



Sociological Implications Of Grave-Vine Information Management In The Tertiary Institutions In Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

Grave-vine information cannot be avoided among employees as they are curious to know what happens in the environment they work. This takes place by words of mouth, being the social channel of communication for conveying thoughts and ideas. Malicious grave-vine information affect work productivity and employee's work behaviours because the employees see themselves as been empowered for passive involvement behaviours in the workplace. It has the capacity to infiltrate and destabilize the official dissemination and utilization of information by ways of misinforming, disinforming and negatively reshape the public orientation about the institutions. In so doing, grave-vine Mills have the potential to penetrate most organizational structures which could lead to organizational change derailment if not addressed accordingly. This is informed by the notion that not knowing something, provokes human instincts to seek the truth among employees by spreading rumours thereby engaging in a habit of carrying out counter productive work behaviours. To achieve the objectives of this study, two hypotheses were formulated based on our objectives. Questionnaires were framed based on Likert Scale Principles of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A) Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Disagreed (D) respectively Z test of mean was used to analyze the hypothesis. The result of indicates that has devastating effect on the employees ability to work. The study concludes with the recommendation that workers should confirm rumors before actions if effectiveness and efficiency is to be achieved.

Keywords: Sociological, implication, grave-vine, management.

INTRODUCTION

Grave-vine Mill has been a controversial and vague subject in the workplace and it is limited to employee's quotidian social conversation. In modern industrial societies, grape-vine information have proliferated, and the social media communication and the internet have played and enticing role in increased grave-vine transmission which produced a negative impression in the organization, Moulin (2013). In the business world, grave-vine information have an adverse impact on employees, in the work productivity and the products and services provided to consumers in the public and private sectors.

Grave-vine information, is a phenomenon that can occur or be promoted due to ineffective regulations, dissemination and utilization of information for social stability, because it is a by-product of information need and access gap. Abdulmanali (2013) opines that it is used to misinform and disinform the public especially for propaganda, political campaign and blackmail among others. Sylvia, Jason and Jamil (2016) suggest that grave-vine is unverified information of uncertainty which is usually by words of mouth. Gossip in the work organization cannot be overemphasized, and

grievances are generated when employees in the civil service prematurely react to a grave-vine. Although, it cannot be completely eliminated, but officials of institutions take prompt actions by supplying the employees the fact supported by empathy rather than projection on the employee. Grave-vines are not mere chance development, they arise from distinct causes and those causes can be controlled, then its effectiveness may not be achieved.

Grave-vine cannot be avoided among the employees as the employees are curious to know what happens in the environment they work. Mohammed (2014) asserts that grave-vine information about coworkers is inadvisable, generally for one thing, your co-worker won't like or trust you. Worse still, at a certain point, a negative grave-vine about a co-worker can get you sued. Grave-vine are pervasive like flying or found everywhere without restriction. It is the oldest form of communication before the advent of formal writing, Timothy and Nwabuto (2013). This takes place by words of mouth, being the social channel of communication for conveying thoughts and ideas. It is believed that grave-vine are capable of transmitting news but can also ruin reputations, set off crises and wars. Obasanjo (2014) says most gravestones have the ability to crawl into most organizational environments, and if rumors are not handled by the company, this lack of action can be interpreted as affirmation by the workers, which can drain work efficiency leading to a reduction in income and eventually harm the reputation of the organizations.

Unfortunately, grave-vine in the workplace are prevalent in most organizations and additionally, rumors relating to organizational change can actually predict where the organization is heading, Aaron and Justin (2011). Workplace grave-vine are a symbolic verbal mechanism reflecting the state of the organizations' climate. If unaddressed, this could lead to counter productivity among staff members. However, researchers have attempted to have a better understanding of grave-vine in the workplace and their potential to derail an organization. Schmidt (2011) suggests that grave-vines are shared attitudes, concerns and anxieties which create mistrust and tension among the organizations' shareholders. Obasanjo (2014) opines that false grave-vine are due to poor communication between management and subordinates and others who desire to seek the truth about inside information relating to the organizational settings/. Closed door meetings spawn more incorrect assumptions than any other reason for grave-vine and moreover, employees are suspicious of seniors.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To determine the causes of grave-vine information among the staffs of tertiary institutions in Rivers state.
- ii. To examine the types of social insecurity the grave-vine information spread in the tertiary institutions.
- iii. To ascertain the extent to which grave-vine information affects the workers' productivity in the tertiary institutions.
- iv. To proffer solutions to the problems of grave-vine information in the tertiary institutions

Hypothesis

This study is built on the following hypothesis:

- i. High school fees, poor administrative management, infrastructural decay etc are not the causes of grave-vine information among staffs of the institutions.
- ii. Retirements, absenteeism and job insecurity are not, the types of social insecurity the grave-vine, information spread in the tertiary institutions.
- iii. Grave-vine information management does not affect workers' productivity in the tertiary institutions.

Related Literature Review

Grave-vine is a specific or topical proposition or a belief that is passed along from person to person by words of mouth without having standards or shred of evidence. Aaron & Justin (2011) suggests that people will attempt to construct an understanding logical interpretation by drawing on their intellectual resources and use it as a form of group collective problem solving, Crana (2014) notes that grave-vines are theoretically a suggestion theory disseminated without official verification of topical information. Aertsen and Gelders (2016) and Fyler (2015) are of the opinion that grave-vines is a method of explaining the occurrences and events of human affairs, and it combines with a set of findings based on four factors, personal anxiety, general anxiety, credulity and topical significance,

which can predict transmission of the grave-vine. Grave-vines are public communications that reflect private hypothesis about how the world works, as well as of exaggerated allegations and circumstantial evidences, Difonzon and Bordia (2006).

Phenomenally, grave-vine has been contextually studied as kind of message and communication which may be true or false, verified or unverified/distorted piece of information (Falade & Ekundayo 2015). It can be affirmed that grave-vine does thrive during social instability as a way of communicating the unfold of events. This is because people value rumours even if they are mostly uncertain about its genuity by they are determined to spread it deliberately or because of the emotions and sentiments attached to the story. Abdulmanali (2013) opines that the spread of grave-vine is a complex socio-psychological process an adequate modeling of this process requires both a correct description of the underlying social networks along which grave-vine spread and a quantitative formulation of various behavioural mechanisms that motivate individuals to participate in the spread of grave-vine (Schmidt 2011).

Jones (2018) asserts that grave-vine information procedure is a kind of emergency communication that endeavoursconcur with many findings of social instability which reports that victims avoid mainstream media and activity adopt informal communication channels. Citizens affected by the Southern California Wildfires in 2013, according to (Schullery 2018 and Oyewo 2017) that many respondents felt that the institutional mainstream media were not providing local information in a timely manner which was desperately needed by residents of the affected areas.

Causes of Grave-vine Information

It was generally observed that the thirst for information occasioned by lack of readily available reliable information from authentic source precipitate grave-vine mongering. Flyer (2015) suggests that the genesis of grave-vine mongering is uncertainly. Humans generate grave-vine as improved news through a collective transaction to cope with their uncertainties of life when the formal communication channel fails to provide them with badly-needed or trustworthy information. Oyewo (2017) opines that non-clarity of information content usually is part of the developmental process of grave-vine through which men strive for understanding and consensus. Abdulmanali 2013 is of the view that grave-vines arise when information is scarce and that information circulates because it has value. In our localities most grave-vines stem from secrets that have been more or less intentionally leaked. And that the conception of grave-vine is also as a result of troubling events or facts.

Moulin (2013) observes that in the course of successive information exchanges, groups tries to reconstruct the puzzle made up of scattered pieces of information gathered here and there. He also observes that the fewer the pieces they have, the greater the roles of the group's unconscious grave-vine play in their interpretation. Also, the more pieces they have, the closer their interpretation is to reality. In another situation, grave-vine can emerge from testimonies individuals give testimonies of events based on transmissions series of transmissions from other persons who witnessed situation tend to add or reduce genuity because of their reasons which could undermine the authenticity of the testimony they give. Similar to distortion of testimony in this line is emotions, because it has been observed that it influences. People feelings and make them to circulate grave-vine information in the society because of interest they have. This was supported by Sunstein(2014) who established that peoples senses are often blurred by their emotional feelings because of affiliations such as ethnic, religion, language and culture. Similarly, designed motive such as propaganda whereby community or a country intentionally disinform or misinform the public in order to achieve intended goals or aim can lead to dissemination of rumour.

Effects of grave-vine Mongering in the Workplace

Depending on their nature, rumours in the workplace can have a wide range of effects, of which most of it are negative. If an unflattering personal grave-vines spread about an employee, she can unjustly face alienation and criticism from peers. If a grave-vine about layoffs spread around the office, employees will likely experience feelings of panic, fear and uncertainly. Abdulmanali (2013) says grave-vines can result in productivity, decreased morale, division among employees, wasted time and heightened anxiety.

Whether the person who is the subject of some unflattering grave-vines or just fed up with hurtful gossips, you might update your resume and start hunting for a new job. The company will lose a

valuable resource person if you succeed at your current role, as you will have to go through the hassle of seeking a new job, recruiting and maybe even relocating. According to Sunstein (2014), a gossip-induced toxic workplace will cause quality workers to *leave*. Management of grave-vines in the workplace

At times, management may choose to ignore grave-vines in the workplace, leading to the spreading or escalation of grave-vine. Studies have suggested that grave-vine prosper when not addressed accordingly (Moulin 2013). Watson (2012) asserts that in a poorly managed organization, they can chip away at morale and fuel anxiety, conflicts and misunderstanding. Most interestingly, rumours have the potential to enhance employee's status, filling gaps in social conversation within an organizational setting. Mohammed (2014) suggests that workplace grave-vine are systematic and can be spread faster than the organization's formal communication channels. According to Labossiere (2018), grapevine is also capable of penetrating even the tightest security because it cuts across organizational lines and deals directly with people in the know organizations should not ignore grave-vines in the workplaces that have the potential to harm its image.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical guide which situates this study is the grave-vine transmission theory by Buckner (2011). Buckner in his theory categorized grave-vine into two patterns, the first is when a grave-vine moves from person to person in a serial sequence, while the second is called the network in which a broader audience of people hears the grave-vine from more than one source. The theory holds that individuals form a groups which become a public audience. As a result, the general audience continues to spread the grave-vine in that case, there is active participation from the audience in spreading the grave-vine.

The theory holds that grave-vines have keen interest in the group, in the end the individuals can interact with more than one person outside the group. Grave-vine may be accurate at each stage of transmission due to cross-checking with the available references to test the truth. In other words Buckner's theory assumes that there is a close group of individuals who have high involvement participation in a grave-vine consequently, the individuals participating in grave-vine activity would generate a good deal of interaction and recirculation, and grave-vines will recirculate, thus, creating a higher level of multiple interactions rather than a single chain reaction of grave-vine transmission. Based on the tenets of this theory, we have accepted it as our theoretical guide for this study.

METHODS

This study was carried out in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt and Rivers State University Nkpolu Port Harcourt all in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The simple random sampling technique was applied to obtain 400 respondents at 200 per university. A Yes/No papers were squeezed in a basket and a group of 4 per department of both academic and non-academic staffs were asked to pick. Those who picked yes formed part of our respondents. This was done until a sample of 400 was gotten at 200 per university. Questionnaires, oral interviews and library documents were the instruments used in this study.

The questionnaire consisted of eleven (11) questions and was built out of the hypotheses. The Likert scale rating was applied to elicit information whereby our respondents were required to score their opinions using the scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), strongly disagreed (SD) and disagreed (D) respectively. Out data were analyzed using Z-test of mean. The questionnaires were distributed to principal officers, secretaries, clerks, messengers and lecturers as well as casual workers in order to justify the grave-vine information management by the workers

On the whole, 3420 copies of the questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This number of the questionnaires which were retrieved were enough to be used for the analyses and perhaps make some generalizations

Hypothesis I

High school fees, poor administrative management infrastructural decay etc are not the causes of grave-vine information among staffs of the tertiary institutions in rivers state.

Description of Items	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total Responses
Item 4	150	130	36	24	340
Item 5	200	100	22	18	340
Item 6	180	140	12	8	340
Total frequency	530	370	70	50	1020
ΣRanks X frequency	2121	1110	140	50	3420

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Formula

$$\frac{\sum \text{ranks X frequency}}{\text{Total Responses (n)}} = \frac{3420}{1020} = 3.35$$

Decision: Accept the hypothesis if the computed value is greater than the critical (table) values, otherwise reject it.

Based on the above analyses, we reject the hypothesis which states that retirements, poor administrative management, terminations etc are not the causes of grave-vine information among staffs of the institutions. This implies that retirements issues, poor administrative management, terminations etc are the causes of grave-vine information among staff of the tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Hypothesis II

Retirement, poor administration and job insecurity are not the types of social insecurity the grave-vine information spread in the tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Description of Items	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total Responses
Item 6	140	160	20	20	340
Item 7	196	120	10	14	340
Item 8	188	124	18	10	340
Total frequency	524	404	48	44	1020
ΣRanks X frequency	2096	1212	96	44	3448

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Formula

$$\frac{\sum \text{ranks X frequency}}{\text{Total Responses (n)}} = \frac{3448}{1020} = 3.35$$

Decision: Accept the hypothesis if the computed value is greater than the critical (table) value, otherwise reject it.

Based on the above analysis we reject the hypothesis which states that retirements, absentiseem and job insecurity etc are not the causes of grave-vine information among staffs of the tertiary institutions in rivers state. This implies that retirements, issues, poor administration and job insecurity in the institutions are the types of social insecurity the grave-vine information spread in the tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis III

Grave-vine information management does not affect workers’ productivity in the tertiary institutions in rivers state.

Description of Items	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total Responses
Item 9	130	150	30	30	340
Item 10	160	140	30	10	340
Item 11	150	150	20	20	340
Total frequency	440	440	80	60	1020
\sum ranks X frequency	1760	1320	160	60	3300

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Formula

$$\frac{\sum \text{ranks X frequency}}{\text{Total Responses (n)}} = \frac{3300}{1020} = 3.2 = 3$$

Decision: Accept the hypothesis of the computed value is greater than the table value, otherwise reject it.

Based on the above analyses, we reject the hypothesis which states that grave-vine information management does not affect workers’ productivity in the tertiary institutions in rivers state. This implies that grave-vine information management affects workers’ productivity in the tertiary institutions in rivers state. The researcher in his own position justifies that grave-vine information management is porous in the tertiary institutions and it has affected the productivity of the workers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher made the following recommendations

- i. Management should regulate the quality of information that disseminates to the public as to defuse tensions.
- ii. Management should have cordial relationship with the staffs because false grave-vines are due to poor communication between management and subordinates
- iii. Management should establish clear policies affecting the staffs to avoid the use of grave-vine to understand the ambiguity and to make meaning of what is the truth.
- iv. Organizations should address grave-vine information in the workplace and dismiss it as a common occurrence rather than paying deaf ears because it can drain productivity, reduce profits and create stress in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

Grave-vine information affects many of the most modern institutions of higher learning and influences everything from political elections, success for companies, leadership styles to people choice of homes and schools. It is the dissemination of information which is presented with the intention of persuading and often as an explanation something which is uncertain. However, grave-vine is related to the dissemination of false information, but such information could also be correct. It can also spread exaggeration, simplification or a message that is mixed with false and true information.

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