when we want to stop any negative behaviors; there are positive punishments and negative punishments. Positive punishment is when you add something (consequence) to decrease the likelihood of certain behavior repeating itself; such as reprimanding a child for speaking very loud in the classroom without asking permission. Likewise, it has been recognized that positive punishment holds a healthy place when disciplining children, however, it cannot be relied on too much because children may not learn from what they have done wrong and focus on doing things differently. Another example of positive punishment can be spanking.

Many researchers say that when you spank a child it may cause a detrimental effect on the child, as it may increase aggressiveness and many behavior issues in the long run. There is no doubt to believe that there are other ways to discipline alternatively to spanking. The child can be given more chores whenever he or she tells a lie about coming home late after being told to come early after school.

There may exist negative side effects or consequences of positive punishment ( Obibuba, 2020) that are unintended as it might not at all times change certain behaviors effectively in the long term. This technique may pose certain constraints, such as possible ethical issues, as it may cause certain physical discomfort or even cause harm to children. Therefore, it is important that there is consistency when applying positive punishment, and the timing is vital to gain effectiveness in the process.

* ***Negative Punishment***

Contrary to positive punishment, negative punishment includes removing something (stimuli) that the child likes; for example, when a parent takes a privilege from a child, taking away a mobile phone for not observing the curfew order. However, there might be possible constraints to negative punishment as there may be a possibility of losing its effectiveness if the consequence is not the child’s desired item or not valued by the child. Like, positive punishment, if there is inconsistency when applying negative punishment may decrease its effectiveness as well.

* ***Positive Reinforcement***

Positive reinforcement means providing the child with something likely to increase the probability of the child repeating the behavior (Obibuba, 2020), and this is seen as very effective when it comes to disciplining children, as it reinforces that particular behavior. Some examples of positive reinforcements: are token economy, and praise. From personal experience, adults too most times rely on positive reinforcement, for example, getting paid for their work at the end of the month. Positive reinforcement can be used to modify behavior as an encouragement to good behavior. Thus, this technique is efficient and a fast way to promote desirable behavior. When a person exhibits certain behavior, it will result in negative or positive consequences, therefore, when receiving negative consequences, such as time out, the possibility for the person to repeat the action decreases (Vijayalaskshmi, 2019). However, when the person receives positive ones, it will encourage him or her to repeat that behavior over again.

Most time we want to reinforce children’s behavior, there are various ways to do that, for example:

* Giving thumbs up
* High fives
* Giving a hug
* Offer praise, amongst others.

It has been studied that each time a child makes progress, positive reinforcement should be provided, and maintain consistency. Ong’Ayan (2018) claims that young people need encouragement and reinforcement when they are gaining new skills, as well as when they are trying to manage their daily challenges to be able to lift their self-esteem.

* ***Negative reinforcement***

Negative reinforcement intensifies the behavior or the response through avoidance, removal, or stopping of a negative result or aversive stimuli (Cruise, 2016). An aversive stimulus will tend to include some kind of awkwardness, either psychological or physical. Each time there is a removal or avoidance, it reinforces certain behaviors that follow making the possibility that the response will repeat itself in the future (Cherry, 2022). When an individual is motivated enough to change his or her behavior because an unpleasant thing will be taken away, is known as negative reinforcement. For example; a young person decides to stop certain behavior, as his or her mother is yelling at him or her; therefore, attempting to get free from this negative reinforcement (yelling). So, can we conclude that the behaviors causing the problem are maintained through the removal of the action the person was engaging in previously? Thus, it may be uninteresting to decode whatever is contributing to the behavior problem (Cruise, 2016). However, negative reinforcement should not be used all the time with children because it is not as effective as positive reinforcement.

Some examples of real-world issues based on negative reinforcement:

* You clean up the kitchen after you made a mess (behavior) only to avoid the nagging of your mother (removing the aversive stimuli)
* You decide to leave your house early on Monday morning (behavior), to prevent getting caught in the traffic jam and arrive late to work (removing the aversive stimuli).

There are potential strengths to negative reinforcement, such as increasing positive behaviors, which can lead to long-term changes, and work quickly. Negative reinforcement may be used in the treatment of addiction and other contexts, such as education and parenting. Even if negative reinforcement may generate immediate effects, it might be more suitable for short-term solutions. Although negative reinforcement may seem helpful, it contains some possible shortcomings: there can be misinterpretation, especially in communication, and bad timing may it less effective. It can be concluded that the reinforcement used is crucial, nonetheless how fast and how frequently the reinforcement is provided can play a vital role in the strengthening of the reaction (Cherry, 2022).

**Application of the knowledge to your life, work, and community**

Behavior modification is vital in all aspects of life; social, emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual. Applying behavior modification in personal life would be something that many of us would like to do. Behavior modification in daily life implicates the application of methods to impact individual behavior positively. When an individual applies behavior modification in their personal life, it means identifying everyday habits they want to change, then setting achievable and clear goals, making a plan of action, tracking their progress, and making sure to recompense themselves for making positive transformations or any adjustments made, and remove any temptations. These strategies may help to instill good habits and help reduce maladaptive behaviors in different areas of life. Self-awareness and practicing consistency are vital for long-term progress in maintainable behavior modification. Additionally, seeking support and staying motivated at all times is important to attain a positive change in behavior and gain lasting well-being.

Many individuals spend a lot of time in the workplace they enjoy, a maximum time. Likewise, in the workplace behavior modification is crucial, as an environment full of negativity does not stand a chance to progress, rather it will collapse. Therefore, implementing behavior modification in the workplace is to identify the desired work-related behaviors, set clear opportunities, set positive feedback, and reinforcers, as well as promote positive workplace settings. Thus, to maintain the desired positive behaviors, and bring to a halt the negative ones, utilizing rewards, training, and recognition are the keys to a successful working environment. It has been observed in the workplace that many people, involved in problematic behavior seem just the primarily developed communication abilities they are used to. Behavior modification (Vijayalakshmi, 2019) is a very efficient technique to help change maladaptive behaviors through reinforcement, structured approaches, and punishment. It will nurture skills and good habits in different settings, such as in education, counseling, and daily life. Personally, modifying behavior can help people develop better daily habits, decrease negative behaviors, and improve self-discipline, which will lead to an improvement in well-being, increase productivity, and develop a fulfilling relationship by consistently providing positive reinforcement. When promoting accountability and self-awareness, modifying behavior contributes to improving psychological being and individual growth.

**Personal experiences and opinions on Behavior Modification in school as a school counselor.**

The author shares a strong opinion about rearing children and young people; a child if not shown the good and the bad, he or she will grow up thinking they can do whatever they want and wherever they want in society. We usually use behavior modification with our friends and family relationships (Vijayalakshmi, 2019), therefore, we can also use it in education settings. It has been observed that in the school environment, educators have the duty and right to discipline pupils in their classroom as education professionals, and this discipline may result in a conducive or chaotic learning environment (An, 2022). Today in the educational setting and through the popularization of many policies and laws, school is left in a dilemma because the school policies and laws are not being reinforced to do the job it supposed to do. Additionally, even though educators learn about classroom management in their training, somehow they forget how to deal with or modify students’ behavior appropriately and they get carried away with using punishments that create negative outcomes on the mental and physical well-being of their students (An, 2022).

 As a school counselor working in a primary school. Behavior modification when working with children and young people may involve the use of a methodical approach by encouraging good actions and not encouraging bad behaviors. This will include:

* **Reinforcement** – children like rewards, therefore reward them for good behaviors, such as stickers, and praise to motivate them.
* **Punishment** – Use consequences for maladaptive behaviors to stop them.
* Modeling – children like to imitate, so demonstrate better behaviors for them to imitate.
* **Structured environment** – Provide predictability and stability by creating consistency in routines.
* **Goal setting** – establish achievable and clear goals that children can easily understand and keep track of progress.

Ong’Ayan (2018) believes that educators can use reinforcement approaches in their classroom, but should be appropriate to their students’ developmental stages and capabilities, as believed by the author. As mentioned before children imitate behaviors, according to Bandura’s learning theory children learn through modeling, observation, and the imitation of other individuals. Additionally, the theory believes that an individual’s personality comprises behaviors acquired previously by the individual’s ongoing interactions through environmental and personal factors (Hassan, Oladipo, & Owoyele, 2022).

Normally children observe older adults as their role models to shape their behaviors, especially their parents, guardians, and teachers. We have many uninvolved parents in the lives of our children, parents lacking appropriate knowledge about disciplining children rather than the only corporal punishment; spanking. We cannot blame these parents as they have not been taught how to. The author feels that parents and the community require sensitization on appropriate approaches to transmit and instill good values in our future generation.

The author may argue that the contingencies within the environment may shape children to want to do things that their physical setting as well as what society wants them to do (Hassan, Oladipo, & Owoyele, 2022). However, once children understand the inference of the behavior modification approaches to undesirable behavior they display, they will gain trust and confidence to enhance their behavior by being guided to discover their abilities as well as their weaknesses (Ong’ Ayon, 2018), and a better learning environment will prevail. One criticism that the author will point out on one of the school policies; in school, there exists a document called ‘The Whole School Behavior Policy’, its purpose is to guide educational staff on the proper channel to help modify pupils’ behaviors. Unfortunately, this document is not as effective as it should be, educators discard its presence and do things on their terms when it comes to disciplining pupils. However, it is a very valuable document in schools but we treat it as a worthless document. If this policy was used accordingly and appropriately, many undesirable behaviors would have been eradicated in school settings and teachers would not be crying out loud about misbehaviors in their classrooms.

While many studies investigate academic successes and designing curriculums, the social aspect of the development of children and young people will always be left behind, which can result in antisocial behavior, in the end, we will have clever people with little moral values. In general, behavior modification can help children and young people develop healthier self-control, emotional regulation, and social skills on their route to adulthood.

**Recommendations to different stakeholders involved in Behavior Modification**

The readers need to know what the next step is, therefore, the following recommendations will give actionable measures on exactly how we need to address concerns and also how to implement the strategies to achieve positive outcomes.

* ***Education***
* School experts need to reinforce the utilization of behavior modification ((Thompson-Bramwell & Mauzard, 2022) as an alternate option to using punishment.
* The school counselor can organize professional development sessions on a termly basis to re-sensitize educators on the importance of utilizing behavior modification approaches to modify pupils’ behaviors.
* School educators should continuously be encouraged to use behavior modification techniques in their classroom every day to foster desirable behavior change in their students ( Obibuba, 2020).
* ***Government:***
* The government should liaise with the Ministry of Education to come up with a plan of action for non-governmental agencies, school experts, and other stakeholders to make available training and workshop opportunities to teach educators on appropriate utilization of behavior modification techniques to improve education settings where learning can take place.
* ***Ministry of Education:***
* The Ministry of Education system should provide directives to school leaders to make available workshops for educators in the behavior modification approaches to improve the school environment and the service it provides to the community.
* Sensitize parents and the community at large on how to use the behavior modification approaches as a way to transmit good values and improve discipline in children.

**Conclusion**

Behavior modification empowers people to make positive behavior changes (Thompson-Bramwell & Mauzard, 2022) in life, it can lead to individuals improving their well-being, production, and interpersonal relationships. Using this collective approach, the personal changes will create some ripple outcomes that will positively make a difference in the world. Exploring the boundless possibilities of behavior modification approaches will nevertheless, contribute to unlocking people’s potential in shaping a positive future through sustainable and intentional change in human mindset and behavior.

Implementing behavioral therapy in different settings such as; education, healthcare, and individual life will surely help to address various behavioral challenges, improve learning needs, enhance mental well-being, and promote individual growth. Moreover, when specific interventions are tailored to particular goals and needs, behavioral therapy will help people achieve long-lasting changes in life as well as in their communities.

It can be concluded that behavior modification approaches (Dolezal et al, 2019) have exhibited significant achievements in helping change behaviors in different environments and populations. Only if we understand the philosophies behind behavior modification techniques and effectively apply them to everyday life, people will achieve lifelong changes positively in their daily habits and behaviors, which then lead to an improvement in the quality of life. However effective behavioral modification may sound promising to many people, behavioral challenges will remain a defy subject across many countries in the world. As the years prolong so do individuals with maladaptive behaviors, they do exist today in more complexity. Therefore, there is a growing urgency for further research to examine the various behavioral therapies thoroughly, and their effectiveness in changing behaviors as mentioned previously. The question of ‘Why do people do the things that they do maladaptive and still behavioral modification techniques exist’ will always be the highlight of many leaders of the world.

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