

**COMMUNICATING SELF DISCIPLINE AMONG YOUTHS: THE
PSYCHOLOGY OF IDENTITY AND PRESENTATIONAL SELF PARADIGMS****¹Onebunne, Jude I., ²Ojiakor, Ifeoma C., ³Nkwam-Uwaoma, Adeline O.**¹Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria^{2,3}Department of Mass Communication, Imo State University, Owerri, NigeriaCorresponding E-mail: ojiakor99@gmail.com, Tel: +2348037437980**Abstract**

Man's many potentials and remarkable evolutionary growth which are products of social order has caught him in a perilous web of retrogressive development where legality is now preferable to morality; now a society without conscience. Without rocket science, this is the current millennia's problem with attending human aberrations. Taking advantage of communication as a tool necessarily will help to drive the message of self-discipline deeper into the fabrics of the youths especially if it is understood that the link among the self, the environment and the intended social influence (in this case self-discipline) lies with the utilization of identity and presentational paradigms which enhances the self to better communicate self-discipline to others with intended positive influence. Without willpower, hard work and persistence, the current malaise may not be overcome by the youths. The authors have explored communicating self-discipline as its panacea and thus; recommend that relevant stakeholders (parents, teachers and government) do more to internalize the basic disciplinary dispositions in youths and impact them with relevant identity and presentational skills to influence their peers and the larger society more purposefully and positively.

Key Words: Communication, conformity, self-discipline, personal identity, presentational self, social environment, ethical living

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Introduction

Man's glorious path to development and subduing the universe has excelled on the heels of conscious efforts to harvest his too many endowed potentials. This often stems from self discipline and conformity to established social order without which life will be shambolic. Despite man's remarkable evolutionary growth, he has caught himself in a perilous web of retrogressive development with legality now preferable to morality as the consequence of his crave for unlimited freedom. To a large extent, man's path to unlimited freedom has come with grave consequences casting its shadow against a society that once enacted laws to preserve its essence, value and future but now as a society without a conscience. Without rocket science, this is the current millennia's problem and sadly; without social order, human evolution and advancement will essentially become her bane. The absence of social order is anarchy which hurts human civilization and socialization process (Mehta, 2016). The many human aberrations which are the real global issues of today were as they were, antecedents to social deviance which grew out of lack of self-discipline but were legalized other than condemned (Mushambi, 2014). Amidst this hoax; the authors are hopeful that the light of hope still lies with personal living especially one that communicate self-discipline to the society to change the next person; one which culminates in conquering the self against the legality of what is wrong.

Under the prevailing circumstances, one will inevitable be internally convinced in order to rise above the malaise of the crowd effect. Unfortunately, the focus on discipline is itself partially misdirected; less internalized than its external manifestations (Etzioni, 1982). Discipline, as most people understand it, is something external. For example there is always a demand from teachers and people in teaching positions at school, church or family "lay down the law" to students to "show respect" by rising when their teacher enters the room, not speaking unless spoken to, and so on. But, discipline is more that the "show" it something more internalized than externalized. It is more of the self than the outward display of it (Pavlina, 2005). When discipline emanates

from the self, it says a lot than its externalism and what it says is a sort of communication which influences and affects others lives and the society in general. Etzioni (1982) contended that self discipline is developed in structured situations, not in authoritarian ones and his contention may be summarized while mediating on Moawad's (2005) classical quote:

“the best day of your life is the one in which you decide your life is your own; no apologies or excuses; no one to lean on, rely on, or blame; the gift is yours - it is an amazing journey and you alone are responsible for the quality of it. This is the day that your life really begins”

The above is same as saying that greatest starts with conquering the self especially in utilizing one strengths and managing one's weakness conforming to societal norms without which misdemeanors turn to anarchy. How to get one internally motivated towards the paths of disciple is unsurprising the greatest challenge for youths today. The challenges youths have faced in this arena have in parts or all been mirrored in varying problems facing youths today such as: laziness, procrastination, negative peer influence, untamed aggression, poor school grade, cultism, gambling, drug use/abuse, extremism, negative radicalism, get-rich-quick syndrome e.g. prostitution, armed robbery, kidnapping and internet fraud etc. How these have wrecked our modern society is a story for another because all over our society all are affected in one way or another by these menace.

Literature Review

Discipline

The morphology of the word "discipline" gifts us the understanding of what life should be all about – an honest and conscious effort to learn, a strive to adhere to training instructions which readies us to be more conformists than deviants. In essence, the word truly means ability to regulate and control oneself within the acceptable standard. According to Mushambi (2014), without discipline, all the motivational teachings and time management strategies in the world will never be effective. It therefore follows that you can keep playing around with words like ‘change’, ‘strive’, ‘courage’, ‘no excuses’, ‘desire to improve’, ‘be persistent’ and ‘goal setting’ all you want. It is easy to utter these words, but it is an arduous task to get oneself to do it”.

Self-discipline – Self-discipline is the ability to get yourself to take the right action regardless of your emotional state (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2018). The pinnacle of self discipline is when you reach the point that when you make a conscious decision and abide by it. Self-discipline is one of many personal development tools available to any individual without which such individual is headed to destruction. While it may not be a panacea, it can wipe out procrastination, disorder, and ignorance. Within the domain of problems it can solve, self-discipline is simply unmatched. Moreover, it becomes a powerful teammate when combined with other tools like passion, goal-setting, and planning (Pavlina 2005).

Self-discipline is ability to sustain one's inner motivational drive towards doing what is ethically right, morally accepted and socially just (Etzioni, 1982). It is being the ideal person in accordance to societal, religious, significant groups and socio-cultural expectations. According to the authors, self-discipline is conscious inner awakening to conform to expected societal standards in whatsoever endeavour of life. It is a desire to play by the rules considering the other and the larger society first before self. Bearing the plight of the youths in mind, most of the troubles that plague modern individualistic lifestyles in our society which includes: addiction, abuse, crime, domestic violence, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, prejudice, financial debt, failure at school and work, obesity – to no small measures connate lack of discipline albeit their capacity to ruin the entire life of the youth. Pavlina (2005); and Mushabi (2014) insisted that the problems abound and persist mainly because of lack of self discipline. Contrary to popular belief, self-discipline does not mean being hard on yourself, or having a restrictive lifestyle. It means self control, which is a result of inner strength, and it is a vital recipe for success in today's world. Delayed gratification, focus, the right work ethics, perseverance, commitment and a standard of excellence are the staples of a successful person won through self-discipline!

Self-discipline appears in various forms, such as perseverance, restraint, endurance, thinking before acting, finishing what you start doing, and as the ability to carry out one's decisions and plans, in spite of inconvenience, hardships or obstacles (Ridder, Lensvelt-Mulders, Finkenauer, Stok, & Baumeister, 2012). Self-discipline also means self-control, the ability to avoid unhealthy excess of anything that could lead to negative consequences. One of the main characteristics of self-discipline is the ability to forgo instant and immediate gratification and pleasure, in favor of

some greater gain or more satisfying results, even if this requires effort and time (Hofmann, Baumeister, Förster, G., & Vohs, 2012). The term self-discipline often causes some discomfort and resistance, due to the erroneous notion that it is something unpleasant, difficult to attain, and which requires a lot of effort and sacrifice (Seasons, 2016). While it may require strenuous efforts, the benefits are great. More so, self discipline acts as a bridge or vital tool for overcoming negative habits as well as sticking to your decision and following them through.

Five pillars of self discipline

Positive change is intentional, and self-discipline allows us to take our lives off auto-pilot; hither-to, the auto-pilot mode has wheeled many to destruction by simply following the crowd and drowning one's true sense of reason, morality and social civility. The crowd drowning effect can be suppressed and curbed by steering oneself towards continuous improvement. The five pillars of self-discipline according to Pavlina (2005) are: Acceptance, Willpower, Hard Work, Industry, and Persistence (A WHIP).

Acceptance - Acceptance means that you perceive reality accurately and consciously acknowledge what you perceive. The most basic mistake people make with respect to self-discipline is a failure to accurately perceive and accept their present situation. If one haven't consciously acknowledged where they stand in terms of level of self-discipline, it's highly unlikely that such fellow is going to improve at all in this area. To access the strength of one's discipline at the moment, Pavlina (2005) insisted that there is need for introspection on the areas of: personal challenges, addictions of any kind (caffeine, nicotine, sugar, etc.), time management, loyalty to promise, leisure, and influences on self and physical appearance. Guided by honest answers to the above critical factors, surely lead the way to actualization of a better self.

Willpower – If one has discovered the self especially with emphasis with strengths and weakness, without a strong willpower and commitment, one cannot actualize self-discipline (Baumeister, & Tierney, 2011). Willpower provides an intensely powerful yet temporary boost. Even though it is usually considered temporary, it is a concentration of force that pushes a person forward towards the desired direction

Hard Work – Whether we are fighting for the self or we are involved in the pursuit of personal or collective goals; none will be actualized without hard work. Per se, hard pushes our limits and makes it possible to arrive at new heights (Seasons, 2016). It is often said that strong challenge is commonly connected with strong results. When you discipline yourself to do what is hard, you gain access to a realm of results that are denied everyone else. Hard work is universal recipe for success.

Industry - In contrast to hard work, being industrious doesn't necessarily mean doing work that's challenging or difficult, it is about a belief which one is willing to put his or her time to actualize it is the longer focus of working hard. Disciplining yourself allows a person to become industrious by squeezing out more value of your time. Time is a constant, but your personal productivity is not.

Persistence - The metaphorical saying that winners never quit and quitters never win is a demonstration of the power of persistence. Persistence is the ability to maintain action regardless of your feelings; it is ability of sustaining motivation for an action or cause regardless of the current outcome (Tierney, 2011). Persistence of action comes from persistence of vision. When you're super-clear about what you want in such a way that your vision doesn't change much, you'll be consistent in your actions. And that consistency of action will produce consistency of results.

Communicating Self-Discipline

Without communicating self-discipline, its effects cannot be harvested for a collective influences aimed at impacting the society. Hence, to communicate self-discipline to others there is need to understand that communication is not just a process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions through speech, signals, writing or behaviour. To communicate basically means to share (instead of giving or receiving ideas) ideas, information, opinions, feelings or experiences between people. Okunna and Omenugha (2014) asserted that it is the ability to establish a common ground with another person or group of persons by encoding messages through the desired channel to be decoded with the right information which catalyzes appropriate feedback. Consequently, to communicate self-discipline, there is need to share it internally in a way that it influence the next person by taking advantage of various communication tools

necessarily to drive the message deeper into the fabrics of the next person. This may come from one or more communication modes such as:

Verbal communication - of saying what is right appropriate and fair. It is noted that the word of mouth is perhaps the most powerful tool in life. Communicating self-discipline through verbal communication is the largest platform because it's applicable to a wide range of situations, be it; formal or informal discussions, public speeches made to micro or macro group of audience. Oral communication either of spoken words used in face to face conversations, speech, telephonic conversation, video, radio, TV which explicitly makes the listener understand without doubt that our moral and ethical convictions, values and our responsiveness to social issues are the motivation which propels us to institute actions for a change. As the climax of personal communications, this form of communication offers an advantage of quick or immediate feedback through words, gestures or body language and gifts the speaker or communicator an opportunity to reinforce his or her positions and assert his or her convictions.

Written communication – Social values can be communicated to written communication in social media. There is value in communicating morality and social values at these times in written forms. The kind of information to share with others should stimulate their inner desire to be better persons.

Non verbal communication - There are other communication mediums other than word of mouth and written mediums; tactile, kinesics and visual forms of communication are also powerful tools that can be used to communicate self-discipline. Without words, one can still communicate one's moral convictions through gestures, body language, posture, tone of voice, use of time and eye contact and the actions of looking while talking and listening, and facial expressions. Considering the current moral decadence, clothing, hairstyle, neatness, use of cosmetics, body language may be most powerful tool through which discipline may be communicated among the youths. In difficult moments, one can use tactile communication e.g. touching or not touching in various ways to convey aspects of emotional and attitudinal states. Touch can convey anger, love, warmth, coldness, hostility etc. This form of communication may be deployed to discourage immodest and unethical situation where one may not be able to talk freely or openly to avoid attracting attention or embarrassing people around or the offender. In

some circumstances, kinesis which is the movement of hand, postures, eye contacts, arm, face and body movements to convey messages may also be deployed. Another non-verbal communication that can be used to convey self-discipline is photography, signs, symbols and designs.

At this point, it is important for us to reflect on critical issues regarding communications in our fight against destructive attitudes to take a stand on our readiness to communicate self-discipline to our peers and the society at large.

- Interpersonal communication: Does my interaction with others (my peers, seniors, parents, teachers, strangers and other categories of people) show that I am a discipline person?
- Dressing: Do I dress in a way that conveys that I am a person to be relied upon, responsible and showing character of purpose?
- Speaking: Does my verbal utterances one that can stand to convince others that there is difference between right and wrong, good or evil? Are those utterances having efficacy to challenge the next person beside me course to change or desire change?
- Pictographs: Do videos and pictures I share on socio-media ones I can be proud of? Are they designed to communicate the true essence of life as a youth especially in forms of hard work, endurance, honesty, self-discipline and strive to be ethically stable and morally upright?
- Writing: Do my posts in social media draw up provocative thoughts in others with debased morality?
- Overall appearance: Does my appearance show that I have no regards for God, decency, contentment, and purposeful life?

Providing answers to the above questions call for intrusive reflections and evaluations on where we are coming from, where we are, where we are headed and the hope for better.

Theoretical Framework

Presentational Self Theory (Goffman, 1959)

Presentational self theory propounded by Goffman (1959) is based on two basic assumptions of the adaptation to the situation and the persons involved in the interaction.

Adaptation - the nature of a social situation determine how the self ought to be rightly presented whereas; Person - the person the individual one is interacting with. According to Goffman

(1959), a self-discipline person should be able to adapt to changing environment in order to communicate self-discipline more effectively to influence the next person. There is also the need to understand that the person of the interaction is of importance especially in tailoring the communication of self-discipline in a way it will be effective on the person. What works for one may not be adequate for another.

The basic linkages provided by Presentational self theory is that how discipline will be impacted to the third party is dependent on the contextual situations such the content, the nature of matter at stake, cultural location and perception and influence of the larger environment. Also in consideration is the nature and personality of the persons in contact in relation to the values which is being impacted. There is a possibility that the interaction of the self in relation to the influences of individual differences and contextual factors may combine to affect the way in which the self and valued is presented and communicated respectively. Therefore, how the self is presented to a large extent influences how value emanating from the self may be communicated, perceived, and interpreted.

Identity Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 2015)

Identity negotiation theory was propounded by Ting-Toomey (2015). The theory consists of the following core assumptions, which explain the antecedent, process, and outcome components of intercultural identity-based communication competence as the core dynamics of people's group membership identities (e.g., cultural and ethnic memberships) and personal identities (e.g., unique attributes). Identity are formed via symbolic communication with others; individuals tend to feel included when their desired group membership identities are positively endorsed (e.g., in positive in-group contact situations) and experience differentiation when their desired group membership identities are stigmatized (e.g., in hostile out-group contact situations); and persons tend to desire interpersonal connection via meaningful close relationships (e.g., in close friendship support situations).

The INT posits that human beings in all cultures desire positive identity affirmation in a variety of communication situations. However, what constitutes the proper way to show identity

affirmation and consideration varies from one cultural context or situation to the next. The INT emphasizes particular identity domains in influencing individuals' everyday interactions is usually based on if meaningful intercultural-interpersonal relationships can create additional emotional security and satisfactory identity negotiation outcomes include the feeling of being understood, respected, and affirmatively valued.

Ting-Toomey's (2015) Identity negotiation theory gifts this study the understanding of the socio-relation with people ultimately create pressures on people which influence the patterns of their communication and how they want to be valued. This is the critical area which affects people orientation to discipline and communicating same. With pressures, people are not likely to conduct themselves in interactions in way to shows off their inner beliefs and convictions especially if these are going to make them unacceptable within the interaction circles, group or society. As such, many times, self-discipline may be difficult to be communicated to others if they communicator do not first realize that he or she owes no one an apology but can use proper and effective communication tools and skills to drive home the values of disciplines.

Implications of the Communicating Self-Discipline

To impact the world around us, self-discipline is the best option especially when our lives particularly communicate same to the world which validates the valence of our convictions without doubt. Communicating self-discipline is infectious tool to fight the current abysmal malaise ravaging our society in general especially considering that without discipline human social interaction is more or less a nomadic jungle.

Communicating self-discipline can trigger both spiral and viral reactions not just from the people around us; but critically as it reinforces and boosts conformity to societal values in ways not only; intentional, directly and overtly but unintentional, indirectly and covertly. The effect is the needed recipe for socio-ethical revolution to save our society without conscience. It is in the later; (unintentional, non-directional and covert effects) that lie the power to spark positive attitudinal changes and conscious but deliberate decisions to uphold the tenets of esteem values even when it is unattractive and unprofitable. The conscious and deliberate decision to do this is typical of having the will power to conduct one's affairs ethically, morally and in a socially responsive manner amidst the massive ocean tide swimming against us whittling down our

efforts. To achieve this is the central focus of promoting self-discipline by every stakeholder who has stood out to put a stop to the growing anomaly.

Conclusion

Communication is not just a process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions through speech, signals, writing or behaviour. To communicate basically means to share ideas, information, opinions, feelings or experiences between people. The ability to establish a common ground with another person or group of persons by encoding messages through the desired channel to be decoded with the right information which catalyzes appropriate feedback is the hallmark of communication. To communicate self-discipline to others, the requisite of deploying various communication paradigms becomes plausible bearing in mind that “*nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively*”. Taking advantage of communication as a tool necessarily helps to drive the message deeper into the fabrics of the youths especially if one understands the link among the self, the environment and the intended social influence (self-discipline) lies with the influence of identity and how one presents the self to others to communicate self-discipline which is intended to positively influence others. Without willpower, hard work and persistence, the current malaise may not be overcome by the youths.

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