

Fame Suppression on Company Growth in Small to Medium Enterprises in the Construction Industry of Zimbabwe, Focusing on Aluminium Companies

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Abstract: The study investigated the impact of fame suppression on company growth in the construction industry's small to medium enterprises. The toxic triangle was used as the theoretical framework in this study to explain how toxic leaders can cause toxic environment as well as influence employee. The study used the quantitative approach, with a sample size of 160 drawn from the three Aluminium companies under study. Questionnaires were sent to SMEs employees and management of three Aluminium companies in Harare. A correlation and regression analysis was carried out to find the relationship between the variables. The research found out that fame suppression has an impact on company growth, although there are other factors that affect organisational growth like slow adoption to technology. The study recommended the reduction of fame suppression through the adoption of strategies like employee involvement and participation in decision making as well as encouraging both management and employee training. The research further recommends that there should be further studies to explore in other towns where other fundamentals may be different and in other sectors too.

Key words: aluminium companies, company growth, construction industry, fame suppression, Small to Medium Enterprises, toxic leaders

I. INTRODUCTION

Fame suppression is a disease that needs to be diagnosed quickly and treated as an immergence otherwise it kills the growth of organisations and Small to Medium Enterprises in particular. The dramatic shrinking of the formal sector as a result of most companies closing and most Zimbabweans being retrenched gave birth to the growth and supremacy of the informal business in the country, (Nyapfumbi, 2017). This informal trading business opened a means of survival to many Zimbabwean citizens, (Gangata, 2013). Small to Medium Enterprises became the major basis of employment in the country. SEDCO, which is the Small Enterprises Development Corporation, defined an SME as a company with a total number of one hundred employees and a yearly income of eight hundred and thirty dollars (US 830, 000). Kazunga, 2017) avers that an estimated 18 500 SMEs exist in the country and have formalised their operations. This study investigated how fame suppression impacts the growth of SMEs in the Zimbabwean construction industry focusing on the Aluminium companies.

1.1 Background to the study

The concept of fame suppression is fairly new to the academic arena though the words fame and suppression existed before but were not intertwined. Fame suppression was first coined by Mutongi and Mazhawidza (2019). The joining together of these two words fame and suppression has inspired the writers of this paper to write on fame suppression on company growth. Mutongi and Mazhawiza (2019) defined fame as the state of being known or recognised by many people because of your achievements, skills, talent, knowledge, capabilities and wisdom. Suppression as alluded by the two writers is the action of subduing something such as activity or publication, it involves hindering someone from achieving something. The writers are therefore, going to link fame suppression with the likes of toxic leaders and dysfunctional leaders as all these have the same characteristics.

Stark (2013), described toxicity (suppression) as a pain inflicted into individuals and takes away their confidence and self-worth and slowly disconnecting the employees from their work they will be committed to. Suppression in the workplace is perceived by employees, to come from toxic leaders (suppressors) within the organisation and therefore rendering it as a suppressed organisation. Apellbum (2017), is of the view that, one major characteristic of fame suppression is crafting or creating and safeguarding a toxic work environment. A fame suppressor may best be pronounced as someone who is motivated by egotism, someone who is not concerned about others and affects the organisational environment negatively, (Seeger et al., and 2015). Fame suppressors enjoy fighting and controlling rather than inspiring others. Their main focus is short-term achievements and accomplishments and they are destructive leaders, they celebrate when they tear others down. Reed (2014) is of the opinion that, the best approach to understand whether someone is toxic or not, is to scrutinise the increasing consequence of demotivational behaviour on employee or subordinate's confidence and working environment over time.

Mutongi and Mazhawiza (2019), postulate that fame suppressors do not want to involve others in their decision making and power is concentrated on one person. Those in power control every aspect of the business, including being involved in the company's recruitment processes. Fame suppressors due to their behaviours of making their own

decisions, have been highly involved in corrupt issues like nepotism. The Industrial Psychology Consultants Zimbabwe (2017), have reported that for the past years, there has been reports on high occurrence of nepotism in most companies in the country. The continuous occurrence of nepotism affects the selection process during placements in companies as well as how people are promoted into jobs. Those with relatives and close connections within the companies getting chances well ahead of other deserving candidates.

This study focused on three Aluminium companies and the reason for choosing these companies is because they are the major players in producing aluminium products as well as selling of aluminium profiles, (Building and Construction brief Zimbabwe report of 2018). All companies that have operations in manufacturing or provision of construction material or services are categorised in the construction industry in Zimbabwe. Such companies include those that are in cement manufacturing, those that produces paints, door and window frames, reinforcement of steel, assembled structures, contractors in building and building materials, roofing material providers, architecture, tiles, aluminium profiles, architecture and engineers are all classified under services providers in our building and construction industry, (Building and Construction Brief, 2016).

Our own construction industry is currently in a risky position, with business owners and their employees living in fear and panic trying to come to terms with underlying performance, profitability, growth and productivity and sustainability challenges, (Mhlanga, 2017, financial Gazette). Mhlanga (2017), is of the view that the minimum barriers to entry in the industry as a result of non-existence of industry regulations, has created a drenched market place heavy too much competition. Profit margins are dropping drastically as well as compelling reinvestment in latest technology and best business practices. These events have greatly affected most companies in the construction and building industry, as well as affecting its GDP percentage growth and contribution to the economy. The industry's GDP contribution was higher in 2017, but began to fall in the year 2018 from 5% to 4.6% and a further fall in 2019 to 4%, (Zimstats, 2019 Reports).

Mangwendedza (2019), aired out that Iron and Steel dominated the construction industry back then with the names ZISCO steel dominating the Zimbabwean markets. However, Aluminium came into play and taken over the iron and steel companies, with most people now preferring aluminium products. The major player in the aluminium business back then was Alumin Industries, (www.alminindustries.org). Several other small to medium size aluminium companies later came into the picture, (Building and Construction Brief report, 2018). The Sunday Mail 06 Jan 2017 reports that there are several aluminium companies in the country, but however lacks variety as they are all producing the same products which are mainly the aluminium doors, windows, shop fronts, office partitioning and suspended ceilings. The three selected companies are producing these same products. Despite being

the major players in the aluminium business they have not grown to the extent of having their own factories to manufacture aluminium, but rather have stocks of aluminium profiles in their ware houses imported from outside the country, (Mhlanga 2017).

Table 1.1: Nepotism Prevalence rates by Sector

Industry	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Construction	2.20%	2.30%	2.50%	3.10%	3.3%

Source: Industrial Psychology Consultants Zimbabwe Nepotism Prevalence in the Workplace Report (2016-2020)

Fame suppression fight prosperity and it is self-centred and selfish, (Appelbum, 2017). Several court cases have been filed against several companies in the construction industry for constructive dismissal where employees claim their leaders where making the working environment intolerable, (NEC Construction 2018 report). The most common case is between NEC Construction Vs Zimbabwe Nantong International (Pvt) Ltd a construction company of 2019, where employees logged a complaint against the employer, (Zimlli.org). Nyoni (2017), in his findings concluded that highly skilled personnel do not want to associate themselves with toxic environment created by fame suppressors. The construction industry's employment levels are gradually decreasing, according to the Zimstats labour force 2019 report, a total of only 5.8 percent was recorded as the only employed people in 2018. A further decline was recorded in 2019, with a fall of 2.2% leaving the current percentage distribution of employed population to 3.6%, (Zimstats, 2019 labour force and child labour survey report).

Given the issue of fame suppression literature has also observed that fame is also subdued in the use of digital technologies. Most companies are failing to acknowledge the importance of digital technology as it is quickly changing industries all over the world and in all sectors. A report by the *Herald of 09 September (2019)*, stated that our very own building and construction industry is slowly adopting the new work practices as well as innovations, and these have a direct impact on performance and growth. It is high time engineering, architecture and construction companies in Zimbabwe start to buy into the idea of embracing new technologies for development and move away from the old systems and ways of doing business and try to make use of processes that are more effective at saving cost and improving quality, (Nheta, 2019).

1.2 Research objective

To determine the extent of fame suppression on company growth in Small to Medium Enterprises in the construction industry of Zimbabwe, focusing on aluminium companies.

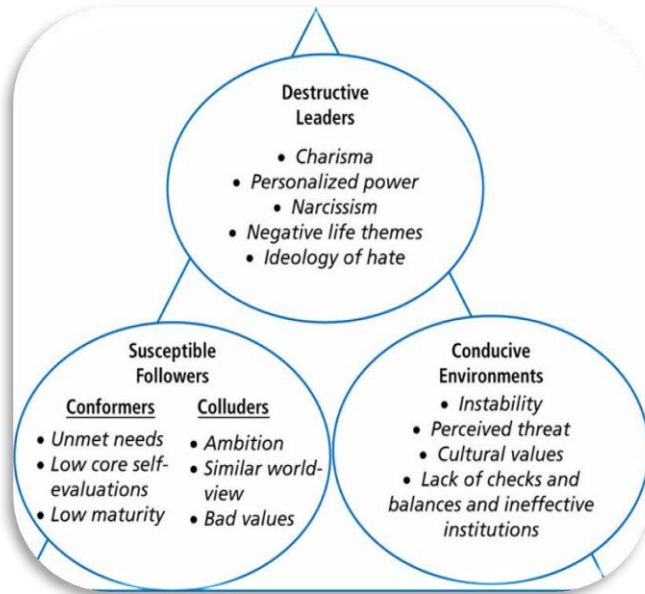
II. WHAT IS FAME SUPPRESSION?

Fame suppression is taking part in hindering someone's progress, prominence and recognition. The term fame suppression was coined by Mutongi and Mazhawidza (2019).

Fame can be suppressed in many ways which include character assassination, never seeing good in others but thinking that you are the only one who can do it, pulling others down by negative comments, feeling threatened by someone's abilities and not giving others chances to showcase their talent, skills, experiences, competence and knowledge. Fame suppression can also be seen in not acknowledging the original owner of the idea.

2.1 Toxic triangle theory

Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007), came up with the toxic circle model after an analysis of the characteristics and behaviours of toxic and destructive leaders.



Source: Padilla et al. (2007)

Padilla et al (2007) postulated that this toxic triangle consists of three elements which are the leaders that are toxic, the environment which was intoxicated and the toxic followers. (Fraher, 2016, Leonard, 2014), supported the findings of Padilla et al (2007) when they noted in their researches that every factor in the triangle influence or promotes toxicity in all the three aspects. When leaders show their toxic behaviours, the result could be seen in employees' change in behaviours showing they are not happy. This could eventually lead to toxic working environment where both the employees and the leaders are hopeless, and less productive (Fraher, 2016). Toxic working environments may also neutralise leaders with positive minds and later change their behaviours to becoming toxic as well due to the exposure to a toxic working environment, (Fraher, 2016). Toxic leaders pollute the environment to become a toxic one.

2.2 Toxic Leaders in the toxic triangle

When an organisation is headed by a toxic leader(s), it is more worrisome (Atmadja, 2019). It is worrisome because of the leader's responsibility and role to model desired or expected behaviours of their subordinates and building the culture the

organisation wants to adopt as their organisational culture (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2013). Padilla et al (2007) are of the opinion that, subordinates take their gestures from leaders and if a leader portrays toxic behaviour the subordinates are likely to portray the same. Baronce (2015) supported the view of Padilla et al (2007) when he alluded that if leaders act in an unethically manner or engage in unethical behaviours in their day to day activities, like showing favouritism to some employees who will be bullying others, those closely working with such leaders will begin to portray similar behaviours. Green (2014) avers in his study that leaders may become toxic when they are threatened by successful subordinates and are ashamed of their incompetence, or not qualified for their positions job or leadership role. In his opinion Fischbacher-Smith (2015), alludes that if a leader is incompetent, employees may choose not to respect him/her, thus underrating both the leader and the organisational structure.

2.3 The extent to which fame suppression affect organisational growth.

Organisational politics, nepotism and lack of trust among people in the organisation are the characteristics of toxicity as expressed by, (Erickson, Shaw, Murray and Branch 2015). The expression of such behaviours is directed to the accomplishment of selfishness among the leaders rather than goals that lead to the achieving of long term goals, profitability and sustainability of the organisation, (Erickson et al, 2015). Ronnie (2017) opines that, toxic leadership is associated with a number of similar traits: as expressed by other scholars, and in his research he mentioned reluctance to take feedback, is the major trait of toxic leadership, lying or inconsistency to cover bad behaviours, autocracy, manipulation and bullying. In his study on effects of toxic behaviours on organisational growth, he concluded that when toxic leaders are given the chance to run wild for long, they can destroy or influence organisational structures, systems and values and bring down the entire organisation. Veldsman (2016), avers in his study on how toxic leaders destroy organisational growth that, toxic leaders are very exploitive, they are destructive, they devalue and demean work experiences, therefore they are the ones that purposely destroy and tarnish the organisations' reputation.

Boddy (2015) assets that workplace results with a toxic leader in an influential position included staff withdraw and oppression. Staff withdrawal in most cases lead to lower productivity, creativity and innovation in organisations also affecting the organisation's turnover and competitiveness. Torres and Taknint, 2015; Zhang et al, 2014, are in agreement with Boddy (2015) when they concluded in their findings that toxic work environment and toxic leaders usually report unproductivity, minor profits, and ruin their organisational public reputations. These behaviours create low morale, due to stress or other factors and this will in the end result in hostile relations among employer and employees as well as lower productivity, (Brown Crossley and Robinson, 2014, Cotton, 2016; Hadadian and Zarei, 2016). Leet (2011), in his

research on the impact toxic and severe dysfunctional leadership has on the efficiency of an organisation, he came up with a conclusion that the increase in cases of corporate failures is as a result of toxic behaviours by those on influential positions. Leet (2011) postulates that, when organisations allow chaos and misunderstandings to prevail in the organisation, the levels of employee morale as well as productivity are likely to fall. The fall in productivity and employee morale, have a great impact on organisational profitability, sustainability and potential survival of the organisation.

Yang (2010) avers that leadership behaviour has been proved as a very important factor that has a great influence on creativity and innovation and organisational performance. She is of the opinion that it is of supreme significance to recognise the effect of leadership styles on firm production levels in SMEs as they are confronted with several trials which include among others access to finance, as supported by (Abor and Quartey, 2010) as well absence of managerial skills and corruption. Olawale and Garwe, (2010) supports the view of Yang when they said in their study that crime and corruption caused by leadership styles also contribute to firm performance, failures and growth. (Abor and Quartey, 2010 and Okyere, 2013) are in support that leaders have essential roles in organisational expansion and evolution, when he stated in his study that when leaders fail to provide equipment and technology in their firms, the firm's performance and innovation is greatly affected. Their study was different from this study in that they looked at other factors that can limit growth of SMEs which can be driven by leaders and these are provision of equipment and technology. In their conclusion they stated that these challenges are limiting factors to SMEs growth and survival.

Uchenwamgbe, (2013) is of the view that the owner or the manager is a vital person in the small to medium enterprises business context because he or she has to make key decisions on day-to-day basis that can affect the growth and survival of the business. In doing so, the leadership style adopted has a telling effect on the direction of the business. Lawal et al. (2015) in their study concluded that participating leadership styles adopted by most SMEs are toxic and autocratic in style, and these have affected most SMEs growth, profitability and success. Similarly, Mgeni (2015) investigated leadership style by SMEs, and reported that overwhelming majority of the respondents used autocratic leadership style. The study concluded that there was an important solid positive association between autocratic leadership style and business performance. Uchenwamgbe (2013) alleges that small business leaders tend to maximise control and avoid delegation of authority and responsibility, preferring instead to directly carry out or to supervise most of the daily operations of their organisations themselves.

Franco and Matos (2013) investigated leadership styles in SMEs and reported that toxic leadership and dysfunctional leadership styles were the prevailing approaches. He

concluded that the behaviours of these leaders are essential in the organisational growth and success, as they directly influence the behaviour of subordinates. Abor and Quartely (2010), avers that leadership styles are also very important in the performance of the organisations as they drive and facilitate the making of policies, drive the vision and mission of the organisation. Bad leadership according to them have contributed to the failure of many small to medium enterprises. (Aryee et al., 2007) stated that whenever someone who is in an influential position creates an unfriendly environment, it fallout in negative results that can trickle down to every level in the organisation and create a stressful environment which can undesirably affect the subordinate's personal and work life. Stress caused by toxic behaviours in most instances cost organisations many billions of dollars in disability claims and lost productivity.

Appelbaum (2015) opine that an organisation with many toxic people is likely to fail than an organisation that has a less number of toxins. He is of the opinion that the other cause toxic organisations perform badly is the unsupported business environment shaped by toxic supervision. Toxic circles promote bad feelings among employees like low morale, depression, poor communication, despair and unnecessary anger resulting in poor outcomes, increased turnover and organisational growth, (Brett and Stroh, 2013). Dyck and Roithmayr (2011) alluded that toxic leaders have low people management practices and they are usually outperformed by those organisations with high people management practices.

Jerry and Morris (2019), reiterates that business environment oppression often has consequences to both the organisation and employee performance that is in direct relation to the toxic event. Becker, Catanio and Bailey (2014) support the idea of Jerry and Morris when they stated in their research that harassment has extensive results on organisational costs such as reduced output leading to low return on investments, low productivity and non-growth. It is not always that toxic behaviours or leadership affect negatively the organisational performance leading to poor productivity and non-growth. Obiwuru et al. (2011) did a survey study on the effects of leadership style on organisational performance in small-scale enterprises. They reported that toxic leadership style had significant positive effect on organisational performance as employees fear for their jobs due to the behaviours of their leaders. Several scholars discussed above are in agreement that toxic leaders affect organisations either positively or negatively, and most of them did mention that toxic leaders affect organisational growth and performance. However, they left a gap on the extent to which these toxic leaders affect organisational growth, and this has caused the researcher to embark on this study to look for the impact of fame suppression on company growth and mainly trying to find out the actual percentage of fame suppression to company growth as compared to other factors.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research study employed the quantitative research approach. The research philosophy employed by this research was positivism, a deductive approach was used and the research design was descriptive survey. A sample size of 160 was drawn for this research and a self-administered questionnaire was used as research instruments. The results were presented in a quantitative analysis of data through correlation and regression techniques.

IV. FINDINGS

A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed and 107 were returned however, 10 were discarded. The response rate from the study was 67%. Results from the Spearman’s correlation coefficient between fame suppression and company growth showed a negative figure of -0.069 meaning that fame suppression has a negative effect on SMEs growth although the relationship is not so strong.

4.1 Testing of hypothesis for fame suppression and company growth

The research hypothesis was tested as stated below:

H0: There is no relationship between fame suppression and company growth in aluminium fabricating SMEs industry in Zimbabwe.

H1: There is a relationship between fame suppression and company growth in aluminium fabricating SMEs industry in Zimbabwe.

Responses of the extent that fame suppression affect growth in SMEs

Obstacles	Very large extent	Large extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	Not at all
Fame suppressors are causing the slow adoption of technology	16 (17%)	14 (14%)	31 (32%)	14 (14%)	22 (23%)
Fame suppressors are not encouraging employee training.	26 (27%)	20 (21%)	16 (16%)	18 (19%)	17 (18%)
Fame suppressors are affecting Organisational culture.	24 (25%)	19 (20%)	18 (19%)	14 (14%)	22 (23%)
Fame suppressors are promoting nepotism	23 (24%)	23 (24%)	23 (24%)	14 (14%)	14 (14%)
Fame suppressors are causing skilled labour shortages	20 (21%)	14 (14%)	26 (27%)	19 (20%)	18 (19%)
Fame suppressors are influencing organisational Politics	23 (24%)	19 (20%)	16 (16%)	23 (24%)	16 (16%)

The table above summarises the frequency with which each obstacle category mentioned to assess whether fame suppression in a company affects the company growth based on the 5-Likert scale from the very large extent to not at all. Based on the responses from the questionnaire a large number of respondents supported that fame suppressors are not encouraging employee training in their organisations as most of them agreed that employee training is not being supported to a very large extent. The promotion of nepotism by fame suppressors in the Aluminium companies was also agreed to be evident by respondents as a total of 85% agreed that nepotism is being practiced by fame suppressors in their organisations. Nepotism was supported to having effects on employees by Palanski et al (2014) when they highlighted that employees indicated that supervisors’ abusive behaviours and nepotism cause them to be less satisfied and motivated with the business environment, marking the intensions of higher turnover.

Other factors like fame suppression and adoption of technology and fame suppression and organisational culture were said not to be affecting the organisations at all by respondents These findings therefore mean that employee training and nepotism are the most evident in the Aluminium companies although the other factors are present but not having much impact.

4.2 Fame Suppression versus Firm Growth

Spearman’s Correlation coefficient

		Presence	Fame Suppression company growth
Spearman's rho	Presence	1.000	-.069
	Correlation Coefficient		.500
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	97	97
Fame Suppression company growth	Presence	-.069	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient		.500
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	97	97

The table above shows the results of the Spearman’s correlation coefficient between fame suppression and company growth. Supporting the descriptive statistics and analysis, the Spearman's rho to measure fame suppression on firm growth of -0.069 means that fame suppression has a negative effect on SMEs growth. However, the relationship is not so strong as it is very small.

4.3 Regression Analysis

Testing of hypothesis for fame suppression and company growth

The research hypothesis was tested as stated below:

H0: There is no relationship between fame suppression and company growth in aluminium fabricating SMEs industry in Zimbabwe.

H1: There is a relationship between fame suppression and company growth in aluminium fabricating SMEs industry in Zimbabwe.

To test this hypothesis a regression and correlation analysis was carried out.

Fame suppression and company growth regression and correlation analysis.

The test was on fame suppression and company growth in aluminium fabricating SMEs industry in Zimbabwe. The hypothesis under test is that, as the organisations leadership suppress their subordinates, it results in slow growth of the company sales and profitability. Fame suppression formed the independent variable (X) and data is generated from the responses made by questionnaire respondents in binary form with 1 representing presence of fame suppression and 0 absence of fame suppression in an organisation while sales growth is presented by the (Y) dependent variable as shown in table below.

Sales growth and fame suppression analysis.

Year	Fame suppression	Sales growth (%)
2015	0	12.1
2016	1	10
2017	0	19
2018	1	6
2019	0	7.8
2020	0	8.3

Source: CIFOZ Financial Reports (2015-2020)

Linear regression showing the relationship between Fame suppression and company growth

Linear equation describing the relationships among variables:

$$Y = a + bx$$

$$b = \frac{(n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y)}{(n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)}$$

$$a = \frac{(\sum y - b \sum x)}{n}$$

Test Y Results $Y = 0.08 - 0.075X$ linear relationship

Interpretation: The intercept term with a value of 0.08 and coefficient of -0.075 indicates that fame suppression reduces the growth of the company by 7.5%.

Pearson correlation analysis

Pearson's Correlation coefficient for increase in fame suppression.

Pearson's Correlation coefficient (rp) showing strength of the relationship between fame suppression and company growth:

$$rp = \frac{(n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y)}{\sqrt{[(n\sum^2 - (\sum x)^2)X(n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)]}}$$

rp = -0.838

Interpretation: Therefore, using Pearson correlation this shows that there exists a strong negative linear relationship between fame suppression and company growth. This means that increase in fame suppression leads to decrease in growth of company.

4.7.4.2 Coefficient of determination for increase in fame suppression on growth and Interpretation

$$rp^2 = -0.838^2 * 100\%$$

$$rp^2 = 0.702244\%$$

Interpretation: 70.2244% of the differences in growth of the company were caused by fame suppression and the 29.7866% of the differences in company growth were caused by other factors not looked by this study.

Therefore: Discard null hypothesis that states that there is no relationship between fame suppression and company growth. Accept another hypothesis that mentioned that there is a relationship between fame suppression and company growth. There is a strong negative linear relationship between fame suppression and company growth of -0.838. Increase in the fame suppression led to 70.22% differences in growth while 29.78% of the differences growth was due to some other external factors.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Fame suppression if not attended to will result in suppressed nations, organisations and individuals. Mutongi and Mazhawidza (2019) shows ways of dealing with fame suppression to allow fame explosion.

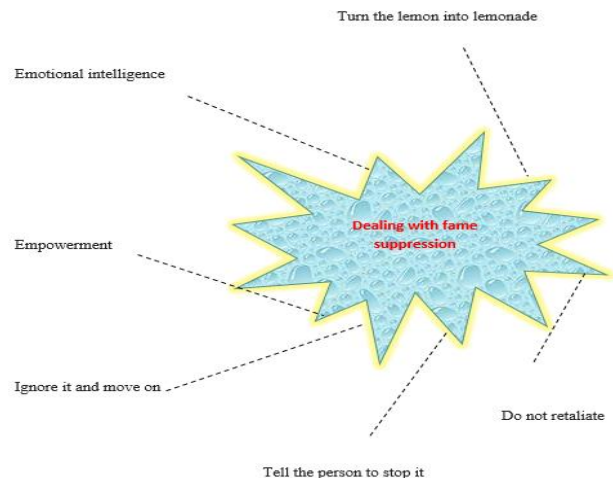


Figure 1: Fame explosion

There is need for walking besides each other, rather than walking in front of each other or behind each other. Walking besides each other produces synergy, connection, friendship and teamwork. It results in complementing each other and compensating each other's weaknesses. The results from the study suppression. There is need to reduce fame suppression through the adoption of strategies like employee involvement and participation in decision making as well as encouraging both management and employee training. This has the most positive significant influence on the growth of SMEs. Companies need to also look at other factors that can reduce growth besides reducing fame

5.1 Further research areas

Further studies can explore on more strategies that the SMEs can use to improve to eliminate fame suppression. This research was geographically limited to Harare so further studies can explore in other towns where other fundamentals may be different, in other sectors too. Further research again may build a model that includes other external factors like PESTLEG (political, economic, social, technological, legal, ecological and global factors that affect company growth, innovation and job satisfaction. The model can also be extended to large companies for further research and potential extension of the debate.

5.2 Conclusion

There is a solid negative direct relationship between fame suppression and company growth of -0.838. Increase in the fame suppression led to 70.22% differences in growth while 29.78% of the differences growth was due to some other external factors. If fame suppression is not attended to, it leads to suppressed organisations hence affect organisational learning. It results to a learning disability hence hindering the learning organisation. Organisations need to be aware of the concept of fame suppression on company growth so that measure can be taken in dealing with it.

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