

Full Length Research Paper

The relationship among survivor qualities – attitude, commitment and motivation – after downsizing

Crispen Chipunza^{1*} and David. M. Berry²

¹Department of Industrial Psychology, University of Fort Hare, Alice, South Africa. ²School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resources Management, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa.

Accepted 10 March, 2011

The psychological well-being of employees who survive organizational downsizing and restructuring remains a contemporary theme in the work environment. This situation has a substantial influence on organizational success. This study examined the relationship among survivor attributes (attitude, commitment and motivation) after downsizing in selected manufacturing organizations. To have a better understanding of the relationship between survivor attributes after downsizing, a total of one hundred and fifty survivors (n = 150) who had experienced downsizing participated in the study. Four null hypotheses, investigating the levels and relationships among the attributes were tested by means of specific statistical methods, such as measures of central tendency and correlation analysis. The results showed that survivors had high levels of motivation and moderate to satisfactory levels of attitude and motivation. A significant relationship was observed between survivor motivation and commitment. Specific recommendations are provided to ensure improved survivor quality after downsizing.

Key words: Survivor quality, downsizing, attitude, commitment, motivation.

INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest challenges facing organisations today is how to deal with the current business challenges. These challenges range from increased oil prices, political instability, HIV/AIDS and economic recession and their impact on productivity. Melaine (2006) asserts that developing the adaptive ability of a learning organisation within a changing environment is a key challenge to productivity.

Globally, organisations that do not respond to the aforementioned business challenges through engaging in strategies intended to reduce expenses, enhance performance, and maximise productivity do so at their own peril because their survival and viability in the current competitive environment will be compromised. To remain competitive, most organisations are changing the way they are doing business (Taylor, 2008). They are adopting and implementing cost saving strategies in order to prevent the erosion of their productivity baseline.

The target of cost reduction measures invariably is to reduce expenditure on manpower. Therefore, workforce-related expenses are usually the target of early investigations by many organisations on causes directly related to productivity erosion. Because there is pressure on today's managers to account for all the expenses and identify their sources, the strategy adopted by organisations as part of their response to the business challenges they are facing is downsizing through workforce reduction. The result is more work with less staff.

While it has become a common practice for organisations operating in the current global economy characterised by recession and political instability to downsize in order to remain competitive, a grave problem of survivor quality arises. Survivor quality according to Vinten and Lane (2002) is characterised as the worker's, attitude, commitment and motivation in the new work situation after downsizing. As previously indicated, workers who remain after downsizing are likely to be affected in terms of survivor quality. Survivor quality is viewed as a critical component in guaranteeing increased

*Corresponding author. E-mail: CChipunza@ufh.ac.za

productivity and long-term growth and productivity after downsizing (Littler, Wiesner and Dunford, 2003). Survivor quality is also seen to account for the organisation's credibility, and bottom line impact (Vinten and Lane, 2002). The literature argues that often management overlooks the psychological effect of downsizing in terms of survivor quality. Vinten and Lane (2002) point out that downsizing leaves the survivors frustrated, anxious, resistant and with the "wait and see" attitude, a scenario also known as 'survivor syndrome' (Kusum, 2004). Good (2005) also notes that survivors are the greater losers when compared to those who have been terminated, because they have to endure disillusionment, frustration and generally have a perception of insecurity.

There is no doubt that organisations need to continually evolve as they adapt to new and often challenging environmental changes. Planning for downsizing is critical in order to take into account factors that affect survivor quality. Frydenberg and Lewis (2002) suggest that the quality of survivors in terms of attitudes towards the new work situation, commitment towards the organisation and motivation to carry out the new tasks often undergo change as downsizing begins or after it ends. Such changes can cause heightened stress levels which in turn affect job performance and consequently productivity. Research (e. g., Noronha and D'Cruz, 2005) shows that in the new environment created after downsizing, an organisation's success depends on the well being of the survivors in terms of their attitudes, commitment and enthusiasm to work. Therefore, an understanding of the relationship between survivor quality factors is an essential step in getting closer to dealing with survivor qualities after downsizing. Knowledge of survivor quality aspects will enable Human Resources (HR) practitioners design methods to involve survivors in the decision-making process, improve worker conditions, and initiate survivor re-training focused on the new job demands. This will result in improved survivor morale, commitment and motivation. The relationship of aspects of survivor quality will also help organisations to be proactive by focusing inwards at their departments and outwards at their customers in order to effectively reorganise and enhance the efficiency of their delivery systems without jeopardising worker quality.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The relationship among attitudes, the levels of motivation and commitment among survivors is not clearly understood after downsizing. To ensure improved efficiency, effectiveness, competitiveness and productivity, the relationship among survivor qualities need to be studied and understood. Ryan (1989) stresses that as many organisations downsize, survivors' attitudes, commitment and motivation towards the new working environment become important elements of productivity. Therefore,

benefits of downsizing will continue to be at stake if planners continue to ignore the factors influencing survivor quality. Consequences of neglecting the interplay of survivor quality factors may be poor productivity, negative attitudes towards work, poor job satisfaction, and lack of organizational commitment among survivors.

Researchers (Applebaum, Patton and Shapiro, 2003; Fisher and White, 2000; Iverson and Pullman, 2000) have documented extensively on downsizing, discussing issues like job security, organisational commitment, and other aspects as single concepts without broadening their investigations towards the relationship of these factors, especially as it relates to survivor quality. Interest has been on change management and organisational effectiveness (Willcoxson, 2006). Nonetheless, researchers are credited for pointing out the importance of survivor quality and further, discussing the effects of downsizing on survivors, such as job security, mental and physical health and organizational productivity, but fall short of exploring the relationship of many of these variables as they relate to the survivors after downsizing, especially in contexts that are unstable, economically. This study investigated the relationship among perceived attitude, work commitment, and motivation among survivors of downsizing in an unstable economic environment. The investigation was guided by the following questions: What attitudes, commitment and motivation do survivors have after downsizing? Is there a relationship among these survivor quality factors?

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship among attitude, commitment, and motivation among survivors of downsizing. To help achieve this main objective, the following specific objectives were identified:

- i) To explore the concepts of downsizing and survivor quality.
- ii) To determine the attitude, commitment and motivation of survivors after downsizing.
- iii) To determine whether a correlation exists among attitude, commitment and motivation after downsizing.
- iv) To formulate recommendations for downsizing planners in terms of survivor quality, provide a foundation for academic training and make recommendations for further research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Organisations largely depend on committed and dedicated employees. An understanding of factors that influence survivor quality after downsizing is grounded in theories that explain the reactions of employees to organisational downsizing. Such theories include the

organisational justice theory (Greenberg, 1987), and the attribution theory (Weiner, 1995). Organisational justice is defined as employees' perception of the fairness with which they have been treated by an organisation (Campbell and Finch, 2004). The theory focuses on perceptions of fairness in organisations, by categorising employees' views and feelings about their treatment and that of others within an organisation (Saunders and Thornhill, 2003). Three types of organisation justice theory have been identified in literature. Perceptions about outcomes of decisions taken from the basis of distributive justice (Homans, 1961) cited in Campbell and Finch (2004). Perceptions about the process used to arrive at decisions to downsize form the basis of procedural justice (Cropanzano and Greenberg, 2001) while perceptions about the quality of the interpersonal treatment that an individual receives during the enactment of organisational procedures form the basis of interactional justice (Campbell and Finch, 2004).

Within the context of downsizing, distributive justice is concerned with perceptions of fairness by survivors arising from organisational allocations of resources to victims and the outcomes thereof. Perceptions of unfairness among survivors are more likely to lead to positive inequity, where survivors perceive they had a better claim to allocations leading to feelings of guilt and decreased motivation. In this way, an outcome may be favourable but may not facilitate fairness, trust or commitment owing to perceptions of the lack of integrity in the relation process (Bews and Uys, 2002). Alternatively, perceptions of unfairness may lead to negative inequity, where survivors feel that they have a greater claim to an outcome compared with the person receiving it, leading to feelings of anger, and possibly less effort in work (Saunders and Thornhill, 2003). Procedural justice would be concerned with, for example, survivors' feeling with regards to whether supervisors or managers conducted downsizing in a fair manner. Positive views of the procedures are linked to higher levels of trust in the organisation and the supervisors. Justification of downsizing and the use of empathetic communication (interactional justice) with both victims and survivors are likely to produce perceptions of fairness. Thus, survivors are more likely to accept decisions, even unfavourable ones, when given an adequate and genuine reason for them (Saunders and Thornhill, 2003). This assumption points to the role effective communication may play in engendering the reactions and subsequent behaviours of survivors in the new organisational setting.

Weiner's (1985, 1986) cited in Hareli and Tzafrir (2006) attribution theory provides another framework for analysing potential positive and negative emotional, and consequently, behavioural reactions of employees who survive organisational downsizing. Attribution theory focuses on causal attributions – subjective thoughts about the causes of a given outcome and their link to affective and behavioural reactions. Downsizing involves

major changes for the individual and the organisation as a whole. Such a situation is likely to lead to emotional reactions on the part of the individuals at the nexus of the event (Mossholder, Setton, Armenakis, and Harris, 2000). Emotions arise from the way a person appraises a given situation. One type of appraisal known to contribute to an emotional reaction and, which may play an important role in the context of downsizing is attribution information, that is, information concerning the reasons underlying the given outcomes.

In the context of downsizing, attribution information mainly involves the reason why an employee was retained in the organisation or was dismissed. This information is likely to be spontaneously generated by the employees because significant outcomes, such as fear, insecurity, guilt, tend to elicit causal thinking. The likelihood for causal thinking increases when the situation is unexpected, as is the case with downsizing, and the chances for attribution thoughts in the context of downsizing also increases (Brockner, DeWitt, Grover and Reed, 1990). In addition, rumors related to downsizing and the formal information provided by a manager may also include information concerning the reasons for the decision. Hareli and Weiner (2002) argue that this attribution information is known to be an antecedent of different emotional reactions and behaviours on the part of the person who is considering the information. The specific emotion elicited by such attributions is partially a function of the nature of the causal information contained in the attribution. For example, survival attributed to mere luck is likely to elicit fear or anxiety resulting from the perceptions of the probability of being laid off in a possible future wave of downsizing. Survivors embroiled in such fear are not able to perform effectively. They are likely to stay demotivated and less committed in the post-downsizing phase.

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The concept of downsizing

According to Noer (2001), downsizing is defined as a deliberate organisational decision to reduce the workforce in order to increase organisational performance. The decision to downsize can be triggered by economic decline (Budros, 2002), mergers and acquisitions (Appelbaum, Everard and Hung, 1999) or market regulations (Michael, 1997), among others. Other euphemisms used to refer to downsizing are retrenchment and/or layoffs. Sandringham (2000) points out that there are various strategies used in downsizing, namely workforce reduction, work redesign, and systemic strategies. Workforce reduction employs tactics such as early retirement, transfers and out-placement, buy-out packages, lay-offs and firings (Makawatsakul and Kleiner, 2003). It is mostly done through top-down directives. With

it usually come other strategies such as work redesign and systematic changes. Work redesign includes eliminating functions, hierarchical levels, divisions, or products, consolidating and merging units, and reducing the working hours, while systematic changes entail changing the organisation's internal and external systems such as values, communication, production chains in terms of suppliers and customers (Bleuel, 2001). Downsizing using the workforce reduction strategy has been regarded as the harshest way of improving efficiency, productivity and worker competencies because of its impact on both the victims and survivors.

For the purpose of this study, downsizing is defined as a quick and involuntary reduction in head count.

Survivor quality

According to Armstrong-Stassen (2003), the quality of the remaining employees after downsizing will largely determine the effectiveness and quality service provided by the organisation. Within the downsizing context, survivor quality entails the psychological well-being of survivors in terms of their work-related attitudes, commitment to the organisation and motivation to exert more work effort. The quality of survivors in terms of these attributes after downsizing should be positive in order for them to champion the organisation's competitiveness and productivity objectives. The quality management literature notes the importance of having quality employees who will in turn support all the quality initiatives of the organisation (Lam and Reshef, 1999). Indeed, the long-term performance and success of any organisation depends on the strong quality foundation of its human capital, that is, the value of its employees with job related abilities, experience, ideas, energies, creativity and dedication. Therefore, after downsizing, the creation and development of human capital (survivors) possessing the correct competencies, creativity and expertise, and commitment becomes imperative because the benefits outweigh the costs of doing so.

Influence of downsizing on survivor quality

Downsizing, in general has been shown in the literature to cause a plethora of organisational problems. One finding that researchers of the downsizing phenomenon agree upon is the cluster of reactions among survivors in the organisation – a cluster that has become known as 'survivor sickness' (Noer, 1993) or survivor syndrome (Cascio, 1993). Other researchers (e. g., Barusch and Hind, 2000) refer to it as negative responses of employees who retain their jobs after downsizing. Survivor syndrome is the major factor that contributes to the failure of most organisations to achieve their corporate objectives after downsizing (Appelbaum et al.,

1999). Although not as severe in corporate downsizing as in major tragic traumatic events, 'corporate survivor's syndrome has proved to be no less physically or mentally devastating (Applebaum, Schmidt, Peytchev, and Shapiro, 1999). As a result, the survivor syndrome manifests itself in a number of ways. These include anger, depression, fear, guilt, risk aversion, distrust, vulnerability or powerlessness, loss of morale and motivation and reduced work and organisational commitment (Nixon, Hitt, Lee and Jeong, 2004).

The literature on downsizing consistently points to the potentially negative impact of downsizing on the survivor attitudes. For example, Worrall, Cooper and Campbell (2000) observed the negative impact of downsizing in the public sector as breakdown of the psychological and reduced job security among managers. Mone (1999) found out that feelings of loss of control over the situation and the uncertainty caused by the possible loss of their own jobs cause severe stress reactions in the survivors. These are further exacerbated by the sharp increase in the work overload, longer working hours, and fewer vacation days, leading to inefficiency and burnout. The job/work transition theory states that organisational change caused by downsizing results in changes in responsibilities, reporting relationships, co-workers, policies and procedures. In tandem with this theory, Allen, Freeman, Russel, Reizenstein and Rentz (2001) found out that that job attitudes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job involvement, role overload, role clarity, satisfaction with top management, and turnover intentions become less favourable after downsizing. These findings indicate that downsizing seem to have an impact on a number of work-related attitudes.

Despite these findings, Armstrong-Stassen (2006) has shown that some survivors are driven to work harder after surviving a layoff, particularly those who become worried about their own job security after watching lay-offs. Similarly, findings by Nelson, Cooper and Jackson (1995) relating to employee attitudes after downsizing showed that after downsizing, survivors' personal control and job certainty perceptions improve over time. Others, for example, Armstrong-Stassen (2001), Parker, Chmiel and Wall (1997) have shown that uncertainty and stress are elevated during the change process, but then decrease or stabilise after the implementation of change. Allen et al. (2001) also concluded that the in impact of downsizing on attitudes varies over time and that some attitudes are related to each other after downsizing. Thus, the influence of downsizing on survivor attitudes seems to be inconclusive and varying with author and context.

Organisational commitment is defined as the acceptance of organisational goals and values, a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation, and desire to maintain membership in the organisation (Gautam, Dick and Wagner, 2004). Three kinds of commitment commonly discussed in the literature are affective,

continuance and normative (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Normative commitment is the sense of responsibility an employee develops in helping to sustain the organisation and its activities (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Continuance commitment is defined as commitment to the organisation based on investments made in the organisation that make it costly for individuals to leave (Brown, 1996). Affective commitment describes how emotionally attached a person is to an object (e. g., the organisation) and is referred to as 'want to' part of commitment (Brown, 1996). Studies suggest that committed workers contribute to the organisation in a more positive way than less committed employees (Metcalf and Dick, 2001). In addition, high commitment among employees is related to turnover intentions (Greenberg, 1996).

The way survivors perceive the reasons, process and outcomes of downsize might determine their commitment levels. Thus, relationship has been shown between continuance commitment and procedural justice (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). Similar findings on affective commitment have been reported. For example, after some organisational change, the levels of affective commitment were related to survivors' perceptions of how they were treated by the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Employees who show high affective commitment levels are those that have an obligation to do so. However, it has been shown that affective commitment significantly predicts intention to leave (Leung and Chang, 1999). It is therefore worth assuming that affective commitment after downsizing can be favourable for individual and organisational outcomes such as lower turnover, job satisfaction and high productivity.

The sum total of skills, knowledge and general attributes (human capital) alone, among survivors, is not enough for a downsized organisation to ensure the correct attitudes, performance and productivity required. Survivors are required to translate their human capital into some form of action that results in performance that contributes to the achievement of organisational goals (Hitt, Miller and Colella, 2006). Motivation is the process through which this translation takes place. The concept refers to forces within an individual that account for the level and persistence of effort expended at work (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn, 2005). There is empirical evidence that downsizing is associated with reduced work effort and thereby job performance. For example, Armstrong-Stassen (1994) has shown that perceived job insecurity is directly related to the amount of work effort exerted and lower job performance.

Similarly, Brockner, Grover, Reed, and DeWitt (1992) found that work effort was especially likely to decline in conditions of perceived high job insecurity and lack of control. Armstrong-Stassen, Wagar, and Cattaneo (2004) found significant differences in motivational levels among survivors in moderate work-groups (work group without major changes) and those in intact groups.

Similarly, Grunberg, Anderson-Connolly and Greenberg (2000) reported that layoff contact - either direct contact (at risk for being laid off) or indirect contact (close ties with the laid off; e.g., coworkers) - was associated with higher work effort by survivors in lower positions. Thus, how survivors put effort into their current work stations and whether they are motivated to do so may partly be explained by judgments of fairness of the organisation when dealing with the laid off. Such judgments are based on answers to the following questions: Were the layoffs seen as truly necessary? Was the layoff consistent with the organisation's history and culture? What criteria were used to determine which employees would be laid off and those that get to remain? The conclusion from these assertions can be that after downsizing, perceptions of organisational justice have an influence on the ability of survivors to put effort in their new work roles.

Based on the above-mentioned arguments, the following hypotheses were formulated to investigate the relationship among survivor quality dimensions after downsizing:

Ho₁: The attitude, commitment and motivation levels of survivors remain unchanged after downsizing.

Ho₂: There is no association/correlation between survivor attitude and commitment.

Ho₃: There is no association/correlation between survivor attitude and motivation.

Ho₄: There is no association/correlation between survivor motivation and commitment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To investigate the relationship among survivor qualities after downsizing, an empirical study was undertaken.

Research approach

The quantitative research method was used in this study. It is a form of conclusive research, which involves a large representative sample and structured data collection procedures are used. The quantitative research approaches used are exploratory/descriptive research and confirmatory research.

The sample

The population for the study comprised of 2667 survivors from 13 identified manufacturing organisations in Zimbabwe that had downsized in the previous year or two to ensure that survivors still had the memory of the downsizing event. Only downsized manufacturing organisations that employed 50 or more people and had clear organisational structures were selected. A probability sampling procedure was used and a random sample size of 150 survivors was drawn.

The questionnaire

A structured, five point numerically scaled Likert-type

questionnaire, was constructed for the purpose of this study to meet the criteria recommended by de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2006). The questionnaire was divided into nine sections. The verbal scale utilised in each section differed according to how the main question was worded.

i) Section A dealt with the classification of respondents (biographical details) and contained a nominal scale of measurement, using eight categorical variables. Aspects covered included: position in the organisation, educational level, age, race, gender, language, years of experience with the organisation, and whether they had survived downsizing or not.

ii) Sections B, C and D contained items developed by Ashford, Lee and Bobko (2000) to measure respondents' job security. Sections B and C measured perceptions of threat to various job features or characteristics and the probability that certain events might occur in one's current job. Section D measured respondents' sense of control of events within the organisation.

iii) Section E contained 22 items from the Job Descriptive Index (JDI), developed by Smith, Kendal and Hulin in 1969. The JDI is the most widely used instrument measuring employees' job satisfaction within organisations (Schwepker, 2001). The JDI questions or items dealt with five distinct aspects of the job. These are nature and content of the job, pay, supervision, promotion and advancement, company policy and support, and relationship with co-workers.

iv) Section F contained 11 items that measured respondents' job involvement. The items were developed by Reeve and Smith (2008) after a revision of the original scale developed in 1965 by Lodahl and Kejner.

v) Section G had three items related to respondents' intention to leave the organisation or turnover intention (TI). The three-item Staying/Leaving Index was developed by Bluedorn (1982) and Lucas (1985) to tap withdrawal cognition among employees.

vi) Section H contained 13 positively worded items from the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Bagraim (2004). These items measured respondents' affective, continuance and normative commitment.

vii) The last section, I, on the questionnaire contained ten items from the Employee Motivation Questionnaire (EMQ) developed from Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and from the Job Design Theory by Hackman and Oldham cited in Robbins (2005).

Pilot study

In order to pre-test the questionnaire, it was given to three academic staff and two industry experts in human resources management to check for question phrasing and content. It was also given to a statistician to ascertain the practicality of the instrument in terms of response categories and items for statistical analysis. 15 employees were also asked to evaluate the questionnaire in terms of, among other things, time to complete the questionnaire and clarity of items. After processing and analysing data from the pilot study, the questionnaire was refined and some minor changes were made regarding wording, sequence and layout.

Data collection

Four months before the actual data collection, permission was sought from the 13 identified downsized organisations. Questionnaires were left with the human resources person identified from each organisation for distribution to the respondents at a time conveniently known to him or her. A total number of 500 questionnaires were distributed, 100 in each city or town. Clear instructions were given to the human resources person regarding how the respondents were to complete the questionnaire. Data was

collected over a period of three months and the contact person in each organisation would make a follow up every other week.

Data processing and analysis

The returned questionnaires were inspected to determine their level of acceptability. They were edited where necessary and coded. The data were transferred to an Excel sheet. A statistical computer package, Statistical Analysis System (SAS), was used to process the results. The techniques used during data analysis included descriptive statistics (e.g. measures of central tendency) and correlation coefficients.

RESULTS

Response rate

A follow up of the questionnaires showed a marked increase in the total response rate from all the towns and cities from the first month 42(18.6%) to the third month 64(28.3%). At the end of the data collection phase, the total number of the completed questionnaires was 150. Given that the sample size of the study was 226, this represented a response rate of 66.4%.

Sample description summary

This study was based on a random sample of 150 employees who survived downsizing exercises in different manufacturing organisations in Zimbabwe. Close to 95% (140) of the respondents were black and 122% (82.4) were males. About half of the respondents were in the 31-39 years age group followed by about 35% (53) being older than that.

The respondents were not equally distributed according to educational level with 133 (91.7%) who had at most diploma level education. Five respondents did not provide their educational levels. The majority 93 (62.4%) of these respondents had at least 11 years experience with the organisation while 16 (10.7%) had less than three years and the rest had between 4 and 10 years experience.

Reliability of the questionnaire

External validity refers to the generalization of research results to other population and is ensured by means of a proper and sound sampling procedure. Clear guidelines were given regarding the place, time and conditions under which the study was to be conducted. Internal validity of the instrument's scores is ensured through both face and content validity. Expert judgement and a pilot study were undertaken to assist in this regard. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire. As shown in Table 1, within section Cronbach's alpha coefficients were quite high with the lowest being 71%

Table 1. Within-section reliability analysis.

Section	Title	Cronbach's alpha
F	Impact	0.86
G	Security	0.85
H	Control	0.75
I	Satisfaction	0.89
J	Involvement	0.71
K	Future plans	0.89
L	Commitment	0.85
M	Motivation	0.88

detected for the job involvement section. This is evidence that each section clearly dealt with a single issue/aspect. A cross - section reliability analysis was also done to determine the possibility of deriving a single variable out of sections measuring survivor attitude. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80 was found for this analysis. This provides evidence that these sections represent one construct, namely, survivor attitude. Therefore, survivor attitude, commitment and motivation were derived from the original variables generated from the questionnaire based on results of a reliability analysis of the instrument/questionnaire. These were the central variables of interest in this study.

Measures of central tendency

These derived variables of interest were measured on a continuous scale within the interval [1; 5] while all biographical variables were categorical. One way frequency distribution tables for the original variables were generated for purposes of describing the sample as well as getting the patterns of responses for the variables of interest.

In order to establish determine the attitude, commitment and motivation levels of survivors after downsizing (hypothesis 1), measures of central tendency and dispersion for the responses of each variable were computed. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, the mean survivor motivation score of 3.4 was the highest, while survivor commitment and motivation were found to be average to satisfactory as reflected by 95% confidence intervals of the mean scores contained within [3.1,3.5]. Survivor attitude on the other hand was average as shown by a central 95% confidence interval of the mean score of [2.8, 3.0]. Based on these results, hypothesis 1 was therefore rejected.

Correlation analysis

Using Spearman's correlation coefficient, pair wise correlations among the variables survivor attitude,

commitment and motivation were computed to determine the strength, direction and statistical significance of correlations. This measure was found suitable for the data because the variables, though continuous in [1; 5], assume only a few of the values in that interval.

The correlation results in Table 3 indicate that only the correlation between survivor motivation and commitment was statistically significant ($r = 0.40$, $p < 0.0001$). Hypothesis 3 was therefore rejected and hypotheses 2 and 3 were not rejected.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among attitude, commitment and motivation among survivors of a downsizing exercise among selected manufacturing organisations in a volatile economic environment. The results indicate that survivor motivation was high and, survivor attitude and commitment were average to satisfactory. The results show that the survivors were satisfied with the downsizing process in their organisations. Because survivors perceived the process of downsizing as satisfactory, this probably had an impact on their commitment and motivation levels. This assertion is supported by previous studies which point out that there is a positive relationship between justice perceptions and continuance commitment (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001), affective commitment (Hendrix, Robbins, Miller and Summer, 1998) and motivation (Brockner, 1992) after downsizing. If the assertions about these relationship are true, one might argue that survivors in the present study who were strong in continuance commitment, and who might have felt that they had made investments in their organisations were less likely not to be committed since they always perceived that decisions to downsize were made by management with an attempt to be fair. Similarly, because affective commitment develops from antecedents such as an employee's experiences with the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1997), survivors' level of commitment reflected concerns with other issues that they were not happy with in the downsizing process. With regard to the average level of motivation shown by survivors in the present study, motivational studies (e. g., Brockner, Grover, Reed and DeWitt, 1992) related to lay-off survivors would explain it as having been influenced by survivors' perception of the outcome-input ratio. Thus, the moderate levels of motivation probably reflected survivors' effort to reduce the feelings of inequity they had experienced when the process of downsizing was unfolding.

Survivors showed average to satisfactory levels of attitude, meaning that after downsizing, they were moderately satisfied with their jobs, moderately involved with their jobs, and felt moderately secure in their current positions. The literature (Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, and Carson, 2002) argues that downsizing

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and confidence intervals.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Lower 95% CL for mean	Upper 95% CL for mean
Survivor attitude	103	2.8924	0.3935	2.8156	2.9694
Survivor commitment	128	3.3201	0.7189	3.1944	3.4458
Survivor motivation	139	3.4187	0.7976	3.2849	3.5525

Table 3. Correlations of survivor quality components.

Variables	N	r	p-value
Attitude vs. Commitment	98	0.03	0.7438
Attitude vs. Motivation	101	0.11	0.2767
Motivation vs. Commitment	123	0.40	0.0001

makes survivors develop affective and cognitive feelings about their organisations and jobs. The combination of a survivor's thought concerning the organisation and how the survivor feels about the organisation determines their satisfaction, job involvement and job security levels. The present findings indicate that the antecedents of such thoughts and feelings, such as ensuring that all procedures and interactions are fair during and after downsizing might have been addressed, but survivors had a lot of other reservations about the whole process.

The correlation between survivor motivation and commitment showed that highly committed survivors were also highly motivated. This finding confirms the previous results which show that survivors had moderate levels of both commitment and motivation. Indeed, the literature has shown that both commitment and motivation are affected by variables such as perceptions of justice (Campbell-Jamison, Worrall and Copper, 2000), training provided to survivors (Tella, Ayeni and Popoola 2007) and clarity and adequacy of information given throughout and after the downsizing process (Appelbaum and Donia, 2001). All these variables are concerned with support for the survivor before, during and after downsizing and they seem to have been satisfactorily provided for during the downsizing process.

Survivor attitude had no correlation with motivation and commitment of survivors. Contrary to this finding, research indicates that highly satisfied survivors have been found to be those who exert much effort in their work and achieve high performance (Greenberg, 1996). Similarly, other studies have found that job involvement after downsizing is affected by, among others, situational characteristics, and the differential treatment of men and women during and after downsizing (Aryee, 1994). Armstrong-Stassen (2001) found that compared to management and non-management survivors after downsizing, non-management survivors reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction, perceived threat of job loss and lower levels of morale. Despite this evidence, lack of correlation between attitude and both commitment

and motivation in the present study might therefore suggest that variables that affected survivors' attitude may not have been the same as those that affected their commitment and motivation, while those that affected commitment and motivation were likely to be the same as shown above.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There seem to be changes in survivor attitudes, commitment and motivation after downsizing in a highly volatile environment. Additionally, survivors of downsizing in context volatile economic environment experience high levels of motivation and commitment. The implication of these conclusions for human resources managers is that:

(1) they should have knowledge of the context in which downsizing is taking place. Such knowledge makes them effective in deciding the criteria, processes and procedures to be adopted when downsizing and, (2) there should be differential of treatment of employees during and after downsizing. This might lead to the strengthening of commitment towards the new organisational order. However, it might also lead to strengthening negative perceptions of deepening discrimination among the survivors. The managerial challenge, then, is to navigate carefully through the downsizing process and maintain a balance among those who leave (victims) and those who remain (survivors). In other words, the elements of downsizing need to be managed with sensitivity to ensure positive psychological outcomes for the survivors and positive economic outcomes for the organisation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The uniqueness and strength of this study is that it is focused on the investigation of the constructs of survivor quality in a changing environment. However, there are

limitations to and problems with the present study. These limitations include, collecting information from employees whose organisations had downsized in the previous one or two years. There was no guarantee for the researcher that some of the survivors still had the organisational memory of how the downsizing event had taken place. Those who participated in the study were mostly males. This unequal distribution with regards to gender might be problematic since some other factors relevant to females might have been omitted. Studies have shown that women of a certain age tend to have continuous work histories and are therefore not vulnerable to lay-off (Kozlowski, Chao, Smith and Hedlund, 1993).

The study was conducted in an environment that was unstable in terms of economic growth. Though this was a unique feature of the study, the context raises questions of the generalisability of the results in contexts other than those from where the sample was drawn. In addition to this, because the variable 'volatile or unstable environment' was not measured within the study, the results might not be a true reflection of survivors' reactions as influenced by the observed factors, but some other factors.

As part of good research practice, it would have been proper, and more interesting results could have emerged, if the researcher had obtained the levels of survivors' attitude, commitment and motivation before the actual downsizing took place and then compare them with levels of these constructs after downsizing. Data were collected from manufacturing organisations involved in different business activities. Assuming that each organisation had developed its own personality and culture, the results could be a reflection of feelings and perceptions of survivors from one organisation which had more respondents than the others. This means that the results' applicability might also present some problems.

Future research might want to look at the factors that influence the levels of survivor quality dimensions after downsizing as well as the observed relationships among the dimensions within the same context. There might also be a need to, after downsizing, correlate the different aspects of survivor attitude in similar studies.

REFERENCES

- Allen NJ, Meyer JP (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organisation. *J. Occupat. Psych.* 63(15): 1-18.
- Allen TD, Freeman D M, Russel JEA, Reizenstein RC, Rentz JO (2001). Survivor reactions to organisational downsizing: Does time ease the pain? *J. Occupat. Organisat. Psych.* 74: 145-164.
- Appelbaum H, Doria M (2001). The realistic downsizing preview: a multiple case study, part 11: analysis of RDP model: results of data collected and proposed new model. *Car. Develop. Int.* 6(4): 193-211.
- Appelbaum SH, Everard A, Hung LTS (1999). Strategic downsizing: critical success factors. *Manage. Decis.* 37(7): 535-552.
- Appelbaum SH, Patton E, Shapiro B (2003). The early retirement incentive Program: a downsizing strategy. *J. Europ. Indust. Train.* 27(1): 22-35.
- Appelbaum SH, Schmidt S, Peytchev M, Shapiro B (1999). Downsizing: measuring the costs of failure. *J. Manage. Develop.* 18(5): 436-463.
- Armstrong-Stassen M (1994). Coping with transition: A study of layoff survivors. *J. Organisat. Behav.* 15: 597-62.
- Armstrong-Stassen M (2001). Reactions of older employees to organisational downsizing: The role of gender, job level and time. *J. Geront.* 56(4): 234-243.
- Armstrong-Stassen M (2001). Reactions of older employees to organisational downsizing: The role of gender, job level and time. *J. Geront.* 56(4): 234-243.
- Armstrong-Stassen M (2003). Job transfer during organisational downsizing. *Gr. Organisat. Manage.* 28(3): 392-415.
- Armstrong-Stassen M, Wagar TH, Cattaneo RJ (2004). Work-group membership (in) stability and survivors' reactions to organisational downsizing. *J. Appl. Social Psych.* 34(10): 2023-2044.
- Armstrong-Stassen M (2006). Determinants of how managers cope with organisational downsizing. *Appl. Psych: Int. Rev.* 55(1): 1-26.
- Aryee S (1994). Job involvement: An analysis of its determinants among male and female teachers. <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi>. Accessed, 5 September 2007.
- Ashford SJ, Lee C, Bobko P (1989). Content, causes, and consequences of job insecurity: A theory-based measure and substantive test. *Acad. Manage. J.* 32(4): 803-829.
- Bagrami J (2004). The improbable commitment: organisational commitment among South African knowledge workers. PhD thesis, University of Warwick.
- Barusch Y, Hind P (2000). Survivor syndrome – a management myth? *J. Manage. Psych.* 15: 421-438.
- Bews N, Uys T (2002). The impact of organisational restructuring on perceptions of trustworthiness, *South Afr. J. Indust. Psych.* 28: 19-26.
- Bluedorn AC (1982). A unified model of turnover from organisations. *Hum. Relat.* 35(2): 135-153.
- Brockner J (1992). Managing the effects of layoffs on survivors. *Calif. Manage. Rev.* 34(2): 113-127.
- Brockner J, DeWitt RL, Grover S, Reed T (1990). When is it especially to explain why: Factors affecting the relationship between manager's explanations and survivors' reactions to layoffs, *J. Exp. Social Psych.* 26: 398-407.
- Brockner J, Grover S, Reed T, DeWitt RL (1992). Layoffs, job insecurity, and survivors' work effort: Evidence of an inverted –U relationship. *Acad. Manage. J.* 5(2): 413-425.
- Brown R (1996). Organisational commitment: Clarifying the concept and simplifying the existing construct typology. *J. Vocat. Behav.* 49: 230-251.
- Budros A (2002). The mean and lean firm and downsizing: Causes of involuntary and voluntary downsizing strategies. *Socio. Forum.* 17(2): 307-342.
- Campbell L, Finch E (2004). Customer satisfaction and organisational Justice. *Facilities* 22(7/8): 178-189.
- Campbell-Jamison FC, Worrall L, Cooper C (2002). Downsizing in Britain and its effects on survivors and their organisations. *Anx. Stress Cop.* 14: 25-58.
- Cascio WF (1993). Downsizing: What do we know? What have we learned? *Acad. Manage.* 7(1): 95-104.
- Cohen-Charash Y, Spector P (2001). The role of justice in organisations: A meta-analysis. *Organis. Behav. Hum. Decis. Proces.* 86(2): 278-321.
- Cohen-Charash Y, Spector P (2001). The role of justice in organisations: A meta-analysis. *Organis. Behav. Hum. Decis. Proces.* 86(2): 278-321.
- Cropanzano R, Greenberg J (2001). Progress in organisational justice: tunnelling through the maze. *Organis. Psych. Develop.* pp. 243-298.
- De Vos AS, Strydom H, Fouche CB, Delpont CS (2006). Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Fisher SR, White MA (2000). Downsizing in a learning organisation: Are there hidden costs? *Acad. Manage. Rev.* 25(1): 244-251.
- Frydenberg E, Lewis R (2002). Do managers cope productively? A comparison between Australian middle managers and adults in the general community, *J. Manage. Psych.* 17: 640-654.

- Gautam T, van Dick R, Wagner U (2004). Organisational identification and organisational commitment: Distinct aspects of two related concepts. *Asian J. Social Psych.* 7: 310-315.
- Greenberg J (1987). A taxonomy of organisational justice theories. *Acad. Manage.* 12(1): 9-22.
- Greenberg J (1996). *Managing behaviour in organisations*. UK: Prentice Hall.
- Grunberg L, Anderson-Connolly R, Greenberg EW (2000). Surviving layoffs: The effects on organisational commitment and job performance. *Work Occupat.* 27: 7-31.
- Hareli S, Weiner B (2002). Social emotions and personality inferences. A scaffold from a new research direction in the study of achievement motivation, *Educ. Psych.* 37: 183-193.
- Hareli S, Tzafir SS (2006). The role of causal attributions in survivors' emotional reactions to downsizing. *Hum. Resour. Develop. Rev.* 5(4): 400-421.
- Hendrix W, Robbins T, Miller J, Summers T (1998). Effects of procedural and distributive justice on factor predictive or turnover. *J. Social Behav. Person.* 13: 611-633.
- Hitt MA, Miller CC, Colella A (2006). *Organisational Behaviour: Strategic Approach*. USA: John Wiley and Sons.
- Iverson RD, Pullman JA (2000). Determinants of voluntary turnover and layoffs in an environment of repeated downsizing following a merger: An event history analysis. *J. Manage.* 25(5): 977-1003.
- Kinicki AJ, McKee-Ryan, FM, Schriesheim CA, Carson KP (2002) Assessing the construct validity of the job Descriptive Index: A review and meta-analysis. *J. App. Psych.* 87: 599-14-32.
- Kozlowski SW, Chao GT, Smith EM, Hedlund J (1993). Organisational downsizing: Strategies, interventions, and research implications. In C. L. Cooper and I. T. Robertson (Eds.), *International review of industrial and organisational psychology*. New York: Wiley.
- Kusum S (2004). Revisiting the survivor syndrome: The role of leadership in implementing downsizing. *Europ. J. Work Organisat. Psych.* 13(2): 165-196.
- Lam H, Reshef G (1999). Are quality improvement and downsizing compatible? A human resources perspective. *Relat. Industrielles* 54(8): 727-744.
- Leung ASM, Chang LMK (1999). The impact of organisational downsizing: Psychological dynamics on surviving managers. Paper presented at The First International Conference on Critical management studies, University of Manchester, July 14-16, 1999.
- Littler CR, Wiesner R, Dunford R (2003). The dynamics of delayering: Changing management structures in three countries. *J. Manage. Stud.* 40(2): 225-256.
- Lucas GH (1985). The relationships between job attitudes, personal characteristics, and job outcomes: a study of retail store managers. *J. Retail.* 61(Spring): 35-62.
- Makawatsakul N, Kleiner BH (2003). The effect of downsizing on morale and attrition. *Manage. Research News* 26(2/3): 52-62.
- Melaine B (2006). Talking about change: Understanding employee responses through qualitative research. *Manage Decis.* 44(2): 246-258.
- Metcalfe B, Dick G (2001). Exploring organisation commitment in the police. Implications for human resource strategy. *Policing: Int. J. Police Strat. Manag.* 24(3): 399-419.
- Meyer JP, Allen NJ (1997). *Commitment in the Workplace: Theory, research and application*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Michael U (1997). *Executive Defense: Shareholder power and corporate reorganisation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mone M (1999). Relationships between self-concepts, aspirations, emotional, responses, and intent to leave a downsizing organisation. *Exec. Excell.* 11(7): 12-13.
- Mossholder KW, Setton RP, Armenakis AA, Harris SG (2000). Emotion during organisational transformations: An interactive model of survivor reactions. *Gr. Organisat. Manage.* 25: 220-244.
- Nelson A, Cooper CL, Jackson PR (1995). Uncertainty amidst change: The impact of privatization on employee job satisfaction. *J. Occ. Organisat. Psych.* 68: 57-71.
- Nixon RD, Hitt MA, Lee HU, Jeong E (2004). Research notes and commentaries: Market reactions to announcements of corporate downsizing actions and implementation strategies. *Strat. Manage J.* 25(11): 1121-1129.
- Noer DM (1993). *Healing wounds: Overcoming the trauma of layoffs and revitalising downsized organisations*. San Francisco: Jossey Basesy.
- Noer DM (2001). *Healing the wounds: Overcoming the trauma of layoff and revitalizing downsized organisations*. USA: Jossey-Bassey Publishers.
- Noronha E, D'Cruz P (2005). Achieving downsizing. *Managerial perspectives. Glob. Bus. Rev.* 6(1): 77-94.
- Parker SK, Chmiel N, Wall TD (1997). Work characteristic and employee well-being within a context of strategic downsizing. *J. Occ. Health Psych.* 2: 289-303.
- Reeve CL, Smith S (2008). Refining Lodahl and Kejner's Job Involvement Scale with a Convergent Evidence Approach: Applying Multiple Methods to Multiple Samples. *Organ. Res. Meth.* 4(2): 91-111.
- Robbins SP (2005). *Essentials of Organisational Behaviour*. International edition (8th edition). New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Ryan GR (1989). Dealing with Survivors of reorganization. *Res. Tech. Manage.* 32(2): 40-56.
- Sandringham S (2000). *Trust, motivation and commitment on downsizing*. Strategic Remuneration Research Centre: Farringdom pp. 7-12.
- Saunders MNK, Thornhill AS (2003). Organisational justice, trust and the management of change. *Pers. Rev.* 32(3): 360-375.
- Schermerhorn Jr. JR, Hunt JG, Osborn RN (2005). *Organisational behaviour* (9th edition). USA: John Wiley and Sons.
- Schwepker CH (2001). Ethical climate's relationship to job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intention in the salesforce. *J. Bus. Res.* 54: 39-52.
- Taylor S (2008). *People resourcing*. London: Chartered Development Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD).
- Tella A, Ayeni CO, Popoola SO (2007). Work motivation, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment of library personnel in academic and research in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Lib. Phil. Pract.* pp. 1-17.
- Vinten G, Lane DA (2002). Counselling remaining employees in redundancy situations. *Career Dev. Int.* 7(7): 430-437.
- Weiner B (1995). An attributional theory of motivation and emotion. *Psych. Rev.* 92: 548-573.
- Willcoxson L (2006). Defining and creating high performance organisations. *Australian J. Manage. Behav.* 4(1): 100-106.
- Worrall L, Cooper CL, Campbell F (2000). The impact of organisational change on UK managers' perceptions of their working lives. In R. J. Burke & C. L. Cooper (eds), *The organisation in crisis: Downsizing, restructuring, and privatization*, Oxford: Blackwell pp. 20-43.