

**Organisational Learning During the Restructuring of a Finance-Based Organisation**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Nokukhanya Mbatha, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation is based on my own work and that all information sourced is completely and duly referenced. I also declare that I have not submitted this dissertation to any other institution of higher education to obtain an academic qualification.

Signature:



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## ABSTRACT

Restructuring has become a popular practice for improving organisational performance. Despite the fact that rebuilding is becoming progressively more essential as a standard managerial strategy in organisations, its effectiveness in increasing organisational efficiency remains unknown. Typically, restructuring aims to improve organisational performance by lowering costs, increasing competitive advantage and increasing productivity. In some cases, restructuring has proven to be effective in achieving these goals. However, an increasing number of studies appear to suggest that restructuring results in irrelevant enhancements and, in some cases, a decrease in organisational performance.

The study's main goal was to comprehend the employee experience of organisational restructuring at a finance-based organisation in Sandton, South Africa. Data were gathered using a qualitative research method. The study's 12 participants were chosen using non-probability sampling. In-depth interviews were used as the data collection instrument. Senge's Fifth Discipline theory has been used in the study to explain the way in which individuals respond to change. The sample comprised 12 individuals employed by the organisation under study.

The in-depth interviews covered various aspects, including biographical information of the respondents, team learning, personal mastery and systems thinking, as well as shared vision.

A pilot study was undertaken to ensure the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How did team learning occur during the restructuring process?
2. How did personal mastery occur during the restructuring process?
3. How did systems thinking evolve during the restructuring process?
4. In what ways did systems thinking occur during the restructuring process?
5. To what extent was a shared vision achieved as a result of the restructuring process?

The findings of this study revealed that restructuring did affect staff working in the organisation under study. Most of them did not have an issue with transformation per se; however, they were concerned about the way in which it was being implemented at the organisation. The majority of them believed that to achieve transformational goals, the organisation's leadership

should have considered the fundamental requirements of properly evolving systems thinking and taking personal mastery into account. Furthermore, participants confirmed that “unplanned change” was happening too quickly. This, they believed, contributed to a state of confusion, doubt and disorganisation.

To summarise, broad consultation, active communication, a strong human resource team and a shared vision are required for effective organisational restructuring.

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## **CHAPTER 1: STUDY OVERVIEW**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The primary concern of all businesses is survival, irrespective of their size and location. (Genrich et al., 2020) defined restructuring as a planned process by which directors rearrange departments, positions and reporting lines so that they can increase efficiency or reduce costs. Several factors motivate firms to do this, such as overcoming operational challenges including overcoming competing priorities, aligning to a new strategy or another challenge, driving organisational effectiveness by centralising all resources in one area or decentralising in another area so that they can get things done faster (Gao et al., 2017; Volberda et al., 2021).

The company's management often sees restructuring as necessary for improving productivity and cost-effectiveness, along with surviving in the changing business environment, stated Hurtado (2019). Therefore, it can be said that restructuring is a prominent option that organisations often consider as a remedy for solving organisational issues. Nevertheless, restructuring may come with negative side effects. Bhui et al. (2016) and Singh et al. (2022) pointed out that restructuring organisations can create stress and emotional turmoil among the employees within the organisation.

This study's primary aim was to understand how employees felt about organisational restructuring. The study was conducted to understand issues of interest from previous events that are important for fostering trust, commitment and understanding for the benefit of the organisation and its employees. Employees of the financial institution that were affected by the organisation's restructuring procedure will certainly find interest in this research as it might relate to their own experiences. This study gave readers a chance to hear and understand the opinions of the employees about how they navigated the process of change and how the reorganization affected them both professionally and personally - challenges, concerns, benefits and losses, lessons learnt, and the growth brought by the experiences.

This research aimed to uncover insights on team learning, personal mastery, and evolving systems thinking that might have occurred during the restructuring process. The study considers how shared vision is achieved as a result of the restructuring process.

## **1.2 Background to the Study**

Neboh (2015) and Potůčková (2018) have stated that the business process reengineering strategy is based on thorough change, which involves realignment, redesign and rethinking. The concept of restructuring introduces new notions, such as the outsourcing of non-core functions, the lean system and transformation of structures, to every aspect of employees' work lives.

This study focused on understanding employees' experiences regarding the impact of transformation, the transition period and the repercussions of the company's restructuring. Employees were given the opportunity to discuss whatever topics came to mind, including the start and journey of the change process, performance commitment and their current jobs, and the effect on their personal and professional lives.

Like several companies in South Africa (e.g. Harmony Gold, ABSA and the South African Post Office) and many organisations around the world, the organisation under study underwent a restructuring process that involved several members (Marais, 2020). Most businesses have gone through a chaotic decade of value destruction, characterised by poor company performance as reflected by decreasing market share. The global economic crisis exacerbated the value destruction decade. Although the crisis began in the United States, globalization caused it to spread to developing countries such as South Africa (Marais, 2020). The global crisis has been seen in South Africa through the increased unemployment rate, shutting down of companies and slow economic growth. As a result of the crisis, several businesses have looked for ways to cut costs in their operations. Restructuring a company is one method of reducing operational costs (Schneider et al., 2001; Singh et al., 2022). Employees who have retained their previous positions may experience mental, physical, and psychological stress as a result of the restructuring process. As a result, executives face the daunting task of motivating surviving staff members.

## **1.3 Aim of the Study**

The study's goal was to evaluate the restructuring process of a finance-based organisation in Sandton using Senge's Fifth Discipline model and make recommendations to improve employee morale and keep employees motivated after restructuring.

## **1.4 Research Problem**

The performance of employees after restructuring has been an area of interest to several human resource management scholars over the last decade. This interest has stemmed from the realisation that restructuring is not only disadvantageous to the victims (those who lose their jobs), but it also affects the survivor employees (Omwenga, 2017; Singh et al., 2022). Regardless of the general assumption that restructuring will result in an enhanced work process, many post-restructuring studies contradict this conception. Therefore, this study explored the organisational learning of employees during organisational restructuring. The findings demonstrate the extent to which organisational learning this organisation agrees with or contradicts extant studies on organisational learning during restructuring.

The company under study is a financial institution with a primary objective to contribute to South Africa's balanced, sustainable economic growth and economic empowerment of South African citizens. This organisation went through a restructuring process in 2020. The restructuring of organisations affects the enthusiasm and morale of the employees. Some employees may be moved from their previous positions to new positions with lower titles. Some cannot handle change; some have emotional fear, accompanied by the fear of the unknown. As a result, restructuring has a significant impact on employee motivation and morale.

The purpose of this study was to better understand employees' broad experiences and perspectives on the impact of organisational change, the transition period, and the aftermath of the financial organisation's restructuring. Instead of having one or two focus areas, this study allowed for perspectives from five different angles (Senge's fifth dimension theory, which is discussed further in this paper). Professional support staff were given the opportunity to discuss any topic they wished, including the commencement and journey of the transformation period, their present jobs, performance and dedication to the organisation, and the implications on their personal and professional well-being.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

To collect all of the necessary information for the study's needs and objectives, research questions must be developed. These main research questions serve as a guideline for designing additional questions for data collection through the use of interviews. It is also critical that the

research questions be relevant to the study's goal. According to Rajan et al. (2021), research questions should be developed to address the purpose of conducting research. The following key research questions were therefore formulated for this study:

1. How did team learning occur during the restructuring process?
2. How did personal mastery occur during the restructuring process?
3. How did systems thinking evolve during the restructuring process?
4. In what ways did systems thinking occur during the restructuring process?
5. To what extent was a shared vision achieved as a result of the restructuring process?

## **1.6 Research Objectives**

Loureiro et al. 2020) mentioned that research objectives represent a commitment contract that binds the researcher to deliver the needed research. They direct the rest of the research process from the beginning. Research objectives are structured around the main research question or a research problem identified by the researcher. Hossain et al. (2021) stated that research objectives are important to evaluate and make sense of a study. The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To examine how team learning occurred during the restructuring process.
2. To examine how personal mastery occurred during the restructuring process.
3. To determine how systems thinking evolved during the restructuring process.
4. To examine how systems thinking occurred during the restructuring process.
5. To determine whether a shared vision was achieved from the restructuring processes.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study gives an indication of how organisational learning occurs during the organisational restructuring of a financial services organisation. It provides guidelines and recommendations for human resource managers in the handling of restructuring processes.

## **1.8 Justification/Rationale**

Organisational restructuring of often a challenging process, but it is also an opportunity for organisational learning for stakeholders in an organisation. This study maps out ways in which organisational learning occurred during the restructuring process. In doing so, it may identify

ways in which best-practice restructuring processes can be designed. It was also in the researcher's best interests for the findings to provide useful feedback to the financial organisation's management who compile reports and conduct surveys, for future reference in the company.

## **1.9 Overview of the Methodology**

This study used a case study research design, aligned with a qualitative data-collection approach. This study aimed to explore the results and experiences of the employees of the organisation under study regarding the restructuring process. This research was guided by semi-structured interview questions. The interview questions tapped into five dimensions of Senge's theory, namely, (a) personal mastery, (b) mental models, (c) systems thinking, (d) shared vision and (e) team learning. The organisation under study is a national financial institution that is set up to promote economic growth and industrial development and develop domestic industrial capacity. The main site of this study was the organisation's head office, which is based in Sandton, Gauteng.

The study's participants included employees from various fields/departments in the organisation, both male and female. Employees worked in the departments of human resources, finance, marketing, public relations, administration, and top management. The purposive or non-probability sampling approach, also known as the criterion approach, was used in this research study. This study's target population included more than 450 employees; 12 of those employees were chosen to participate.

To ensure data quality, this study adopted a pre-testing method using a sample of three participants from the target population, to increase the reliability or trustworthiness of the study findings. The interview-drafted answers were then sent back to these participants for them to confirm the accuracy of the gathered data. Locations and times best suited to the researcher and the participants were chosen. The interviews were voice-recorded, supported by note-taking. It was later analysed and interpreted thoroughly in the form of thematic analysis.

### ***1.9.1 Ethical Considerations***

This research complied with all of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN's) clear ethical protocols. Ethical clearance was obtained from the UKZN Ethics Committee before commencing data collection through interviews. The reference number for this study's ethical

clearance is 00017752. This includes ethical principles of anonymity, confidentiality, non-maleficence, withdrawal from the study at any time, and voluntary participation. Such consent was obtained directly from participants and their direct superior, with the assurance that the data obtained would be treated confidentially and used solely for reporting study results. The study participants were classified as working and experienced adults who were informed fully about the purpose of the research and how the data collected would be used.

### ***1.9.2 Limitations of the Study***

The nature of qualitative research necessitates that sample sizes are small. This has implications for the generalisability of findings. Nonetheless, the study aimed to be suggestive rather than conclusive, as is the nature of qualitative research. The sensitive nature of the study may also have shaped how the participants responded.

The research participants were selected from the different functional divisions in the company, identified by the researcher. The findings are not applicable to the overall population, on account of time limitations and since the study was of a small scale. Participants in the study were full-time employees from various departments of the financial organisation; therefore, proper planning was required, given that it was not possible to keep a group of staff members away from their duties for an extended period of time. The interviews took place during the participants' break times. It was also difficult to derive the expected number from the sample because most staff members appeared uneasy about participating in research due to fear of prejudice.

## **1.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter aims to provide an icebreaker in the form of a research overview and general background to the research study to its audience. The chapter provided a synopsis of the main topic, which is intended to attract and inform the readers about the study problem, the contribution and significance to the field of study, what the researcher hoped to achieve by conducting research, and a brief description of the research methodology that was used.

This study consists of six chapters which delve deeply into the topic of reorganising and change in a financial organisation. The chapters are laid out as follows:

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of relevant restructuring literature. This chapter focuses on the background and history of change and restructuring in a financial organisation. It covers

issues that relate to reorganising organisations, world views (international and national), current trends and experiences, and clarifying concepts used to measure the objectives of the study.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology used in this study. The chapter goes into detail about the methods used to conduct the actual research, including the design, approach, study population, and participant selection, to the way in which the data were collected, analysed and explained.

Chapter 4 presents the study results

Chapter 5 contains a discussion of findings from data collection.

Chapter 6 provides an overall conclusion of the study, as well as recommendations practice and further studies.

## **1.11 Conclusion**

There is a need for effective restructuring at the organisation under study to ensure that the company achieves its goals. This study sought a holistic understanding of employees' experiences and viewpoints relating to the impact of change, the transition period and the aftermath of the financial organisation's restructuring. Instead of having one or two focus areas, this study was open to views from five angles (Senge's theory). The next chapter provides a review of the literature on restructuring, causes of restructuring, effects of restructuring, change theories, managing restructuring and alternatives to restructuring.

## CHAPTER 2: RESTRUCTURING OF A FINANCE-BASED ORGANISATION

### 2.1 Introduction

Cho et al. (2017) contend that in response to the changing global economy and shifting consumer preferences, organisations are inclined to adapt constantly therefore can no longer operate in the same manner as in the past. Organisations that do not implement any changes to its structure will not survive in this ever-changing and demanding market. The practice of restructuring has gained popularity as a tool for improving organisational effectiveness. Restructuring typically aims to create alignment with a new strategy, boost organisational performance by reducing expenses, strengthening competitive advantage, and to increase organisational effectiveness by centralizing or decentralizing all resources in one area so that they can complete tasks more quickly. Restructuring has occasionally been successful in helping organisations reach these objectives. The literature review for this study presents the concept of restructuring, analyses Senge's theory and the reasons for restructuring as well as the reasons for the failure of organisational restructuring.

### 2.2 Organisational Change

According to Bamberger et al. (2012) and Mäkikangas et al. (2019), organisational change is the modification of the company's primary systems, which includes the values of an organisation, the way the organisation works, its structure, and strategy, which involves changing both the operating procedures and the organisational system. According to de Jong et al. (2016) and Corbaz-Kurth et al. (2022), reorganization is a much more major change in an organisation than any other normal change. A reorganisation is a series of actions taken to effect major change in an organisation's structure. This could include reducing management staff and changing elements of the organisation through acquisition, divestiture, and the labour force.

Jong et al. (2016) and Corbaz-Kurth et al. (2022) stated that the consequences of reorganisation affect sections of the organisation, if not the whole organisation, in the form of expansions, shutting down the organisation, merging, reorganisation the organisation, bringing in contractors and offshoring. Monette et al. (2013) and Robson (2022) further elaborated that restructuring is much more than a change that affects the whole company by closing, merging, maneuverability or offshoring within the organisation. Restructuring changes the way in which an organisation runs, and this change can be done in the form of renewal, restructuring,

transformation or reorientation. Restructuring is a kind of change that is vital for the organisation's existence in the future. McCalman et al. (2016) and Contreras (2020) stated that change will never fade or disappear as a result of the advancement of technology, innovative thought and civilisation. Cawsey et al. (2016) and Contreras (2020) elaborated that before the process of restructuring is implemented, the employees should be informed of the opportunities and risks that the reorganisation will bring. Informing employees will increase enthusiasm in the organisation, ensuring an effective change initiative.

According to Godbole (2013) and Burke (2018), organisations reorganise in the hope that they become more innovative than their competing companies, which could lead to the organisation becoming the industry leader. The majority of restructuring processes are implemented with the expectation of increasing the company's financial performance. Moreover, the side effect of this process is that it seems to strain the organisation's management, its employees, government, and the taxpayers.

### **2.3 Definition of Organisational Change**

Jung et al. (2016) and Hanelt et al. (2021) defined change as the procedure of shifting from an old condition to a new one. Wong et al. (2017) and Hanelt et al. (2021) stated that organisational behaviour is the act of adopting a new behaviour by workers in an organisation. Maheshwari & Vohra (2015) and Ekholm (2017) stated that organisational change means transforming the functioning or design of an organisation from an old undesired state to a new desired state. Teece (2016) and Robson (2022) defined organisational change as the process by which companies move away from a present state of being to some preferred future state to improve their efficiency at different levels, namely, the functional resources and human resources, organisational abilities and technological capabilities. Hussain et al. (2018) stated that organisational shift entails alternatives which change the critical organisational processes, might influence individual behaviours, and later affect organisational outcomes.

### **2.4 Restructuring**

Burke et al. (2011) and Burke (2018) defined restructuring as a planned task by which the executives of an enterprise reorganise departments, reporting lines, and positions. According to Burke (2018), operational restructuring entails making decisions regarding the appropriate size of the company's personnel, the necessary skills, the organisational capacity and position, its functions and combinations, and possibly a shift in production focus. This means that it may

be regarded as

a management strategy or a program that aids in controlling as well as significantly altering the organisation's service scope.

Allan (2008) and Chadha (2021) classified restructuring, rightsizing, delayering, downsizing, and other synonyms; the results are the same: workers are laid off. According to Burke et al. (2011) and Chadha (2021), downsizing without restructuring is possible, as is restructuring without downsizing. Though these two descriptions are similar in the sense that the reorganisation process introduces a new arrangement in the workplace that replaces the status quo, this does not necessarily mean that reorganisation will result in the reduction of personnel. Nonetheless, studies by both Allan and Chadha confirmed that staff reductions are common, but they also stated that it is possible to avoid them during company reorganisation. This can be done by proper planning or forecasting. Although Allan made this observation more than a decade ago, it is just as true in today's world as it was then.

According to DePamphilis (2018), corporate restructuring can be classified into two types:

- **Financial restructuring**, which according to DePamphilis (2018), Financial restructuring refers to adjustments in an organisation's capital structure, such as the addition of shares or an increase in liability, in order to either avoid a takeover or increase equity.
- **Operational restructuring**, refers to changes in the asset structure of an organisation. According to Kowalski (2017) and Moh'd Abu-Dabbour (2022), business restructuring is a process that addresses an organisation's poor market position by implementing innovation, planning strategically, and responding to unexpected situations.

Reorganisation has become a resolution for multiple organisational issues; and thus, the top management investigates the how this impacts the lives of employees. Cameron and Green (2019) and Hughes (2022) further maintain that managers must be aware of the various downfalls that can impede the success of the restructuring process and have a suitable strategy in place to deal with the downfalls. If an enterprise is facing difficulties, restructuring may be the last resort since it does not always resolve the issue it was intended to solve. According to Hughes (2011, 2022), of the change initiatives implemented, 70% of these have failed.

This could be due to leaders' failure to use a proper framework to integrate transformation and successfully manage. Restructuring, according to Torbert (1987) and Kilper and Wood (2020), is a long-term procedure that builds on itself. It is essential to recognize that skipping phases

in this process would not speed up the process; rather, it may be stalled or perhaps even ruined. Burke and Nelson (1998) and Kilper and Wood (2020) elaborated that restructuring may occur not just because the organisation is not profitable, but also because the organization needs to remain competitive. According to a survey, 81% of reorganized organizations were more profitable the following year of restructuring.

## **2.5 Types of Corporate Restructuring**

Chaddha (2016) and McMillan and Perron (2020) clarified that reorganisation has a significant impact on the morale of the involved personnel. These authors add that the staff often feel that restructuring is an unfair process to them and after the organisational restructuring, there is enormous confusion about their roles in the organisation and what is expected of them. The decreased morale among staff will ultimately lower their trust and loyalty to the enterprise, as well as the Staff members' feeling of security is diminished. There are three types of restructuring that Furrer (2016) identified, namely, *organisational*, *financial* and *portfolio* restructuring. These will be discussed further in the sections that follow.

### **2.5.1 Organisational Restructuring**

Brooks (2018) defines organisational restructuring as "an organized process of making significant improvements to the structure of the company. This does not necessarily mean that the entire organisational structure is changed, but rather that certain employees in that organisation are moved into different positions. Restructuring brings about change in the enterprise. It entails reorganizing sub-units, changing communication and collaboration methods, and working within the organisation to adapt to changes in the environment.

### **2.5.2 Financial Restructuring**

According to Lubian (2014) and Harrigan and Wing (2021), financial restructuring focuses on changing the capital and ownership structure of the organisation. This type of restructuring is common in businesses that want to reduce the agency associated with incompetence while tightening ownership and control. According to these authors, this type of restructuring is usually carried out in organisations with a high debt-to-equity ratio.

### ***2.5.3 Portfolio Restructuring***

This type of restructuring involves reorganising the organisation through acquisitions and mergers because of changes in the executives perception of the scope of the organisation. Furthermore, Furrer (2010) and Harrigan and Wing (2021) stated that the process of restructuring is necessary to prevent diminishing the organisation's resources.

## **2.6 Reasons for Restructuring**

Kotter et al. (2021) state that there are several reasons that an organisation would decide to rearrange its structures and operations. If the reorganisation process is implemented properly, this can positively enhance productivity. It may also result in the implementation of cutting-edge technology. The following are some of the reasons for restructuring:

### ***2.6.1 Downsizing or Rightsizing***

According to Nayab (2012) and Thangavelu (2018), downsizing is the most common result of a changing economy. An organisation may be rightsized or downsized as a result of the implementation of new strategies or a new product, as well as the intense pressure and competition from companies using a low-price strategy and drops in input costs.

### ***2.6.2 Finance-Related Issues***

According to Cameron and Green (2015) and Yue (2022), the current state of the market forces organizations to restructure in order to cut costs. Businesses that are on the verge of bankruptcy may need to reevaluate their resources, such as their human resources, and try to make them leaner in an effort to cut costs. In order to increase cash flow, organizations might also think about selling excess assets. These tactics will prevent the company from filing for bankruptcy.

### ***2.6.3 Efficiency or Effectiveness***

To ensure that the organisation is operating at its best, businesses could reevaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation and make internal improvements (Fouad, et al., 2019). The goal of doing this is to maximise productivity.

### ***2.6.4 New Work Methods***

Fouad, et al., 2019 further stated that a typical working day for most organisations is from 8:00 until 16:00, but the advent of new work arrangements like flextime, outsourcing, and telecommuting has altered organizational practices, policies, and culture. These new systems frequently necessitate a process of reorganisation.

The business world is and always will be one that is dynamic. It never stops and changes over time without ceasing. External factors occasionally have the power to seriously harm some industries. For instance, two of the most severely impacted industries during the COVID 19 pandemic were tourism and hospitality (Joshi and Gupta, 2021). The players' only option in scenarios like this is to persevere. Industry giants might have the resources to survive, but not every organisation will. To continue operating in such circumstances, a company may change its focus and go through a restructuring process.

Joshi and Gupta (2021) further stated that over time, operations will continue to incorporate new approaches. The emergence of the culture of remote work, new and improved working systems, better employee policies, and technological advancements are a few examples of this. To these changes, a business needs to react and adapt quickly. These changes might occasionally require a significant organisational restructuring. These may result in new divisions, managers who report to others, etc. It may occasionally be necessary to restructure in order to create new departments, management structures, and leadership philosophies.

### ***2.6.5 Flattening the Hierarchy***

Companies that adopt a new flattened structure to improve the internal structure of the organisation must adopt the restructuring process in order to carry out the changes to the structure (Al-Obaidi, 2018).

### ***2.6.6 Technological Changes***

According to Nayab (2012) and Al-Obaidi (2018), restructuring is necessary to implement in order to keep pace with changes in technology, work procedures, as well as other business operations.

### ***2.6.7 Mergers and Acquisitions***

According to De Pamphilis (2018), acquisitions and mergers, require reorganisation to achieve the following:

- to take into account the requirements and preferences of the new owner,
- to reduce replications in systems and human resources, and

- to conduct a thorough review of the merged organisation's systems and processes to ensure consistency.

### ***2.6.8 New Product or Service***

Restructuring is necessary if the organisation has introduced a new service or product and implement a new strategy.

### ***2.6.9 Statutory and Legal Compliance***

Changes in legal and statutory requirements result in the reorganisation of an enterprise (Andersen, 2022). This is done so that the organisation complies with the new legal or statutory requirements.

### ***2.6.10 Internal or External Crisis***

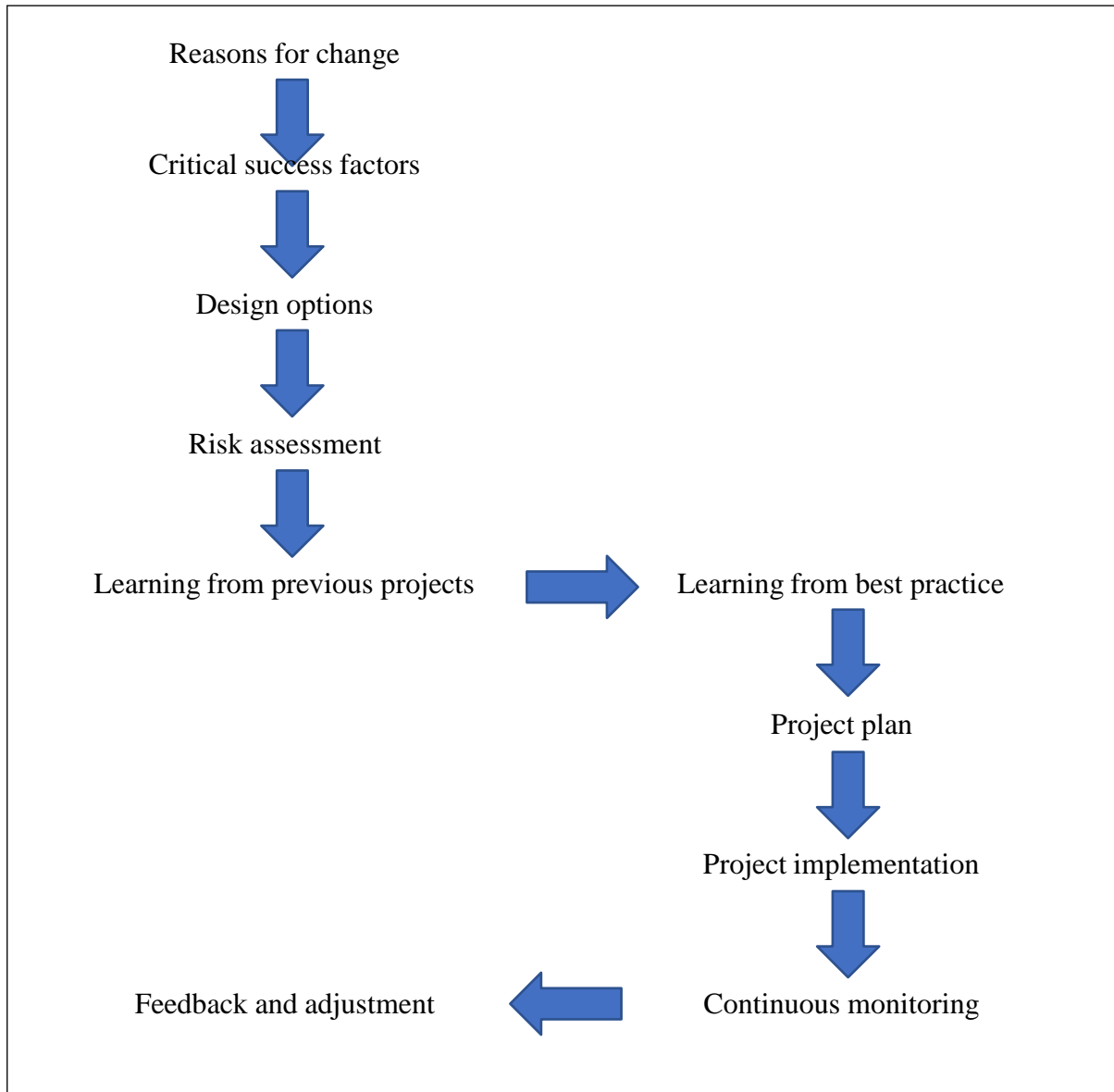
Burnes and Jackson (2011) state that unexpected or unforeseen change necessitates organisational reorganisation in order to successfully and competently accommodate the change.

## **2.7 The Restructuring Process**

Figure 2.1 shows steps in the restructuring process. The steps are explained in detail in the sections that follow.

**Figure 2.1**

*The Restructuring Process*



**2.7.1 Strategic Review**

Any business that wants to restructure its organisation needs a logical plan in order to carry out the action. This can be accomplished through the strategic review process, in which problems with the business environment (both internally and externally) are identified as areas that require attention.

### ***2.7.2 Reasons for Change***

The organisation should explain why the change is required. Aldossari (2020) mentioned some of the potential causes of the change are listed below:

- mergers and acquisitions
- Improved client responsiveness
- change in management
- change in laws and regulations
- to increase in effectiveness.

### ***2.7.3 Critical Success Factors***

An important component of organisational restructuring is identifying and defining critical success factors. According to Cameron and Green (2015) and Kiran and Reddy (2019), organizations should look at their market, infrastructure, culture, organisational processes, and strategies in order to identify the crucial success factors.

### ***2.7.4 Design Options***

The different ways that an organisation can be structured are described by design options. The evolution of the organisational structure and its connection to the organisational strategy have been described in great detail by Kiran and Reddy (2019). The following are these structures:

- **Functional structure:** this occurs when there is a traditional service or product, a national market, or both.
- An **entrepreneurial structure** develops when there is only one good or service offered, or a small local market.
- **Dynamic networks** are present when there is a need for product and service design or when global markets are undergoing change.
- **Divisional structure:** occurs when there is a change in the product line, national or international markets.
- **Matrix structures** can be found in innovative products or in markets that are both stable and changing.

Organisations are usually designed according to their functional, divisional, entrepreneurial or matrix structure.

### ***2.7.5 Risk Assessment***

Every restructuring procedure has unavoidable side effects. According to Ali, et al., (2021) These risk factors must be recognized and understood by organisation executives. The executives must be aware of all potential risks and devise effective strategies to reduce those risks. The risks can vary from organisation to organisation, but some of them include communication, people, corporate identity, synergies, structure, and cost.

### ***2.7.6 Learning From Previous Projects and Best Practice***

Cameron (2015) and Yue (2022) stated that executives should make a list of the methods that had worked out for the organisation and the methods that did not work in previous restructuring initiatives of the organisation. Those methods should then be used (or avoided) in the present restructuring initiative.

### ***2.7.7 Project Planning and Project Implementation***

#### ***2.7.7.1 Leadership***

The learning phase brings about instability in the enterprise for both staff and management. Chebbi, et al., (2020) states that executives must prevent production from ceasing in the organisation despite the confusion among the staff. To be productive in the new structure, employees need to be trained. The transition from the old to the new structure must go smoothly.

#### ***2.7.7.2 Future Direction and Strategy***

Effective reorganisation happens when there is clear strategy and direction rising from a balance between mission and vision. Employees should be informed of how organisational restructuring will advance their future and enhance their working conditions (Chebbi, et al. 2020).

#### ***2.7.7.3 Communication***

According to Ewing, et al. (2019) communication is a vital factor in reorganisation. There must be a balance between under- communication and over-communication. The method of communication is crucial, and it must be personal, like face-to-face conversations. Emails and other impersonal methods are not preferred. Executives must ensure that communication is

well planned, sent to the affected parties at the appropriate time, and through the appropriate medium.

#### *2.7.7.4 The Implementation Process*

Cameron and Green (2015) and Kiran and Reddy (2019) have stated that some executives might underestimate the complexity of organisational restructuring and sometimes do not adhere to the restructuring timelines, therefore resulting in delays, which, in turn, puts undue stress on employees. The timelines and plans for the restructuring must be followed, and managers must promptly inform the workforce of any delays.

#### *2.7.7.5 Supporting Mechanism*

To ensure a smooth restructuring process, support mechanisms should be put in place. This will also guarantee a smooth transition to new systems.

#### *2.7.7.6 Visible Management Support*

Throughout the restructuring process, executives should be very helpful and present. De Jong et al. (2016) state that management must explain to workers the purpose of the reorganization and emphasize how it will improve upon the outdated methods of operation.

#### *2.7.7.7 Continued Communication of the Purpose*

Personalized communication sessions with the staff must be planned by the executives. This will guarantee that the appropriate employees receive communication at the appropriate time. Ewing, et al., (2019) states that to ensure that the employees understand the information they are receiving, communication should be two-way.

#### *2.7.7.8 Senior Management Attention*

Gamble-Smith (2021) states that senior executives must attend meetings, be present during organisational restructuring, and visit the workspaces of the staff. The staff is very appreciative of the managers' presence because it demonstrates that the senior executives are concerned about their welfare throughout the restructuring process.

#### *2.7.7.9 Constructive Consultation*

Buick, et al., (2018) states that middle managers and staff must be fully involved in designing the change process so that they can easily pick up irregularities early on in the process and resolve them.

### ***2.7.8 Monitoring and Review***

Throughout the entire restructuring process, from the initial stages to the final stages, monitoring and reviewing are required. According to Harney, et al., (2018) executives must keep an eye on the restructuring plans and receive continuous feedback throughout the process so they can see what is happening and respond appropriately. Even if there is nothing wrong with the restructuring process, employees may resist change. It is normal for workers to experience emotional responses to specific situations they may encounter at work.

Harney, et al., (2018) further states that this can be managed by the superiors. Alternatively, there can be a resistance to change if there are any gaps or flaws in the restructuring process. This issue must be dealt with by the executives of the organisations. The restructuring process can only work out favourably if the employees are involved and actively listening to their managers. Monitoring and review should be done from the commencement of the reorganisation process and must continue well after restructuring.

## **2.8 The Impact of Restructuring on Employee Well-Being**

Cooper and Dewe (2017) and Fotinatos-Ventouratos (2021) have stated that stress has an enormous effect on an employee's health. The wellness process is vital as it permits groups and individuals to be more aware of the choices and responsibilities that affect their lives. Additionally, individuals will consciously choose to live healthy, fulfilling lives. The well-being of staff is an essential part of the enterprise, as it ensures that the organisation stays productive and competitive. Therefore, having a healthy workforce can result in a more satisfied and effective workforce.

According to Vundla (2012) and Norwood (2018), employee wellness is an improvement of the employee's health. It stresses the individual's responsibility for their own well-being through promoting healthy lifestyle behaviour. Kassiem (2014) and Norwood found that the staff who have survived the restructuring process are often the ones who are demotivated. They may lose commitment to the organisation and are often insecure since they see that there is no career growth in the company. Change and organisational restructuring are crucial organisational processes because they are essential to the growth and sustainability of an organisation.

The reorganisation process is an essential tool for the organisation's existence; however, it may have a negative effect on the well-being of the employees. Jung and Yoon (2015) and Raharjo et al. (2018) stated that some organisational restructuring initiatives tend to fail to improve the productivity and the financial performance of the enterprise. This may be due to the negative effects that the restructuring process has on the wellbeing of the workers. Because of this, businesses should thoroughly investigate and comprehend how restructuring affects both the organisation and the welfare of its employees. A happier, more motivated, and more productive workforce will result from conducting this investigation after reorganization. This will, in turn, positively affect productivity and profitability.

In any organisation, productivity is crucial. According to Anitha (2014) and Vrontis et al. (2019), a person's level of productivity is correlated with their psychological well-being. Employees who are content are more stable psychologically and more effective. Hayes (2014) and Vrontis et al. (2019) illustrated how workplace culture and employee engagement directly affect output. A positive work environment encourages an effective workforce.

After the reorganisation process, some employees are stunned by the fear of losing their jobs and are therefore uncommitted, innovative, or flexible in their tasks, as demonstrated by Kieselbach et al. (2010) and Kaltiainen (2018). This lowers the organization's ability to compete and lowers customer satisfaction. Cummings and Worley (2014) assert that a company's downsizing will lead to fewer career opportunities. Every employee has a psychological agreement with the company they work for, and one of those agreements includes the right to career advancement. This agreement is broken by organisational restructuring, which causes dissatisfied workers.

Vakola and Petrou (2018) indicated that in a study undertaken among employees after a restructuring, the workers felt as if there was no career progression in their organisation. This resulted in employee exhaustion, which decreases workplace productivity, and then contributes to the mental and physical exhaustion of employees. The staff that are not affected by the restructuring process are referred to as survivors of restructuring. According to Padayachy (2022), after the reorganisation process, employees frequently lack motivation, some develop feelings of insecurity, and some lack commitment to the business because they lost a traditional career as a result of the restructuring.

The psychological contract between the employee and the employer can be broken as a result of organisational restructuring, according to Li and Chen (2018), who also noted that increased accountability and more intense work demands may result due to restructuring. Staff members have unavoidably become less dedicated to the company as a result of this. The way in which employees view organisational change is crucial. Personality traits and other individual traits that will influence an employee's perceptions are a good illustration of this.

Getiye (2022) claimed that employees are a company's most valuable asset, so motivating employees ensures that they perform to the best of their abilities. Getiye lists the following as some of the unfavorable outcomes of organisational restructuring:

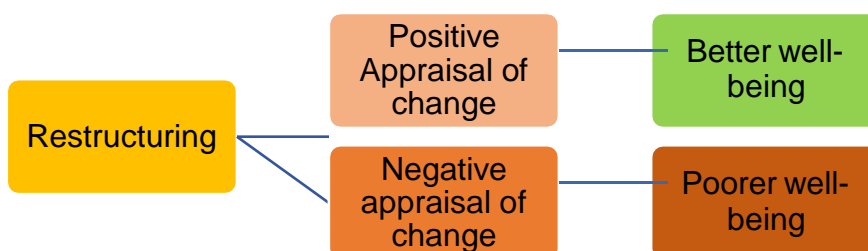
- Staff who experience change through organisational restructuring experience higher sentiments of job insecurity, even 10 years after the change process, than the employees in companies that did not experience this change.
- When companies draw out the process of restructuring, for more than 2 years, for example, this can negatively affect the wellbeing of the employee. Employee commitment to the company is reduced, their health is negatively impacted, their level of job satisfaction declines, and illness and absenteeism are on the rise.
- Staff well-being is unfavourably affected by the experience of being moved to a lower position. As a result, productivity will decline and stress and fatigue will rise.

Reorganisation can also have positive effects, however. In the case of an employee's employment position being upgraded, this will have a great impact on an employee's well-being (Getiye, 2022). The effects of organisational restructuring will eventually increase work engagement, innovative behavior, and job satisfaction.

The positive and negative impacts are shown in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2**

*The Impact of Restructuring on Employee Well-Being*



According to Andersen (2022), the impact of restructuring on employees will depend on how they view the reorganisation process. Employees will require critical assistance from numerous stakeholders after restructuring. If there is effective communication, the effects of reorganization are mitigated. Employees should feel supported by their managers and coworkers, and management should make every effort to earn their confidence. The reorganization process requires active participation from the workforce. They must be given the opportunity to participate in decision-making. Effective communication, support, and active participation are the three factors that will contribute to a greater sense of wellness within the organisation.

According to Ali et al. (2021), the older workforce has a less employable in the market and can have a greater negative impact on organisational restructuring than the younger, more employable workforce. The younger workforce finds it slightly simpler to adapt to the new organisational changes and their new careers than the employees who have been with the company longer. The older workforce is weary of organisational change and therefore tends to retire early.

According to De Jong et al. (2016), a staff member's ability to cope will determine whether or not reorganisation has a positive or negative impact on their well-being. It was discovered that while employees who had an emotional response to restructuring experienced negative impacts on their well-being, employees who took direct action to improve their situation experienced positive effects.

De Jong et al. (2016) further explains that due to the ambiguity of tasks following restructuring, job demand is affected by company reorganisation, which has an impact on employee wellbeing. Employee well-being will improve as managers and supervisors provide more support. Another factor to think about is the possibility that restructuring will lead to employee conflict or unruly behaviour. Support from co-workers is a crucial tool that can lead to improved employee well-being.

Restructuring involves making adjustments to an organisation's policies, rules, and practices, which may make workers more stressed. Employee commitment to the company and attitude may also change as a result. According to De Jong (2016) and Ali et al. (2021), an employee's level of stress has an impact on their wellness. Stress is a very worrying factor for management because it directly affects how effectively employees perform in an organisation. As a result, management needs to take action to reduce and prevent stress. Employee absenteeism can be

directly impacted by stress, which unintentionally affects organisational productivity. These are a few reasons why people experience stress at work:

- the presence of challenging workloads that are perceived by the staff as being unreasonable owing to unrealistic targets and deadlines
- the job itself – it may be repetitive, have poor task design, and not be challenging
- unrealistic working hours
- lack of training and development in current position
- no support from the management
- mergers and acquisitions, together with other factors result in job insecurity
- a lack of effective communication

Hu, et al., (2018) states that employees tend to spend more time at work than engaged in their personal activities. This brings about an unhealthy work–life relationship. People spend the majority of their waking hours at work, and this time has an impact on their well-being. The executive team should implement preventative measures and controls that can assist with improving staff well-being and this will have an indirect impact on the organisation's profitability.

## **2.9 Motivating Employees for Change**

According to Choi and Ruona (2011) and Stouten et al. (2018), effective organisational change can only be achieved if employees are willing to change their job behavior to support the change.

According to Stouten et al. (2018), management is critical in ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to ensure that all employees support the change initiative. The success of the restructuring process will be determined by this. The company executives must emphasise effective communication for a successful change process. An enterprise is equivalent to an open system, that needs to be in a balanced state, with all of its resources in order. An enterprise is similar to an open system that must be in a balanced state. An organisation's resources includes its employees, so if the employees are thrown off balance by organisational restructuring, this will bring about pressure on the management, since they have to restore the state of balance in the organisation.

Mansaray (2019) states that the reorganisation process can be achieved by bringing into line the other elements to the components that will resist the change. The company executives play

an important role here, since they support the employees throughout the change process by motivating them to support change. Company executives should encourage employees by highlighting the advantages that restructuring will bring.

## **2.10 Staff Commitment and Support for Change**

Jung et al. (2020) explained that when employees are committed to the organisation and are more accepting of organisational change, they will exert more effort to ensure that the change process is successful. Commitment in the organisation assists in reducing workplace stress that the staff experience during the change process. Every staff member has a signed contract with their employer. This contract, according to Jung et al. (2020), is a discernment of trust, fairness and an agreement between employee and employer.

McMillan and Perron (2020) state that elements like loyalty, discretion (the employee should be able to keep company secrets), and working to their full potential are some of the contract elements that the employer will expect from the employee. The employee expects the employer to pay and treat them fairly, to provide job security and autonomy, and to allow them to learn and grow in the workplace. If the employees believe that the employer's part of the contract is being met, they will be more committed to the company. In contrast, if employees believe their employer is not upholding their end of the bargain, they will be less committed and willing to be innovative, and they will react negatively to change.

Hayes (2018) observed that employees who were retained during the restructuring process were less likely to respond with higher levels of productivity and commitment. On the contrary: they might respond with being concerned, guilty, have anxiety and shock for those that have left or for those who have been negatively affected by restructuring. Members of the workforce may also react negatively when they feel that they have been treated less fairly than staff who receive much better benefits than them, for example.

## **2.11 Factors That Undermine Support for Change**

Hayes (2018) has recognised four factors that cause employees to resist change, therefore affecting the restructuring process:

### ***2.11.1 Low Trust***

According to Hayes (2018), when employees misunderstand anything regarding the change process or if they are unsure of how they will benefit from the change, this is one of the main

reasons they could resist change initiatives. These misunderstandings push employees to believe that the change will be detrimental to them and might result in their losing their jobs. Usually this occurs when there is a lack of trust between the change manager and the staff, resulting in resistance to change. The executives should plan for and anticipate resistance to change. Effective communication should take place in order for the managers to properly guide their employees through every step of the change process. If proper communication is not present, no matter how beneficial or good the change process will be to employees, it cannot be successfully implemented.

### ***2.11.2 Low Tolerance for Change***

According to Arnéguy, et al., (2018), employees tend to resist change when they believe they will be unable to develop the new skills required to run the new changed processes. Some employees may not understand why change is required in an organisation or how it can improve their work-life balance, so they resist it because they are unable to emotionally handle it or are afraid of the unknown. If employees believe they are lost in the change process, they will automatically go into denial/resistance and will be reluctant to let go of old habits.

### ***2.11.3 Different Assessment***

The employees might view the situation in a different way than others involved in the change process, and this can result in their seeing change as less beneficial to them. The company executives often assume that staff are as well informed as they are, and this often results in employees' resisting change. Buick et al. (2018) stated that lack of effective communication can bring about resistance to change. The executives responsible for the change process must consider outside partners who can factor in the protection from change and guarantee communication between staff and management.

### ***2.11.4 Parochial Self-Interest***

According to Hayes (2018), management should not consider what change will mean for employees personally and instead look at the situation from a rational standpoint. By doing so, employees will be less resistant to change. The extent to which the workforce perceives the amount of benefit or harm that the change process will bring them.

## **2.12 Resistance to Change and the Need to Motivate Staff**

Carranza, et al., (2020) states that an organisation's change leadership can motivate employees to support the change initiative in a variety of ways. Some of these methods are discussed further below.

### ***2.12.1 Education and Persuasion***

According to Pathak and Srivastava (2017), one technique that is commonly used to reduce resistance to change is educating employees about the need for change by providing them with specialized affirmation and a logical argument. As rational humans, the staff can recognize facts presented in an unbiased educational presentation about the reasons for change. As a result, they will alter their behavior in response to the facts presented.

Pathak and Srivastava (2017) further state that another approach to persuade employees is through tapping into the employee's emotions. This could be done by presenting an enthusiastic argument in that is in favour of change. This will ensure that change seems more appealing to the staff members. Employee encouragement is an important mechanism in advertising, and it is also a useful tool when there is a low level of employee commitment to the change process. This method assists with increasing the buy-in from employees and it convinces them of the consequences they might face if they are not on board with the change process, while also letting them know about the benefits of change.

Dzwigol (2019) mentioned that employees are more likely to be convinced of the need for change if they are told about the loss and benefits they might experience. People in general are more inclined to change if they know the possible outcomes and how they will be affected along the way. Most of the time, staff are more concerned about what they might lose in the process of change, rather than what they might gain from it.

The staff have to be motivated for them to change, and the changing organisation has to open their eyes as to why there is a need for change. This means that the company executives can create an environment of dissatisfaction with the present company state, showing employees exactly what they will lose if the enterprise does not undergo the change process. However, executives must be careful not to blame employees, as this may cause them to resist change because they want to justify current practices and reject the need for change (Mayr & Lixl, 2019).

According to Latham (2012) and Dzwigol (2019), the staff have to be actively involved in the collection, analysis and presentation of information, with the aim of being aware that the material or data is accurate and not fabricated by the management. The employees' involvement will, in turn, motivate them to change. Staff involvement and participation in the process generates an environment that is filled with motivation, excitement and shared understanding.

When employees see or feel that the change is not simply imposed on them, but that they are genuinely included in the change process, they are more likely to accept it. Participation in the restructuring process not only boosts motivation but also helps to keep the change going. Latham (2012) and Ponting (2020) conducted studies that demonstrated that when staff are involved in the company's change process, they are more receptive to new practices and the overall change, as they are conjointly accountable for the practice.

### ***2.12.2 Facilitation and Support***

Hayes (2014) and (Jokubauskas et al., 2021) stated that anxiety and fear can bring about resistance to change. Organisations can lower resistance by providing support and facilitation through providing emotional support, training employees so that they can adapt more easily or extending leave days to employees to allow them to process or cope with any loss from change. Employees and people in general need time to detach with their present position after a sense of loss. Hayes (2014) added that group-sharing sessions give employees a chance to express their feelings about their loss. Managers should emphasise the need for change to employees and clearly state the consequences the company might face if change were not implemented. The management should also offer emotional support to employees.

### ***2.12.3 Negotiation***

According to Jokubauskas et al. (2021), incentives should be provided to employees in order to reduce resistance and compensate employees for any losses caused by restructuring. Employees who do not believe that change will benefit them can be motivated simply by rewarding any behavior that promotes change. Negotiation is a highly effective tool for overcoming resistance to change.

### ***2.12.4 Manipulation and Co-Option***

Rios, (2018) clarified that in the process of implementing or designing organisational change, using influential individuals in the company can help to endorse change. However, the disadvantage of this method is that these staff members can be co-opted into thinking that

change is not good or not positive, and this can negatively affect the restructuring efforts of the organisation, as they can be influenced by their co-workers, which can cause employees to resist change even further.

#### ***2.12.5 Explicit Coercion***

Hayes (2014) and Mayr and Lixl (2019) explained that explicit and coercion happens when executives or managers persuade employees to change by threatening to hold back any kind of reward if they resist organisational change. Although the workforce may continue to comply with the change, their motivation and support for change will be low. Executives will need to be constantly vigilant as they monitor the situation and continue with the threat for organisational change to succeed.

#### ***2.12.6 Goal-Setting***

Goal-setting is another factor that affects motivation and performance of staff. Swann et al. (2021) elaborated that attractive goals have an effect on the effective working methods, persistence and priorities of staff.

### **2.13 Reasons for Failure or Success of Reorganisation Interventions**

A low success rate is one notable aspect about organisational restructuring efforts. According to Burnes and Jackson (2011) and Mayr and Lixl (2019), the absence of alignment between the value system of the change intervention and that of the organisation and its people is possibly a significant reason for this failure. Thus far, among all the obstacles and challenges which prevent the continuing viability and success of the restructuring processes, there has been a substantial increase in the scale, speed, importance and unpredictability of change, and need for keeping the organisation ahead of the times. This compels organisations to act, as it is their only hope for survival. Peter (2019) believe that when the intended organisational change does not succeed, the enterprise's arrangement with organisational members is broken, and institutions are more motivated to partake in the restructuring initiation and implementation. In addition, the company should be able to prove or show their legitimacy to the public.

Branson (2008) and Evans (2020) supports the view that success of restructuring depends on the alignment of values of the organisational culture and the organisation's fundamental principles, rather than just the change process. The failure of aligning the company's value systems to organisational change strategies and the staff's individual values or principles can also lead to employees' resisting change; therefore, it is vital to understand interdependence of

these important change elements. If the values of the organisation and employees are recognised and acknowledged when planning for change, specifically looking at the building blocks – culture, purpose, identity, beliefs and values, the environment and behaviours – a strong personal relationship is built.

In a similar context, studies by Keller and Schaninger (2019), along with other leading management consultancies have found that approximately two thirds of all change initiatives do not succeed. The challenge has been that little thought being put into research about the many factors and explanations behind the disappointment. The other error that people and associations make, as indicated by Paton and McCalman (2008) and Jongen et al. (2019), is revising methodologies that were effective in the past but are now no longer fitting. With an end goal of guaranteeing effective execution and positive reactions from employees, Kim and Scott (2019) stressed the significance of the role played by correspondence from the board throughout the change process, as well as the management of issues faced by restructuring survivors in the organisation.

This notion comes from studies that have shown that responses to restructuring are affected by the management's correspondence about the outcomes and consequences of change. Bürger et al. (2008) and Mudrak et al. (2020) proposed the use of logotherapy as an organisational development (OD) intervention (logo-OD) and a perceived model of psychology that would assist employees with discovering the significance and reason of life, regardless of the conditions. Logotherapy can be defined as “therapy through meaning” and, as indicated by Bürger et al. (2008) and Shaked (2021), logo-OD could be used as a positive trigger instance for organisational change execution to help reduce workers' resistance to change. By raising mindfulness and self-guided ways of behaving, the positive trigger occasion would cause a change in employees' perspectives and create a readiness for change. Bürger et al. (2008) and Shaked (2021) stated that OD adds to workers' seeing change as an opportunity as opposed to a danger.

Logo-OD can assume a part in encouraging employees to change in this manner, decreasing resistance by changing employee attitudes towards change. Erwin and Garman (2010) and Daovisan & Chamaratana (2020) expressed that well beyond framework processes of strategy and procedures, mission and technique, and organisational procedure, more attention should be given to different variables that affect the outcome of organisational change, for example, individual ways of behaving, values, needs and inspiration. Also, according to Mudrak et al. (2020), individuals should be involved, contribute, commit and connect meaningfully for

restructuring to happen effectively. To resolve issues in real context, organisations need to acquire information about the unfavourable impacts of organisational change initiatives on individuals.

With regard to assessing achievement or failure of the restructuring drives, the two parts that need appraisal are the acknowledgment of the context from which the change is based and the methodology taken in its execution. Consideration of the human component must be prioritised in any process that tries to change the genuine organisation, in the light of the fact that the people make an organisation and the actual company is a collective of distinct individuals.

Accordingly, the organisation's long-term success and suitability rely upon the organisation's capacity to include every component of value alignment in its execution of the change process, and to productively adapt to the required changes to guarantee this (Branson, 2008 and Kokkoris, 2020). Paton and McCalman (2008) and Kokkoris (2020) proposed that consideration of a framework relationship can be key to progress; change is analysed and seen through a relationship map that plainly shows interlinkages between all role players, such as clients, financial supporters, providers, competition, government, managers, employees and unions. As per Paton and McCalman, when this occurs, the change specialist might start to see the value in the linkages or connection points and intricacies that are part of the change environment.

## **2.14 Barriers to Restructuring**

Aldossari (2020) illustrated five impediments to the restructuring processes:

- the absence of clear objectives about where the organisation is going;
- the absence of or poor assistance from top management,
- the lack of strong communication and updates about the restructuring process from the top management;
- employees' inability to see the need for restructuring the organisation by thinking that the company's current undesired situation will ultimately just go away without changing the company's organogram;
- self-serving senior executives who care very little about the survival and the progress of the organisation; and

- the inability to recognise the right time to start the restructuring process.

According to (Aldossari, 2020), the following factors can cause problems during restructuring: a lack of commitment, everything being equal, overseeing rebuilding at the administrative level, teaching employees that they need to change, organizing change workshops for workers and assuming that they should go along with the restructuring process, failing to respect the past, and not allowing employees time to vent their concerns and feelings first, before the restructuring process begins.

### **2.15 Overcoming Resistance to Restructuring**

Arnéguy et al. (2018) declared that some employees in organisations see the term restructuring as a secret language that businesses use for the harsh reality of downsizing, bringing about unemployment. According to (Rudolph et al., 2021), stress was linked indirectly through perceived business vulnerability and employment vulnerability perceptions to actual risk of joblessness following notification of restructuring. Kreitner and Kinicki (2008) and Arnéguy et al. (2018) proposed potential explanations for why people resisted change, and they linked resistance to change with concern of the unknown, an untrusting environment, apprehension of disappointment, an anxiety about losing status or job security, peer pressure, the disruption of social norms or connections, character conflicts, lack of consideration and timing, shattering the remuneration framework, and a history of failures. Arnéguy et al. (2018) expressed that resistance to organisational change happens at individual, group and organisational levels. As per Seijts and Roberts (2011) cited in Arnéguy et al. (2018) employees who view themselves as having control over their current circumstances and individual achievements embrace change willingly.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2008) and Samuel & Engelbrecht (2021) expressed that we are all predictable creatures. Typically, individuals find it hard to attempt new strategies for getting things done. The reason for this is that most staff members have similar essential human qualities and lack of enthusiasm for change in the work environment. Samuel and Engelbrecht (2021, cited in Robbins et al., 2010) expressed that life is already complex and therefore we should not have to weigh up various decisions for the overwhelming majority of choices we must make on an ongoing basis. To manage this complexity, we depend on programmed or customised responses. Cascio et al., (2021) expressed that good restructuring choices executed badly might produce negative responses from employees. Although it may appear that

employees frequently respond with resistance to change, since they are straightforward people who prefer the status quo to remain unchanged, they become unsettled when somebody changes the norms. This response can likewise be set off needlessly by the directors' poor decisions.

Measures to overcome resistance to organisational change and mediators of negative work-related factors during reorganising are primarily attributable to the fact that, most of the time, reorganising and downsizings are related with indications of endure two class levels (De Cuyper et al., 2010; Zehra & Siddiqui, 2019):

- **personal reactions** such as resentment, antagonism, trouble, and so forth;
- **attitudinal reactions** such as work disappointment, diminished trust, absence of authoritative responsibility, and so forth; and

Seijts and Roberts (2011) and Coule & Bain (2021) stated that if employees do not embrace change or are sceptical of the initiative's success, the drive will fail, regardless of how persuasive the senior management's vision for the change may be. Coule & Bain (2021) highlighted that directors who expect to restructure or downsize enterprises should genuinely consider the effect such initiatives will have on employees and try to ensure that the process serves its intended purpose.

Hellriegel et al. (2009) and Dung & Hai (2020) contended that resisting change will not ever disappear completely, yet management can find better approaches for mitigating its adverse effects by adopting four generally used techniques: (a) education and correspondence, (b) support and involvement, (c) discussion and (d) control and co-operation. Change Theories

This part of the chapter intended to guide the readers through various frameworks and theories that can be used to effectively support the change process in creating healthy work environments. It will also include change theory that is the backbone of this research, namely, Senge's Fifth Discipline.

### ***2.15.1 Expectancy Theory***

According to Hayes (2014) and Thangavelu (2018), employees who have been involved in the change process are motivated and supportive of the change if they believe it will benefit them. Employees will only respond positively if they receive the promised benefit. Expectancy theory describes how expectations influence motivation.

Expectancy theory distinguishes effort received by recipients of change from motivation, performance of the recipients, and outcomes (Flores et al., 2019). The theory assumes that recipients' behaviour is the result of conscious choices they make, with the main goal of receiving the most pleasure and the least amount of pain. Recipients' performance is determined by factors such as skill, personality, knowledge, experience and abilities. Personal motivation is linked to performance, effort and motivation.

Perceptions drive expectancy theory. An employer can do everything possible to motivate employees, and the majority of them will respond positively; however, some employees may believe that it did not work for them (Sims & Chinta, 2020). In some cases, the reward for doing a good job will motivate the employee, and if recipients believe that continuing to perform well will lead to additional rewards, they will be more motivated to perform. In other cases, recipients will behave in a certain way because they anticipate a specific outcome. Expectancy theory is concerned with people's attitudes towards expected outcomes and their contributions to the outcome.

### ***2.15.2 The Kurt Lewin Three-Step Model for Change Management by Lewin (1951)***

Reorganisation management can be handled using the widely used Kurt Lewin three-step model for managing change. Unfreeze, change, and refreeze are the three fundamental steps of the model. Lewin's model places emphasis on the necessity of getting rid of old habits before forming new ones (Kaftandzieva, 2021)

The first step in unfreezing the model involves determining an organisation's current status (Ratana et al., 2020). Reorganisation management can be handled using the widely used Kurt Lewin three-step model for managing change. Unfreeze, change, and refreeze are the three fundamental steps of the model. Lewin's model places emphasis on the necessity of getting rid of old habits before forming new ones (Kaftandzieva, 2021).

The first strategy is to strengthen the motivations that direct behavior away from the existing circumstance or state of affairs. The second strategy is to reduce restraints that prevent leaving the current circumstance. Combining the first two strategies is the third option. Throughout the unfreezing procedure, communication is maintained. Organisations must hold confrontational meetings because communication is crucial during the unfreezing process (Okpalaibekwe, 2022).

Team-building exercises or development programmes for all parties involved are excellent platforms for accomplishing the restructuring process.

## **2.16 Theoretical Framework**

### ***2.16.1 Definition and Purpose of Theory***

A theory is an assertion of ideas and how they relate to one another that explains how and why a phenomenon or event occurs. It can also be viewed as a well-developed logical explanation of an event, according to Corley and Gioia (2011) and Aslam et al. (2020). A theory is described as such by Sergeeva & Kortantamer (2021). A research question is typically developed using a theory, which is then used to guide the selection of relevant data, interpret the data, and provide explanations for the underlying influences or causes of the phenomenon under study.

### ***2.16.2 Theoretical Background***

With the perspective on the abovementioned, we now take into account Peter Senge's (2006) theory of the "Fifth Discipline," which will be used in this research as the main theory and to provide guidance in problem-solving from the perspective of an organisation. Senge (2006, Mazikana, 2022) agreed that in order for businesses to succeed and remain competitive, they needed to adopt a learning culture and transform into learning organizations, such as businesses that constantly undergo change and discovery.

Senge argued that for organizations to achieve long-term success and truly succeed in the future, they must learn how to capitalize on employees' aptitude for and commitment to advancement at all levels. Individual representatives should view themselves as evolving, learning individuals who must change with their evolving organizations, such as by adhering to a framework or system. According to Azam & Siddiqui (2020), the concept of organisations as places of continuous learning emerged after the 1980s. This concept was brought about by the growth of the "action learning" process, which included factors like small group participation and identifying a group's positive emotional energies. Even though learning begins with the individual, he continued, it is ultimately the responsibility of the learning organisation to incorporate individual learning into organisational learning.

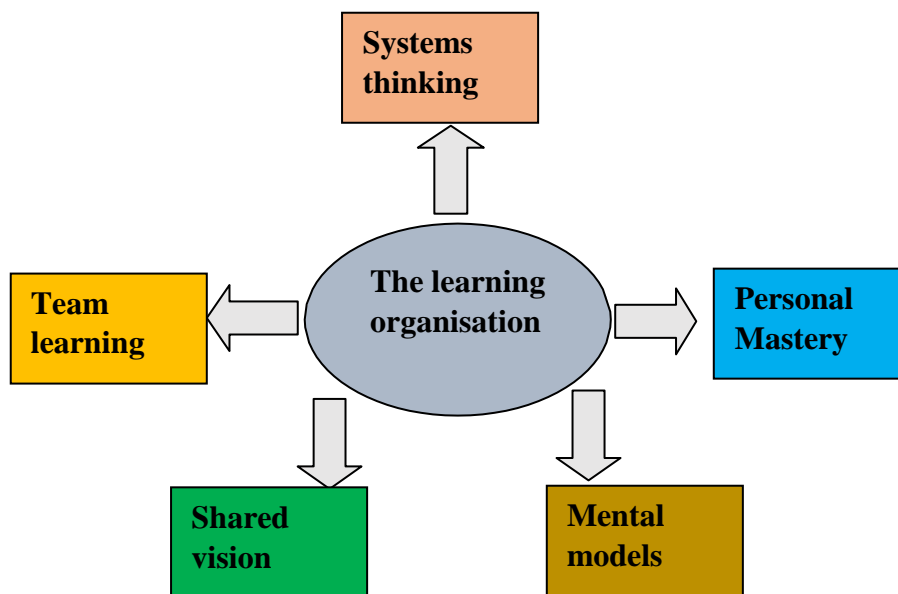
### 2.16.3 The Fifth Discipline:

As previously mentioned, the current study's theoretical structure is drawn from Senge's (2012) work on learning associations/organisations, which is a framework of all members' communicating their aspirations, building mindfulness and creating capacities together. At a learning organisation, individuals who might otherwise have generally been suspicious of each other perceive their common stake in one another's future and their community's future (Senge et al., 2012; Tarnanen et al., 2021).

Senge (2006) promoted the theory of five disciplines and believed that these disciplines are crucial to achieving a learning organisation: (a) systems thinking, which is the discipline that coordinates various disciplines by fusing them into a coherent body of theory and application. It requires the disciplines of (b) creating a shared vision, (c) mental models, (d) group/team learning, and (e) personal mastery. Figure 2.3 depicts the phases and how these five disciplines should align for each to find actual success.

**Figure 2.3**

*Senge's Five Disciplines*



#### 2.16.3.1 Systems Thinking, the Fifth Discipline.

A system is a gathering of interrelated, connecting, and related parts that structure a unified and complex whole (Tarnanen et al., 2021). Systems thinking is an approach to understanding reality that underlines the connections among a system's parts that go beyond the parts

themselves. Instead of concentrating on specific problems, systems thinking reflects how an entire system is observed. Managers must comprehend how each decision and its result lead to another success.

Managers frequently focus on individual actions and, as a result, lose sight of the bigger picture. Employees can identify connections and patterns of change in particular circumstances when they fully understand the correlation. It will be possible for managers to differentiate between cause and effect. By fundamentally and proactively breaking down, for instance, an organisation's current status, future goals, associations with the outside world, and underlying strains, this discipline integrates the other four disciplines (Senge, 1990; Tarnanen et al., 2021

### *2.16.3.2 Mental Models*

Senge (2006) defined mental models as deeply ingrained suppositions, speculative beliefs, or even images or mental representations that affect how people perceive the world and behave. Paton and McCalman (2008) defined mental models as the images, hypotheses, and stories that people convey in their minds and which unconsciously influence their behavior in a way that supports Senge's theory. Employees need to understand the organisation's mission and values, according to Senge. It is easier for employees to see where they are going and how they can advance if they have a clear understanding of who and what they are.

In order to accept new mental models and a new image of the business, the organisation must be adaptable. Organisations, according to Gaiek (2020), are those that can find and adopt new models in order to outperform their rivals. Understanding and utilizing cognitive portrayals of an association are referred to as mental models (Senge, 2006; Gaiek, 2020).

Mental models have been explored in different fields, including sociology, human sciences, psychology and education. As indicated by mental science and psychology research writing, individuals draw on their related involvements to foster mental models as a structure used to make sense of events, permitting individuals to communicate with the world (Cristofaro, 2021). People make such models based on prior information, existing thoughts and previous encounters to interpret and make sense of world events (Cristofaro, 2021). Accordingly, mental models can be viewed as people's portrayals of phenomena to make sense of those phenomena (Forbus, 2019) or mental representations of genuine or imaginary circumstances (Forbus, 2019).

Mental models can be perceived as coordinated information structures that people need to cooperate with their environmental elements (Klein & Crandall, 2018). In the light of past studies, Rouse and Morris (1986) expressed that the three capabilities of psychological models permit individuals to:

- portray a framework's motivation and structure,
- make sense of the framework's working and noticed framework states, and
- foresee future framework states.

The main capability alludes to the origin of a system and why it exists, what it contains and what it looks like (Bui, 2020). The second capability addresses clarifications of what occurs in the system and why the system functions as it does (Bui, 2020). The third, a prescient capability, predicts expected changes (Bui, 2020 and Cristofaro, 2021).

The nature of mental models implies that individuals are frequently unaware of the models' consequences for their way of behaving (Rajagopalan 2020 and Senge, 2006). Moreover, mental models are generally incomplete and only partially founded on real information and perceptions (Rajagopalan, 2020 and Senge, 2012). Individuals with various mental models might envision and portray similar situations distinctively because of the fact that they are centred on various subtleties (Buchanan, 2021; Senge, 2012). They will quite often see and recall only data that supports their current mental models since it decreases their psychological exertion (Senge, 2012). Besides, an individual might hold onto a few commonly clashing mental models (Werhane et al., 2019).

#### **2.16.3.2.1 Example of a Mental Model Used in the Education/ Training Context**

In a study conducted by Zhang and Ahmed (2020) the mental models of teachers (including pre-administration teachers and educator teachers) were studied according to subject matter, educating and learning, for instance, environment education science and second language. Additionally, educator research has examined the relationship between teachers' mental models and implicit depictions in classroom preparations.

Wilke and Losh (2012) showed that educators' mental models, not the depth of their subject knowledge, drove their educational practices. Also, in any event, when educators had deepened their subject knowledge, they did not reshape their academic practices until they had expanded their mental models. Zhang and Ahmed (2020) found that a few real-world mental learning

models might be used to reflect teaching by someone who holds a dual role (as both an educator and a teacher), and these real-world mental models could be used to inform and guide one's actual teaching.

Mental models are rarely talked about, and they stay implicit in instructive networks regardless of their effect on educators' regular choices and activities (Senge 2012). Since mental models reflect individuals' belief frameworks gained through perception, cultural and educational influences (Zhang & Ahmed, 2020), figuring out how to work with mental models through reflection and safe, open conversation may be a bit challenging for schools expecting to become learning communities.

Since mental models assume a critical part in separating conflicting data, and individuals will quite often look for data that accommodates their ongoing understandings (Browne et al., 2021, unexamined mental models might restrict individuals' capacity to change (Browne et al., 2021; Senge,2012). In this manner, especially when changes make mental models explicit through conversation, reflection and dialogic process, educators could improve their understandings of teaching and learning, furthering their academic mastery and.

#### *2.16.3.3 Team Learning*

Team learning fosters groups' abilities to search for the bigger picture beyond people's individual points of view; personal mastery encourages every individual's own creativity to discover what individuals' activities mean for the world. In order to achieve excellent functional team dynamics, team learning is essential (Senge, 2006 and Mutongi, 2018). The discipline is what connects a shared vision and one's own personal mastery. Employees should consider their coworkers to be teammates rather than rivals. It is the first step in starting conversations where people are willing to show their true personalities and be vulnerable. According to Liu (2018), the workplace ought to be a secure environment where sincere errors are accepted. No learning can occur if it is anything different.

#### *2.16.3.4 Personal Mastery*

At personal mastery level, individuals can move from a merely receptive outlook to being a contributor to the issue or framework. Personal mastery occurs when a person combines a clear vision of a goal with an accurate perception of reality (Hansen et al., 2020). The gap between vision and reality motivates employees to engage in all related activities in order to realize the vision. This creative tension is predicated on an accurate understanding of current reality. As a

result, examining and sharing the truth is critical for personal mastery and the related discipline of a shared vision.

Employees, on the other hand, may believe they lack the necessary skills to accomplish their goals. A vicious circle may have formed and may be challenging to break. Employees, according to Senge (2006) and Hansen et al. (2020), should train their subconscious mind because it is able to handle complex problems faster than our consciousness. When people believe in their own powerlessness, they are unable to realize their vision. As a result, humans should train the subconscious mind to deal with stress and problems in real life.

#### *2.16.3.5 Shared Vision*

Building shared vision encourages a commitment to the long term, while mental models centre on the receptiveness expected to uncover shortcomings in individuals' approach to seeing the world. According to Tarnanen et al. (2021), interaction with employees should be used to create vision in learning organizations. There are numerous representatives, and each of them has a unique vision that needs to be combined. The organisation and individual visions must be combined in order to create a shared vision. People who do not share the company's vision may not contribute as much, whereas those who do work because they want to rather than because they are told to (Tarnanen et al., 2021).

#### *2.16.4 Application of the Five Disciplines of Learning Organisations*

For many organizations, putting the five learning organisation disciplines into practice can be challenging. Concentrating on one or a few of these disciplines might be more appealing (Törmänen et al., 2022). But using all of them is essential because they are all interconnected. For instance, having better conversations with team members is essential when an organisation starts to develop a shared vision with its group team learning (Törmänen, 2022).

Employees must comprehend mental models if an organisation starts using system thinking to pinpoint common issues. Because all disciplines are connected, it does not matter where one starts. However, this does not imply that the organisation must simultaneously prioritize each discipline. The company will have a competitive advantage by concentrating more intently on one or two disciplines while pursuing all others.

The five learning organisation disciplines emphasize long-term growth for the organisation both internally and externally (Colombo & Mella, 2022). The discussion of urgent tasks that might impact operations is a typical event within the organisation. The organisation's need to concentrate on the long-term growth process in order to maintain its competitiveness makes the small event's focus the real threat in this scenario. Another example was provided by Senge and Von Ameln (2019), who noted that management wants the team to be moving in the same direction. Former Harvard Business School professor Chris Argyris asserts that most organizations reward employees who agree with senior management (Lawler, 2018). Employees who interrupt the conversation or ask questions risk repercussions. Management should focus on creating a shared vision through strategic planning, as was previously stated. Therefore, management's vision becomes a shared vision by fusing both the organisational and personal visions.

The interconnectedness of the five learning organisation disciplines is the key to comprehending and using them, according to Colombo (2022). The organisation will be able to recognize challenges and opportunities both internally and externally thanks to the interrelationship, even if the focus is only on one or two disciplines before moving on to the next. By putting into practice the five disciplines of learning organisations, an organisation will become competitive and engaged in a continuous learning process (Colombo, 2022). Implementation may be challenging due to some restrictions, such as the organisation's history with a traditional hierarchy.

According to Senge (2006), these disciplines should be viewed as complementary because they can demonstrate how crucial each is to the success of the others. Each of them can be evaluated on one of three distinct levels: (a) practices; (b) standards; and (c) characters. Perhaps the first significant organisation to understand and experience the effects of mental models was Royal Dutch/Shell. This was the driving force behind Shell's success, which saw it move from one of the weakest of the big seven oil organisations to one of the strongest during a period of significant change in the oil industry during the 1970s and 1980s (Senge, 2006). Despite surviving, students never reach their full potential (Senge, 2006). This theory suggests that not all businesses can achieve the status of a learning organisation. Even the best organisations can be poor students and suffer from learning disabilities that ultimately cause an organisation to fail because they never reach their full potential (Senge, 2006).

## **2.17 The link between Change Theories and Senge's Fifth Discipline theory.**

According to Spigel (2017), it is impossible to comprehend an organisation as a system without taking into account its surroundings. Senge identifies five essential elements that, when combined in a coherent way, lead to a learning organisation, as was covered above in the Fifth Discipline. The literature also discusses two other theories that the management employs when restructuring the organisation: the Expectancy theory, which explains how expectations affect motivation, and Kurt Lewin's three-step model for managing change, which emphasizes the necessity of breaking old habits before forming new ones.

Based on the above dialogue, Lewin's theory starts by ensuring readiness for change. The first step of this theory 'unfreezing' which is breaking down the present way of thinking and developing a new outlook on what lies ahead. Rad and Rad (2021) add that in this step the organisation unfreezes by inventing and evoking reason for one to buy into change and therefore involves a lot of communication. This is the stage where the management should ensure that a shared vision is established before the restructuring process commences with the restructuring process and the management should ensure that the employee's mental models are in line with the proposed process and this is the stage where the employees tap into their personal mastery whereby they understand that the restructuring will provide each person with continuous, lifelong learning, all this can be accomplished through motivation which according to Vroom (1964) cited in Malek, et al. (2020), individuals are motivated to perform if they know that their extra performance is recognised and rewarded.

According to Bamberg and Schulte (2018), the second stage of Lewin's theory of change is the most difficult phase where change becomes a reality and individuals wrestle with the reality of change. Fear and uncertainty experienced in this phase result in this being the most difficult phase to prevail over. The organisations management should motivate, educate, effectively communicate and support staff about change so that the employees mental models do not shift from the process and to ensure that that employees have a shared vision throughout the change process. At this stage the mental models are challenged due to the pitfalls that come up along the way and the management must ensure that team learning occurs during this stage.

The refreeze stage promotes systems thinking; the organisation's systems are now interconnected in the newly introduced structure, and management should ensure that the organisational structure is aligned. Employees can be motivated with performance appraisals to ensure that

change becomes permanent (Bulto and Markos, 2017).

## **2.18 Chapter Summary**

It is evident that restructuring is a typical reality in many organisations. In the dynamic and developing marketplace, organisations are progressively opting for restructuring to reduce expenses and become more effective and beneficial. Technological advancement, administrative changes, financial crisis and mergers are further driving enterprises towards restructuring. Despite the fact that there are reported cases in which restructuring undoubtedly brought about positive results, there is likewise proof showing that at times the impact of restructuring is devastating. Brooks (2018) states that human resource researchers contend that the workforce is the bloodline of organisations and their commitment to the company eventually yields areas of strength for the progress of the organisation.

Restructuring by and large adversely influence workers' responsibility and job fulfilment, hence influencing organisational tasks and profitability (Harrigan and Wing, 2021). Restructuring is therefore a precarious endeavour that should be carried out in a calculated manner and cautiously by individuals who are fully skilled to deal with it. This chapter managed the literature behind change and reorganising. The types of restructuring were discussed, change interaction theories were explicated, the factors influencing change examined, Senge's change model broken down and the purposes for restructuring were assessed. The following chapter thoroughly examines the methodology that was employed in this research.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Management and business research is becoming increasingly complex. Therefore, new procedures for exploring research issues and analysing information to clarify and explain social phenomena are required (Amos, 2022). Dwigo (2019) expressed that it is widely known that occasionally managers use sound judgment and are able to solve issues, but often they commit such great errors that the organisations find themselves in deep trouble. The distinction between pursuing a good and a terrible choice is reliant upon how the supervisors approach the decision-making process. Formal research permits managers to be proficient in the best course of action to continue to pursue a decent choice, for example, having the option to recognise and choose the current best fitting and appropriate choice for any situation an organisation might be facing at that time.

Choosing an appropriate methodology is crucial because it affects every aspect of the research process, including data collection, method, analysis, and results. In order to meet the requirements of reality, objectivity, and legitimacy, the process necessitates reflection on the planning, development, and execution of the research (Dwigo, 2019). A research methodology addresses the course of exploration and the choices necessary for the undertaking of the study.

Chapter 1 gave an overall outline of the research questions and the research system used, while Chapter 2 presented a detailed literature review and the theoretical framework that supported this review. In the light of the ultimate goal of this research, this chapter frames its significant building blocks: the research design, the research methodology, the sample of the study and the population, data collection technique/s, data analysis and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 Research Problem and Research Question**

The organisational restructuring process includes decision-making about the reasonable size of staffing complement and their expected abilities (Fandino, 2019; Lin et al., 2008). It can be established that it is common that an enterprise's restructuring undoubtedly affects its employees at ground level. Kotter et al. (2021) expressed that, during the reorganisation process, staff members experience an astonishing increase in their feelings of anxiety because of job security. In this way, the circumstances related to a restructuring process can overwhelm

staff members and cause suffering in numerous ways. However, employees who see themselves as having control over their current circumstances and individual achievement embrace change enthusiastically (Kotter et al., 2021; Seijts and Roberts, 2011).

### ***3.2.1 Main Research Questions***

The main questions to be answered in this study are as follows:

- How did team learning occur during the restructuring process?
- How did personal mastery occur during the restructuring process?
- How did systems thinking evolve during the restructuring process?
- In what ways did systems thinking occur during the restructuring process?
- To what extent was a shared vision achieved as a result of the restructuring process?

### ***3.2.2 Study Objectives***

Shaw et al. (2021) mentioned that research objectives represent a commitment that binds the researcher to deliver the required research, and they direct the research process from the outset. Research objectives are structured around the main research question or a research problem which is identified by the researcher. Shaw et al. (2021) stated that research objectives are important to evaluate and make sense of a study. The following are the objectives of this study:

- To examine how team learning occurred during the restructuring process.
- To examine how personal mastery occurred during the restructuring process.
- To determine how systems thinking evolved during the restructuring process.
- To examine how systems thinking occurred during the restructuring process.
- To determine whether a shared vision was achieved from the restructuring processes.

## **3.3 Research Design**

According to Alam (2020), a research design is a set of guidelines for data collection and analysis that are appropriate for the purpose of the study and practical to carry out.

According to Zaker and Nosratinia (2021), a study design is a thoughtful and practical arrangement outlining how someone expects to carry out the study to address the research problem. Then, according to Rinjit (2020), there is undoubtedly no single definition of research design that encompasses all the angles it refers to. In line with their strategy for gathering data,

exploratory non-directive research designs are employed by qualitative researchers, according to Mohammed and Saazai bt Mat Saad (2022). The purpose of this study was to investigate the outcomes and experiences of workers who had undergone restructuring in the organisation under study.

A case study research design was employed in this study, which, according to Campbell et al. (2020), is a methodology that requires a thorough examination and delineation of a particular case. Sometimes, to contrast and compare, two or three cases are used. Case study research has advantages with regard to both processes and outcomes. Within the limits of time and space, the case study design helped to focus this research on a single case. Additionally, a case study enables the collection of various data types from sources, including observations, interviews, surveys, documents, and more. The case and offers the chance to examine an organisation or person in-depth, as well as their internal operations and interpersonal relationships.

This study sought to understand the holistic viewpoints and experiences relating to the change period and outcome of the company restructuring. Using the case study design helped gain deeper knowledge about the nature of the research problem and obtain further information that might provide new insights into the subject.

### ***3.3.1 Research Philosophy***

A research philosophy is an important viewpoint when planning any research because it ultimately affects the decision regarding the research strategy. A research philosophy, broadly speaking, is a belief about how data related to the phenomena under study should be gathered, analyzed, and used, according to Rashid et al. (2019). The research strategy is supported by the assumptions that make up the research philosophy, which describes how a researcher views the world. Additionally, practical factors are very important in determining the type of research philosophy to be applied to a specific study (Rashid et al., 2019).

In the management research setting, four research philosophies are typically embraced, namely, positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Rashid et al., 2019). These philosophies are summarised in Table 3.1.

The positivist philosophy subscribes to the view that verifiable knowledge is acquired through perception and trustworthiness. Positivism depends on quantifiable perceptions that can be

measurably analysed. Objective data collection and analysis are accordingly the key parts of positivism.

Realists believe that reality is determined by what our senses tell us to be true and that objects have a presence separate from human thought (Rashid et al., 2019). Realists subscribe to the fundamental idea that reality exists completely independently of the mind.

Pragmatism acknowledges that there are numerous approaches to interpreting the world and directing research; accordingly, there is no single way to give the entire picture, as there might be various realities (Rashid et al., 2019).

The interpretivist philosophy integrates human interests by taking into account the researcher's comprehension of study components (Rashid et al., 2019). The idea that the researcher must adopt a sympathetic viewpoint is essential to the interpretivism philosophy. According to Kakkuri et al. (2008) and (Rashid et al., 2019), interpretivist reasoning is best suited for management research, particularly in fields like organisational behavior and human resource management.

Based on the review of the numerous philosophies above, interpretivism was chosen as the research philosophy for the study because it seemed well suited to the study's purpose. Interpretivism is most closely associated with an inductive research approach by which data are collected and analysed to develop or build a theory. Following an interpretivist approach in this research allowed for a better understanding of the research question and research background, as well as eliciting detailed subjective opinions from each participant. Furthermore, the interpretivist approach was chosen because of the small sample size used in this study. Interpretivism helped to understand how the restructuring affected the participants in the study, if at all. Because there is a gap in the literature, interpretivism will provide more context for the way in which each participant experienced the impact of the restructuring on their career development, team/work culture and personal lives.

**Table 3.1***Research Philosophies in Research*

| <b>Realism</b>   | <b>Pragmatism</b>  | <b>Positivism</b>   | <b>Interpretivism</b>   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods chosen must fit the subject matter</li> <li>• Uses qualitative or quantitative</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed multiple methods design.</li> <li>• Qualitative and quantitative</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large samples</li> <li>• Quantitative; however, does use qualitative.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small samples</li> <li>• In-depth investigation: qualitative.</li> </ul> |

**3.3.2 Research Approach**

In general, three strategies can be used to conduct research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. According to Almeida (2018), qualitative research is exploratory, whereas quantitative research evaluates the issue being studied by using mathematical information that can be converted into usable statistics.

**3.3.2.1 Qualitative Research**

This study will use the qualitative research approach to respond to the questions based on objectives set to establish and bring an understanding of the restructuring process at the organisation under study. Mohajan (2018) stated that the main focus of qualitative research is the way in which people interpret and describe their experiences in an attempt to understand their social world. The qualitative approach gathers descriptive information not numerical information. Therefore, it provides a much deeper description or insight of feelings, opinions and experiences of members, based on their social world (Thompson et al., 2022).

As per Almeida (2018), The focus of qualitative research is multifaceted, and it approaches its subject in an interpretive and naturalistic manner. Qualitative scholars concentrate on phenomena of interest in their normal settings and attempt to comprehend and interpret the implications of actions or words from the subjects. The value of abstract implications, metaphors, tone, words and motions cannot be overemphasised in qualitative exploration (Miles et al., 2018). A qualitative approach is holistic and assumes that multiple realities exist and vary based on individual judgement, circumstances and context.

According to Miles et al. (2018) qualitative research gives a critical understanding of an issue and provides insights into causal reasons, suppositions and motivations. Van Rij et al., (2020) stated that qualitative research emphasises processes and implications without thoroughly measuring the intensity, frequency or quantity. A qualitative methodology was best suited to this study as it could reveal people's perceptions attached to experiences and the restructuring process as a whole.

According to Van Rij et al. (2020), qualitative research is any study that generates descriptive data from the participants' own written or spoken accounts of their experiences and insights. Van Rij et al. claim that the commitment to viewing the world from the perspective of the participant is the essential prerequisite for qualitative methodology; the researcher is interested in understanding. They explained that this technique allows a researcher to analyse and characterise people's activities by allowing getting to know them over time and confront their daily struggles in dealing with real-world situations.

The importance of using qualitative methods was emphasized by Miles et al. (2018), particularly in management and business research, which deals not only with organisations but also with the people who work in those organisations.

The research questions from this method centre on the comprehension of a specific issue. As indicated by Miles et al. (2018), a qualitative method has its advantages over quantitative research since there is a lower chance of failure to explore a theme or topic by testing and comprehension of the respondent's motivations, attitudes and behaviour. The challenge with this approach, however, is that its validity can be addressed by various specialists who approach the research problem from a different perspective.

Types of qualitative method include contextual analyses or case studies, in-depth interviews of key witnesses, observations, questionnaires, and inspection of individual reports, for example, life histories, journals and self-portrayals Arici (2020). Each researcher determines which combination is ideal to use for their study. Smaller sample sizes are used in qualitative research, significance is evaluated, validity is high while reliability is low, grounded theory is developed, overall labor force concerns are acknowledged, free response is permitted, and so on (Miles et al., 2018).

### 3.4 Sampling Design and Sampling Technique

As indicated by Rao (2021), it is usually not feasible to concentrate on the entire population because of its size, monetary expenses or time considerations, making it necessary to choose a sample. Sampling is described as picking a chosen portion of a population to represent the qualities of the entire population (Rahman et al., 2022). Certain conclusions can then accordingly be made about the target population, given the data gathered from the sample. Rahman et al. (2022) stated that the sample size is determined by the sort of study and idea or concept being examined.

While choosing the sampling technique to be used in a study, different considerations should be made, including the size of the target population, limitations of the study, costs and the sampling method that will be adopted (Bueno, 2022). Two sampling techniques can be used in a study, specifically, probability and non-probability sampling or likelihood and non-likelihood testing. Under likelihood sampling, each individual from the population has an equal likelihood of being chosen for the sample (Bueno, 2022). Other terms for probability/likelihood sampling include chance sampling and random sampling. Likelihood sampling can be further categorised as area sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, and sequential sampling.

Probability sampling is typically used in cases where there is a small, homogeneous and readily accessible population. The following are the disadvantages of probability sampling:

- It is unreasonable in cases where the population is very large.
- Certain subgroups of interest in the populace might be absent in the sample, causing bias.

Non-probability sampling is when the researcher purposely chooses sample items (Bueno, 2022). Basically, in non-probability testing the researcher purposively selects specific units of the population to be in the sample on the basis that they will be genuinely representative of the population. Non-likelihood testing is also referred to as deliberate sampling, judgement sampling and purposive sampling. It can furthermore be grouped into different sorts, including quota sampling, convenience sampling and snowball sampling (Bueno, 2022).

Non-probability sampling was viewed as the best sampling strategy for this study as it fast, helpful and practical. A total of 12 participants were chosen to partake in the research. The sampling was done by selecting individuals who met the following criteria:

- employees who had undergone the restructuring process;
- employees who were able to verbalise their feelings, sentiments and impressions of the restructuring process and its results;
- employees who showed readiness to participate in the research; and
- employees working at different divisions and at various administrative levels.

This research study used a purposive or non-probability sampling approach, also known as the criterion approach. Mweshi and Sakyi (2020) noted that this sampling approach is used when researchers want to target specific participants for gathering data so they can obtain the data best suited to assist in achieving the study objective. When using the non-probability sampling approach, the potential participants from a large population do not have an equal chance of being selected to partake in the study (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020). When using this method, a small number of participants are selected for a certain specific purpose (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020).

The target population of this study comprised more than 450 employees. From that population, 12 employees were chosen to participate. These 12 primary participants were knowledgeable and rich informants, as they were affected by the restructuring process. Furthermore, I targeted a small number of participants for this study because I aimed to elicit in-depth data from these employees who have personally experienced restructuring from different departments in the organisation.

### **3.5 Participants and Location of the Study**

#### ***3.5.1 Study Location***

The organisation being studied is a national finance organisation that supports capacitybuilding for domestic industry, economic growth, and industrial development. The main focus of this study was the organisation's head office, which is based in Sandton, Gauteng. The 12 selected participants could be easily reached via email, MS Teams and Zoom meetings.

#### ***3.5.2 Study Participants***

Research, according to Westreich et al. (2019), considers the collection of crucial data from the target population. The research of the target population can then lead to the deduction of particular conclusions. In most studies, not every member of the target population is taken into

account. Therefore, it is crucial that research has a large enough population to provide answers to the research questions. The target population is selected based on their likelihood to have first-hand knowledge or experience with the phenomenon under study, as stated by Westreich et al. (2019).

The study participants were employees, both male and female, from different fields/ departments in the organisation under study. Some employees occupied the same positions before and after the organisation's restructuring process, while others had been moved to new positions.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments**

According to Alam (2020), knowledge of organisational culture is important when choosing a data collection instrument. The most frequently used data collection methods in qualitative research are questionnaires, observation, and interviews. However, other techniques mentioned in qualitative studies include focus groups, protocol analysis, and diary methods. In-depth interviews were chosen as the data collection instrument in this study.

#### ***3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews***

Semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection allows the researcher to clarify the questions they pose if the respondent is unsure of what is being asked. They also allow for more in-depth probing following responses from respondents. Alam (2020) stated that other benefits of using in-depth interviews include stimulating thought and obtaining significant study material.

According to Alam, in qualitative studies, In order to vary the types of questions asked and follow up on pertinent new topics raised by respondents, researchers typically use an interview guide that lists topics to be raised in rough order. The interviews for this study were conducted online via the MS Teams platform. A brief overview of the study and the issues being investigated were included in the written request to participants. One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted to enable flexibility on the part of both the researcher and study participants. The sessions were audio-recorded, and the researcher recorded additional information in the form of handwritten notes.

To make sure the main topics were covered and that participants could respond and elaborate as they saw fit, a 26-question interview schedule and a general comments section were created. Each interview took between 30 and 45 minutes. The interview notes were later revised, and each question's responses were grouped into their own separate document. In order to determine overall views, responses were then carefully examined based on similar perspectives to each question.

Striepe (2021) stated that semi-structured interviews are important because they employ an interview guide to gather data from people through face-to-face verbal interaction based on experience and personal feelings. An advantage of using the semi-structured interview method is that it allows flexibility and preparation ahead of time. It incorporates probing questions, open-ended questions, follow-up questions and opportunity for clarification during the interview (Wishkoski, 2020).

The abovementioned method was considered the most suitable method as the research aimed to search and understand, from personal account in their own words, the participants' perceptions, concerns and thoughts arising from the event/s of the organisation's restructuring.

### **3.7 Data Quality Control**

Wishkoski (2020) stated that reliability and validity are two very important fundamentals in a qualitative study that should be given careful attention because the subjectivity of the researcher is likely to influence the interpretation of collected data, and that will affect the findings. The concepts are applied in a qualitative study to check if the conducted research is trustworthy by giving the same findings if it were to be conducted again.

#### ***3.7.1 Credibility and Trustworthiness for a Qualitative Discourse***

The researcher and the participants were accommodated at the place and time that worked best for everyone. To make sure they worked, interview tools were organised and tested beforehand. The interviews were audio-recorded, supported by note-taking. Interview notes and recordings were later analysed and interpreted.

#### ***3.7.2 Reliability***

Reliability is the degree of consistency of the measure, score or rating. Reliability relates to the credibility and consistency of the research. This involves another person retesting the data and

achieving the same results. Therefore, to assure reliability of the research, this study adopted a re-testing method using a sample of 12 participants from the target population. This helped to increase the reliability or trustworthiness of the study findings. The draft answers from the interviews may also be sent back to participants for them to confirm the accuracy of the data gathered (Striepe, 2021). In addition, a clear and transparent audit trail has been shown for the entire research process, allowing other researchers to either replicate the study and/or confirm the rigour of the research process.

### **3.7.3 Validity**

According to Clark and Watson (2019), validity is the degree to which the research instrument accurately represents the concepts being measured. Simply put, validity means that the research measured what it was supposed to assess. Respondent validation was used to assess the validity of this qualitative study. The study ensured that validity was taken into account in the research by carrying out a pilot study and making sure that all of the questions asked were explicit and not suggestive. Also, every effort was taken to ensure a high response rate.

## **3.8 Data Analysis**

There are different ways to analyse data according to their type. Descriptive data attained from open-ended questions can be examined differently from numerical data.

Striepe (2021) stated that when analysing interview data, the researcher can use qualitative tools of analysis such as summarising, narrative accounts of individuals, groups, behaviours, events, thematic/content analysis, patterning, coding and categorising, nodes and connections, constant comparisons as well as theoretical saturation. In this study, the descriptive data collected through open-ended interview questions (which were voice-recorded) were reduced and organised through thematic analysis in the primary stages of analysis. This took place through simplifying, reviewing, transforming, and transferring data from transcripts so that patterns, themes or biases could be identified. The next step is data restructuring, which involves grouping data into sensible groups. The data was categorized using coding. Coding is the classification of specific data subsets, followed by a succinct descriptive summary of the data. Thus, codes build a framework for data analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze and thoroughly interpret the interview data, which included handwritten notes and audio recordings. From the interview notes and transcriptions

of the recordings, a variety of significant issues raised by participants were transcribed (i.e. converting spoken words into written text). After the data had been analyzed, conclusions were made to address the research questions.

### **3.9 Limitations of the Study**

The nature of qualitative research is that sample sizes are necessarily small. This has implications for the generalisability of findings. Nonetheless, the aim of the study was to be suggestive rather than conclusive, as is the nature of qualitative research. The sensitive nature of the study may also have shaped how participants responded.

The research participants were selected from different functional divisions in the organisation, identified by the researcher. The findings cannot be generalised to the whole population on account of time limitations and owing to the fact that the study was of a small scale. Study participants were full-time employees from different departments in the financial organisation; therefore, appropriate planning was necessary, since it was not possible to keep a group of employees away from their duties for a long time. The interview sessions were conducted during the participants' lunch breaks, after working hours and on weekends. It was also very difficult to arrive at the desired number of participants in the sample because most employees seemed uncomfortable with participating in research for fear of prejudice.

### **3.10 Elimination of Bias**

According to Bergen and Labonté (2020), bias is the desire or propensity to come to a particular conclusion, view, or outcome. By posing the same questions to every respondent, the study eliminated bias. To avoid gender and racial bias, no specific gender or race targets were set for the choosing of participants for this study.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Every research study has ethical components that require the researcher to uphold both moral and professional obligations. Even if the participants are unaware of the ethics, the researcher must adhere to them (Brittain et al., 2020). As a result, the researcher's morals protect them from engaging in unethical behaviour. According to Shaw and Satalkar (2018), Maintaining the highest attainable standards and procedures throughout the research is a requirement for the

integrity of the researcher. Declaring the study's objective and disclosing any potential negative effects of the research in cases where negative effects exist, and stating the research limitations.

This research complied with all of UKZN's ethical protocols. Ethical clearance was obtained from the UKZN Ethics Committee before commencing with data collection through interviews. This study's ethical clearance number is 00017752. Ethical principles that were upheld include anonymity, confidentiality, non-maleficence, withdrawal from the study at any time, and voluntary participation. With the assurance that the information would be kept private and used only for reporting study results, consent was directly obtained from participants and their immediate superior. Employees that were classified as study participants were fully informed of the goals of the study and the intended uses for the data gathered.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

An overview of the research methodology used in this study is provided in this chapter. There was a clear statement of the study's main objective, participants, and setting. The main facets of the study, including sampling, data gathering, and data analysis, were also covered. A pilot investigation was done. The research methodologies used for data collection were covered in detail in this chapter. The selection of the research strategy, research philosophy, data collection tools, and sampling strategy used in this study were further supported by this information. The results of the data collected from the respondents through in-depth interviews are presented in Chapter 4.

## **CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The research methodology underlying this study was described in the previous chapter. This chapter presents and analyses the data obtained through semi-structured interviews. The data have been organised in accordance with the research questions. Inductive data analysis methods were used. In other words, the interview data were analysed inductively to identify emerging themes, categories and patterns. The findings are organised following the structure of the interview guide, which is included as Appendix D.

The interview guide was divided into six sections, with 26 questions overall. The first section requested demographic data from respondents (presented in this chapter in the form of graphs). Section B contained general questions about organisational restructuring in the organisation under study. Senge's Fifth Discipline theory guides the interview questions.

This chapter contains descriptions of the themes, sub-themes and categories. A selection of the participants' responses have been included as unedited direct quotations. Yes/no questions from the interviews have also been presented as graphs. The names of the respondents have been omitted in this study; they have been assigned participant numbers (Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) in this write-up.

The following are the five critical research questions that were used to guide the presentation and analysis of the data:

1. How did team learning occur during the restructuring process?
2. How did personal mastery occur during the restructuring process?
3. How did systems thinking evolve during the restructuring process?
4. In what ways did systems thinking occur during the restructuring process?
5. To what extent was a shared vision achieved as a result of the restructuring process?

### **4.2 Response Rate**

The final sample consisted of 12 respondents at various levels in the organisation under study. Initially, 20 participants were recruited, but some withdrew owing to the sensitivity of the study. The response rate was therefore 60%.

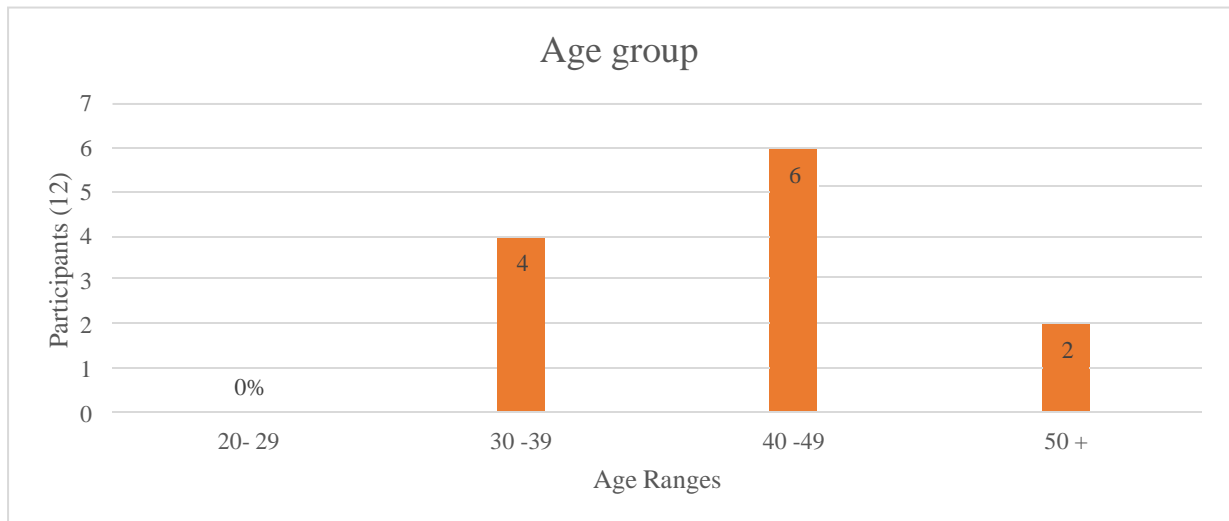
### 4.3 Demographic Profile of Participants

#### 4.3.1 Age

The majority of the respondents fell within the 40–49 age range, as represented in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1**

*Distribution of Respondents by Age*

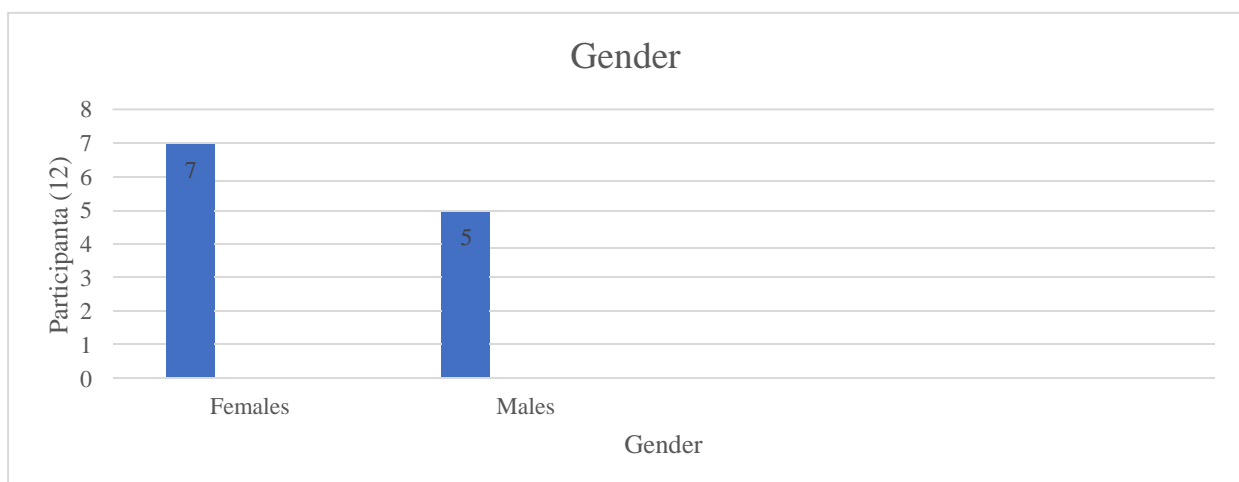


#### 4.3.2 Gender

The majority of respondents were female (60% female; 40% male), as shown in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2**

*Distribution of Respondents by Gender*

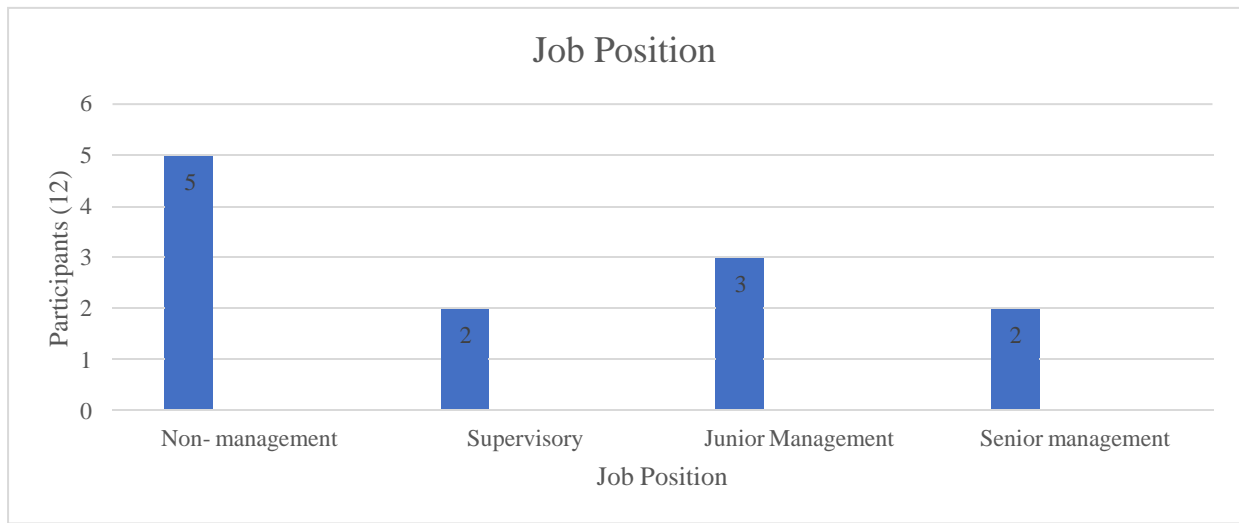


### 4.3.3 Job Position

Respondents were employed in a variety of positions – non-managerial, supervisory, junior management, and senior management – with non-managerial positions having the most respondents (as shown in Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3**

*Distribution of Respondents by Job Position*

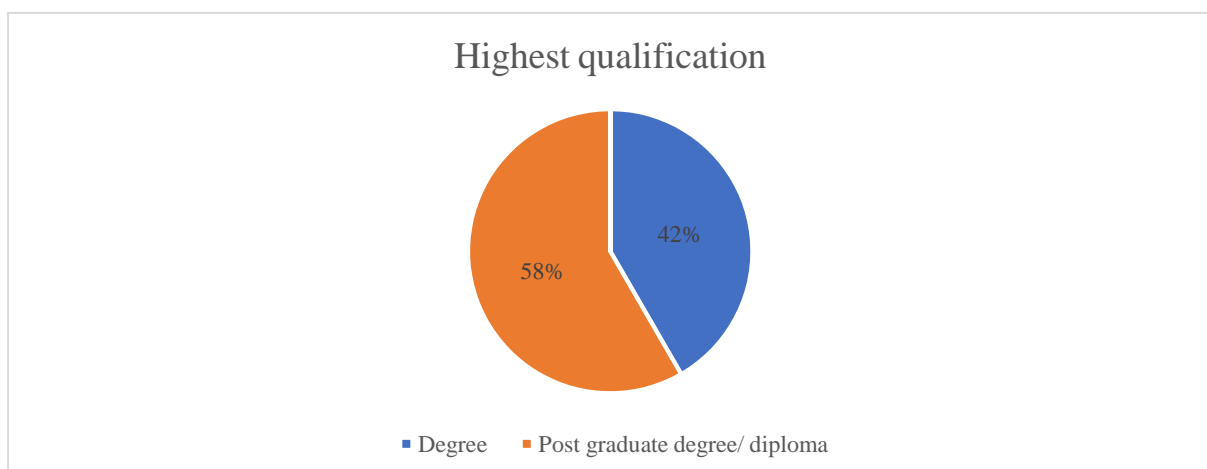


### 4.3.4 Highest Educational Qualification Attained

As shown in Figure 4.4, the majority of respondents (58%) had postgraduate degrees, followed by degree holders (42%).

**Figure 4.4**

*Distribution of Respondents by Qualification*

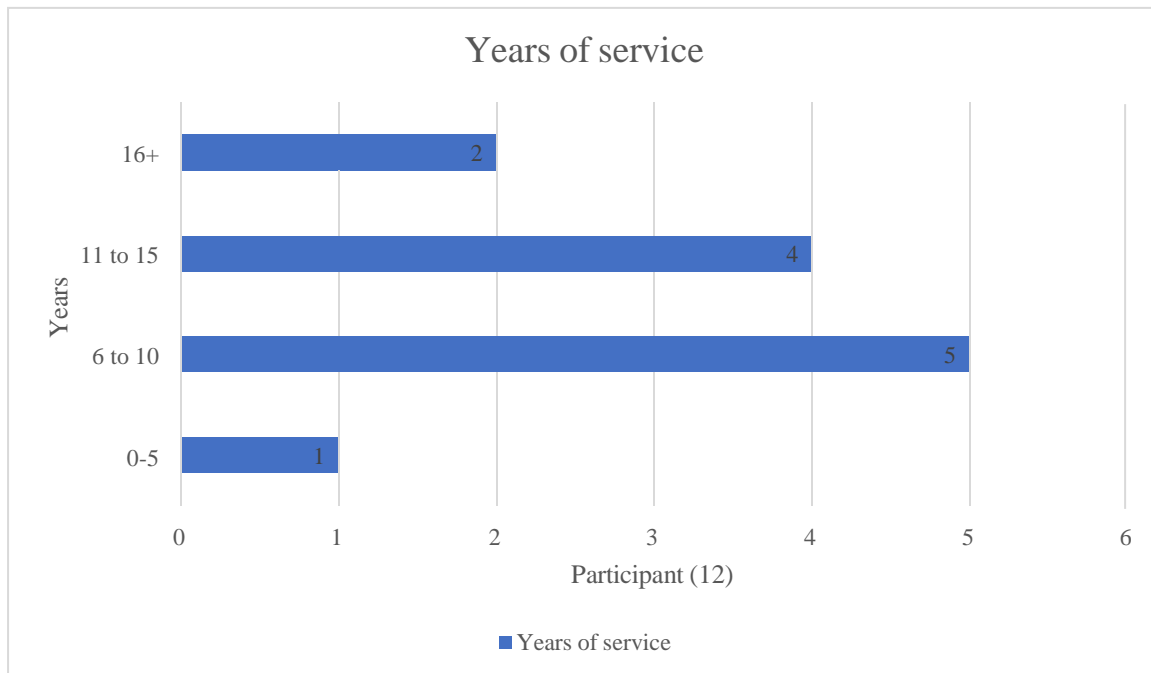


### 4.3.5 Years of Service

The majority of respondents (five) had 6–10 years of service with the organisation under study, four had 11–15 years of service, one had been employed for less than 5 years, and two had served at the company for 16 years or more, as shown in Figure 4.5.

**Figure 4.5**

*Distribution of Respondents by Years of Service*



### 4.4 Profile Summary

In summary, the majority of the study’s participants were female. Most participants were between the ages of 40 and 49 years old. All participants held degrees from various higher education institutions, with 58% holding postgraduate degrees/diplomas. The majority of participants had worked for the organisation under study for 6–10 years, with the majority of participants in non-management roles. Table 4.1 summarises the participant profile.

**Table 4.1***Profile of Participants*

| <b>Participant</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Job position</b> | <b>Highest qualification</b> | <b>Years of service</b> |
|--------------------|---------------|------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Participant 1      | F             | 50+        | Senior management   | PG degree/diploma            | 16+                     |
| Participant 2      | F             | 30–39      | Non-management      | PG degree/diploma            | 0–5                     |
| Participant 3      | M             | 30–39      | Non-management      | Degree                       | 6–10                    |
| Participant 4      | M             | 40–49      | Non-management      | PG degree/diploma            | 6–10                    |
| Participant 5      | F             | 40–49      | Junior management   | Degree                       | 11–15                   |
| Participant 6      | M             | 50+        | Senior management   | PG degree/diploma            | 16+                     |
| Participant 7      | F             | 40–49      | Supervisory         | PG degree/diploma            | 11–15                   |
| Participant 8      | F             | 30–39      | Non-management      | Degree                       | 6–10                    |
| Participant 9      | M             | 40–49      | Supervisory         | Degree                       | 6–10                    |
| Participant 10     | F             | 40–49      | Junior management   | PG degree/diploma            | 11–15                   |
| Participant 11     | F             | 40–49      | Junior management   | PG degree/diploma            | 11–15                   |
| Participant 12     | M             | 30–39      | Non-management      | Degree                       | 6–10                    |

Source: Research findings

**4.5 Interview Findings**

This study sought to investigate organisational learning during the restructuring of the organisation under study, as well as the employees' experiences throughout the realignment journey. The data were analysed after the 12 interviews were completed. The data revealed five major themes, which are as follows:

1. Team learning
2. Personal mastery
3. Ways in which systems thinking occurred
4. Ways in which systems thinking evolved
5. Shared vision

Table 4.2 summarises the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis.

**Table 4.2***Themes and Sub-Themes*

| Theme                                   | Sub-themes  |
|---|---|
| Team learning                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company objectives</li> <li>• Communication from the company</li> <li>• Meeting the objectives</li> <li>• Work environment and team spirit</li> <li>• Workplace culture</li> </ul> |
| Personal mastery                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General feelings towards change</li> <li>• Changes in productivity</li> <li>• Commitment level and performance</li> <li>• Coping mechanisms used</li> </ul>                        |
| Ways in which systems thinking evolved  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interconnectedness and synthesis</li> <li>• Dynamic relationships</li> <li>• Organisational politics and competition</li> </ul>  |
| Ways in which systems thinking occurred | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steps taken by the organisation to ensure clarity</li> <li>• Alternative ways of changing</li> <li>• Long-term and sustainable solutions</li> </ul>                                |
| Shared vision                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-evaluating the restructuring process</li> <li>• New methods of operation</li> <li>• Cutting costs</li> </ul>  |

Source: Research findings

**4.5.1 Theme 1: Team Learning**

Research Question 1 asked, “How did team learning occur during the restructuring process?” In the following section, presents findings on team learning of the staff at the organisation under study during the restructuring process. It explores the objectives that were communicated to employees before the start of restructuring and elaborate on the current work environment and team spirit. It will also elaborate on the current company culture.

Throughout the research process, it became clear that the employees of the organisation under study did not experience the restructuring in the same way as one another. Some described the process as a major impediment to their career development at this organisation. In contrast, some saw the company's new direction as an opportunity to grow and learn new ways of working. Some of staff indicated that some of the prevailing challenges they often experienced were related to miscommunication; while others felt that the reasons for initiating this process were communicated clearly.

#### *4.5.1.1 Company Objectives for Restructuring*

The first sub-theme that emerged from the data with regard to team learning was the objectives stated by the organisation's management for restructuring. In the case of the organisation under study, restructuring was focused on the long-term sustainability of the organisation, and this was primarily based on the poor performance of the company's financial portfolio at the time, specifically very high non-performing loans and some equity positions that had diminished in their expected returns. This necessitated a shift in focus, be it in the sectors they supported or by changing the company structure.

Participant 1 stated:

Obviously, every time there are changes in the organisation, you change your strategic intent with the purpose of improving as an organisation, and also to stay relevant, especially with the mandate. And as well as even addressing the inefficiencies that are existing and maybe even looking at the effectiveness, how effective are we in providing our service and their product offering to the market. So, I think what's interesting about this time is that there was more impressive about the client, the client was central. So, whatever we are doing in any financial activity, the client is at the centre, it's a priority. So that's the reason why the organisation had to take that direction.

On the other hand, five participants expressed that it was and continues to be difficult for employees to process this change, it was revealed that the change was not easy because the reasons for it were not clear, and they therefore challenged their management to provide them with answers. They were told that the restructuring was necessary, purely because the divisional executive felt that the company needed to reorganise. As a result, departments were performing their roles by

hiring outside contractors to provide specific services. Some departments were understaffed and there was only one person who possessed the ability or the skills needed in that department.

Participant 6 stated:

So, despite the fact that some lack the technical expertise to perform well in their current positions, for example, for you to be called a masters student, you would have obviously completed your undergrad and honours levels. But, in this case, what we discovered is that in the public eye, you may be known as a master's student, and people will obviously assume that you have completed your bachelor's and honorary degrees. However, in this case, the role is not clearly defined, despite what the market claims.

In summary of this sub-theme, majority of participants believed that the management communicated the objectives before restructuring thoroughly, though some did not fully understand them or agree with them. They cited various factors that compelled the organisation to restructure.

#### *4.5.1.2 Communication Prior to the Launch of the Restructuring Process*

The majority of participants (58%) stated that the start of this process was well communicated. Furthermore, some participants stated that some of their colleagues saw this as an opportunity to be a part of the change team and joined initiatives that were implemented to ensure a smooth restructuring process. There were also physical engagements with management at which employees could provide inputs prior to the actual restructuring, as well as sessions while it was being implemented. When asked how well management communicated before the start of the restructuring process, some participants responded as follows:

It was well communicated and what was also interesting is that there were initiatives done to source individuals who were willing to even participate to ensure that the restructuring is running smoothly, so it is sort of like being ambassadors who say “we want to be part of this, we will contribute in this process”, for example, you look at certain aspects that we want to change and there will be work streams that were established so people will volunteer to be part of those work streams. So those work streams contributed especially more to how we want to see the organisation. So, I think somehow there was engagement with all the stakeholders within the

organisation. So, I think it was mainly just to ensure that there's buy-in.

(Participant 5)

Yes, it was communicated properly. It was communicated via emails or meetings. It was a range of channels. So, we did get regular communication around the long-term restructuring. (Participant 8)

In contrast, 42% of participants indicated that there was a miscommunication between employees and management regarding restructuring objectives, causing the process to be delayed. They felt that they were just being told about the problem and why restructuring was the only solution, rather than being told about the vision that the company wanted to establish. When asked about management's communication prior to the start of the restructuring process, Participant 6 responded:

They did, but they explained it according to their understanding which was not clear to most of us. Hence, there was a delay in the restructuring because we ended up saying that this is not right. It was more of an "I am telling you" process, it only became a consultative process just because it was highlighted the time they told us about restructuring.

#### *4.5.1.3 Meeting the Objectives*

The majority of participants stated that because the restructuring occurred "only 2 years ago", it would be difficult to measure the results. Perhaps after 4 or 5 years it would be possible to determine whether the organisation had met certain objectives. Although there are signs that the company is progressing, it is known that when implementing new systems in an organisation there are bound to be hiccups, which necessitate continuous improvement. Furthermore, there will never be a perfect organisational transformation – there are lessons to be learnt regardless. There will always be some aspects of change that require immediate attention; therefore, it can never be perfect. When asked whether the objectives had been met, participants held the following views:

Yes, and no. Yes, had it been that you have the right people to put in the alignment in the restructuring. No, in a sense that it's one of those situations where the management looks at the headcount and anticipates whether they can afford to hire

completely new people, so the conclusion was to take what they already have and just turn the staff into what they want. (Participant 7)

But to say whether we have seen any objectives being met I think it would be prematurely. But like I said, there are those quick wins which are showing signs that least we getting there. (Participant 5)

Well, I mean, I think it's still early to tell. I think with any restructuring, you probably see results in five years. So now we are two years in. So, it's still a bit early to tell if there are any major changes as yet. (Participant 8)

#### *4.5.1.4 The Work Environment and Team Spirit*

The sub-theme work environment and team spirit emerged as participants described the work environment post-restructuring:

The workplace is pleasant, given the experience. We just choose not to make it unpleasant. It's pleasant, given that the current person I am reporting to is more engaged and knows what he's doing even though our roles have been intertwined. This is not the first restructuring in the past three years that I'm going through it's a second restructuring. The first restructuring was a disaster, even though we voiced our concerns about how the roles between the two units are intertwined and that's causing a separation between the units. So that's going to cause a problem and now that two and a half years later, they can see that this was actually a bad idea to move the one unit to another department now this is causing further restructuring. It's one of those moments where we are going with the flow I work. The original plan was just as messed up. (Participant 9)

The participants stated that they were still finding themselves with regard to their positions in the organisation, and it was also interesting to note that the restructuring occurred at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, when they were separated from their colleagues owing to the country's being in hard lockdown. At the time of conducting the interviews with the participants, it had been a year since the country lifted the hard lockdown " and lifted the hard lockdown measures. Some participants stated that some people will always be concerned because they do not understand the reasons for the reorganisation. This could be due to a desire

to see results right away. However, they were still discovering themselves and readjusting to the new way of working. Participant 10 stated:

At this moment, there is some discomfort in some areas, you can see that people have discomfort, but it's just part of change and adjusting, it's normal that change will always bring this comfort you know. But the environment right now is a bit difficult because we don't interact a lot with colleagues like we used to. So, you can't get a sense from those small talks that you will have in the organisation, you know. So, COVID changed things. It has brought in the new dynamics into the picture.

Participant 3 stated:

So during it, there was a lot of anxiety because I think you know they had to see which units were not going to make it post the restructuring. So, I think they issued retrenchment notices not specifically for people, but they made allowances for that. So, for people that were probably redundant post-restructuring. So, there was a lot of anxiety during restructuring, but I think now that everybody has settled in, there weren't a lot of retrenchments that occurred. People are just trying to implement the new strategies that were put in place.

As participants described the post-restructuring work environment, another facet of this sub-theme emerged: team spirit within the organisation. In support of this, Participant 4 stated:

If I had to look at our team the team spirit hasn't changed, you know, we still work hard like before, we still engage with each other. Maybe the issue could be that I don't see them every day. So, if I look at the immediate team, I mean we still work harder and we understand what's required from us, yes things have changed and we have taken a new role which is brought more responsibilities. But in terms of personal interaction, I think one would not be able to get a sense of how people feel, but in those two days at work you can feel that there's still some discomfort, they're still trying to understand, we'll get there gradually but to say people at demoralised, not within the team that I work with, it's easy.

Conversely, some participants mentioned that there was a lack of team spirit after the restructuring. This difference in opinion was a clear example of how individuals did not all experience the journey in the same way. Participant 10 related:

No it doesn't have team spirit. It's one of those situations where we are going with the flow, if somebody came up with an idea we just go with that person's idea, no questions asked and no enthusiasm unlike before this change.

#### *4.5.1.5 Workplace Culture*

Participants stated that as they were moving forward with the change. One of the areas that the cooperation wanted to focus on was ensuring that the organisation became an employee-centric organisation. In order to achieve this goal, an exercise in transforming organisational trust was initiated, which is ongoing and allows staff engagement. Given that the organisation has taken a new direction, it was crucial that management understood how employees felt about the change.

Participants also stated that prior to restructuring, the organisation had no issues with organisational culture. They stated that the restructuring did not focus on changing the culture but was more about long-term sustainability. So, with regard to "culture", the participants expressed that they were still searching for themselves and the organisation. Despite the fact that the company has transformed its culture or has achieved the culture that it aspires to, the issue is linking the culture to the employees. Participants stated:

The culture is terrible, there's an attitude of "I just work here and I need to work and carry on with my life". There is no sense of belonging there's no sense of accountability on other parties affecting your work you are just going with the flow. But there are programs or work streams that are focusing on organisational culture and hopefully those will really yield results long term. (Participant 4)

A lot of individuals, I think are not aligned so much with some of the policies that have been implemented in the past few years. There isn't a lot of consultation in terms of new policies, I think that was mostly based on the fact that the management team or the executive team that was in place was there for a long time and they didn't consult on a lot of matters. And now that we have the new executive team in place and I think they're really trying to change that. But there's still obviously institutional memory in terms of what has happened in the past, so there's a lot of distrust between management and staff. And all these programs that they are trying to implement now are really focused or aimed at increasing trust between management and the general staff. (Participant 9)

#### ***4.5.2 Theme 2: Personal Mastery***

Research Question 2 asked, “How did personal mastery occur during the restructuring process?” It was clear that when the restructuring was first announced, most of the participants felt anxious and insecure. The news of the impending reorganisation clearly triggered anxiety in the majority of respondents. Another emotion was insecurity. However, insecurity was not as significant as anxiety because the organisation assured employees that no one would lose their job during the restructuring process. The main concern was that the realignment would stifle their growth.

The findings are consistent with the opinions of other scholars. Pinder (2018) asserted that, based on anecdotal evidence, certain staff members in organisations regard the term restructuring as a code that organisations use for the harsh reality of downsizing, resulting in job losses. According to Rigotti et al. (2021), perceptions of employment uncertainty and, indirectly, stress/anxiety, were related to the actual risk of unemployment prior to the notice of realignment.

##### ***4.5.2.1 General Feelings Towards Restructuring***

As a result of the participants’ describing their experience during reorganisation, this sub-theme emerged, capturing their feelings towards restructuring. A majority of the participants stated that they were anxious mostly about where they would end up and what the restructuring meant for their personal development within the organisation. This is evident in the following quotes from some of the participants:

Well, it was a mixed feeling, maybe because I’m in a certain position within the organisation and I always understand when the executive or maybe the senior executive suggests change, there’s always a reason for change within the organisation. But in terms of work, there will always be that discomfort, especially when you had your ambitions, and I just hoped and prayed that my position won’t be affected. And remember, this happened during COVID time when people were dying when people were losing jobs and the environment wasn’t positive at all. But what I was comfortable about is that with this restructuring, they gave that assurance that no one would lose their job, so that was another positive aspect of this restructuring. ... It was just to realign ourselves and make sure that the company stays relevant and for

the company to improve and to eliminate any inefficiencies and so forth. But, it's natural that I will always feel shaking a little bit about my ambitions. (Participant 1)

I was not worried about my position. Look, I was not worried about whether I will have a job or not. I was more concerned that the restructuring hinders my development in terms of my career and personal development and my growth in the unit at the organisation. (Participant 6)

I think I was also a bit worried because it happened around COVID. I mean as much as there were those engagements but I think there was still a bit of anxiety. Not so much losing my job, but just where I will end up if I will like the new department or the units that I will be placed in. So, there was a bit of anxiety even for me. (Participant 1)

#### *4.5.2.2 Changes in Productivity*

The findings on changes in productivity indicate that the majority of participants were still productive after the restructuring, despite the fact that some had more responsibility in their new positions as a result of the transition from one division to another. Exposure to other parts of the organisation has enabled them to be more productive and produce higher outputs. Participant 11 stated:

Not at all. It [productivity] hasn't changed, it's just that it has more responsibility. But, no, it definitely hasn't changed. But there was movement from one division to another, it has actually exposed me to other areas of the business, which makes it more exciting.

A restructuring is rarely perfect, and it presents significant challenges in people and performance management. Fortunately, most of these obstacles can be overcome through careful corporate training strategies. Employees who have completed onboarding, reskilling, or cross-boarding can contribute to the company as agile contributors. One must keep in mind that training during a reorganisation must also offer key motivators in order to avoid stress, turnover and a decrease in productivity.

It was evident from the interviews that some participants discovered that their roles were no longer clear after the restructuring and that there was some uncertainty about what was expected of them. Participant 9 stated:

There are going to be changes in my job and the role of my job but the management is not seeing it. Despite the fact that it has been voiced out during the previous engagements that we had. However, it seems like there is going to be a fight about who gets a senior position between some people who currently serve as specialists and what bothers me is that irrespective of all of that, they haven't even done grading for the vertical position that is introduced it's one of those "let's cook and see if this meal will come out" without even having the proper ingredients.

These findings concur Foster et al(2019) .'s claim that survivors or in-place employees frequently experience neglect and lack of choice following restructuring processes, adding to their stress.

#### *4.5.2.3 Commitment Level and Performance*

Invariably, participants are expected to take on more work after restructuring. Normally they are asked to do more work for the same pay. For some, there may be fewer career advancement opportunities after a restructuring, making one's future with the organisation less certain. The participants provided mixed responses regarding commitment.

The majority of participants stated that their commitment levels have improved. That was mainly because of the unit that they had been placed in.

There is a lot of alignment in terms of what my interests are in terms of development and focus areas in the unit that I'm in. So, productivity from my side is definitely higher. And my outlook is a lot more positive. (Participant 3)

It's fair to say that my commitment level is still the same. Maybe because of the work ethic that I have but It doesn't matter how difficult or how uncomfortable I put myself in the commitment level remains the same. I haven't changed I want to make a difference in whatever area I'm in. I take pride in what I'm doing, maybe I am too much of a perfectionist. (Participant 1)

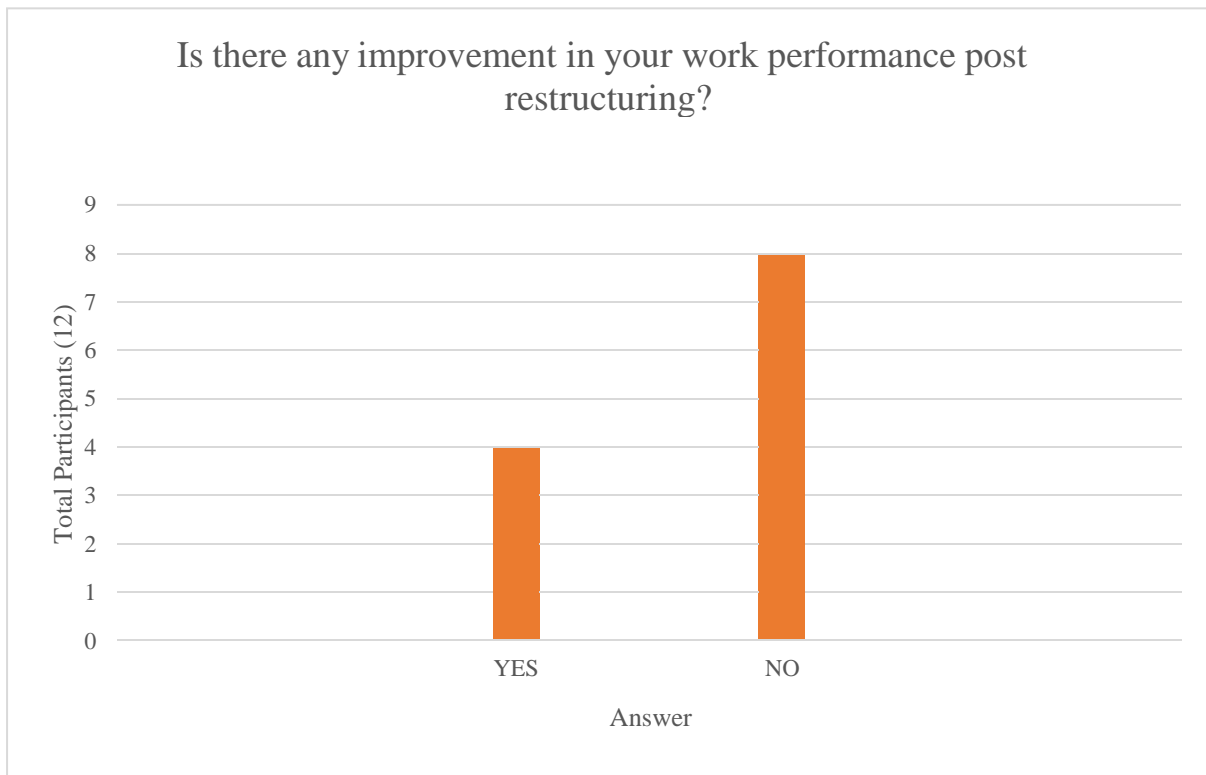
Some participants, however, discovered that their roles were no longer clear after the restructuring and that there was some uncertainty about what was expected of them. This decreased their commitment levels. Participant 12 stated, "in percentage form I would say it's [commitment level] now at 30%", while Participant 3 said: "I think it could be slightly

increased because, like I said, that I put [in] my all regardless. Maybe someone who's observing me might say yay or nay. But for me, I think it is still the same.”

Figure 4.6 shows the split between the majority (eight participants), who stated that their performance level had increased, and the minority (four participants), who stated that it had not.

**Figure 4.6**

*Improvements in Performance*



#### 4.5.2.4 Coping Mechanisms After Restructuring?

With regard to coping mechanisms, it was clear that each participant had a unique experience during the restructuring. The responses to the question of coping mechanisms included the following:

I think what also helps is discussing with your colleagues. Having that discussion with colleagues because sometimes you realise that you're not actually the only one who's worried about uncertainty, worried about the future. So, as you are engaging it feels

like therapy, it's therapeutic in a way. I'm a gym fanatic and I have other hobbies, so I think maybe that also helped. (Participant 7)

Look, working from home helps me. I go to work twice a week. In that way I can just divorce myself from work so basically the hybrid situation whereby you going to work for two days and head home for three days. It helps you out to deal with restructuring nicely. (Participant 5)

Coping is really finding a way out of the company. So basically, you make another plan in case this doesn't work out, definitely finding alternative employment. (Participant 11)

In summary, the majority (83%) of participants indicated that working from home has helped them deal with change because the hybrid environment provides flexibility and balance.

#### ***4.5.3 Theme 3: Ways in Which Systems Thinking Evolved***

Research Question 3 asked, "How did systems thinking evolve during the restructuring process?", which gave rise to this linked theme. Lynch et al. (2021) asserted that effective organisational growth and transformation require a systems-thinking mindset and an interdisciplinary holistic approach to dealing with complex organisational issues. The findings in this theme go into greater detail about how interconnectedness and synthesis occurred during restructuring, as well as the dynamic relationships and organisational politics.

##### ***4.5.3.1 Interconnectedness and Synthesis***

A sub-theme emerged from participants' descriptions of systems thinking during the restructuring process. All of the participants stated that interconnectedness and synthesis did not change initially, and that is because some roles were not clearly defined. However, the organisation has been working towards addressing this issue:

Within the immediate team it wasn't affected. It was clear what was expected from us. It can only be when there are changes in other departments, especially in their roles and what's required of them. So, it required a lot of learning, you had to learn what the other unit or department is doing, especially since things have changed. So, there was a lot of learning that took place so that interconnectedness can happen, because after we've restructured, you needed to understand that so and so in this particular department is doing this and that then you have to learn how they do things. So, in

terms of interconnectedness, I don't think it naturally happened, one had to put more effort into understanding the business. (Participant 6)

#### *4.5.3.2 Dynamic Relationships.*

According to the participants, the dynamic relationships had not changed. They went on to say that when it came to the dynamic relationships between different parts of the organisation, the process of obtaining expected synergies between parts of the company was critical because it allows a mindset shift from linear to circular. Participant 4 stated:

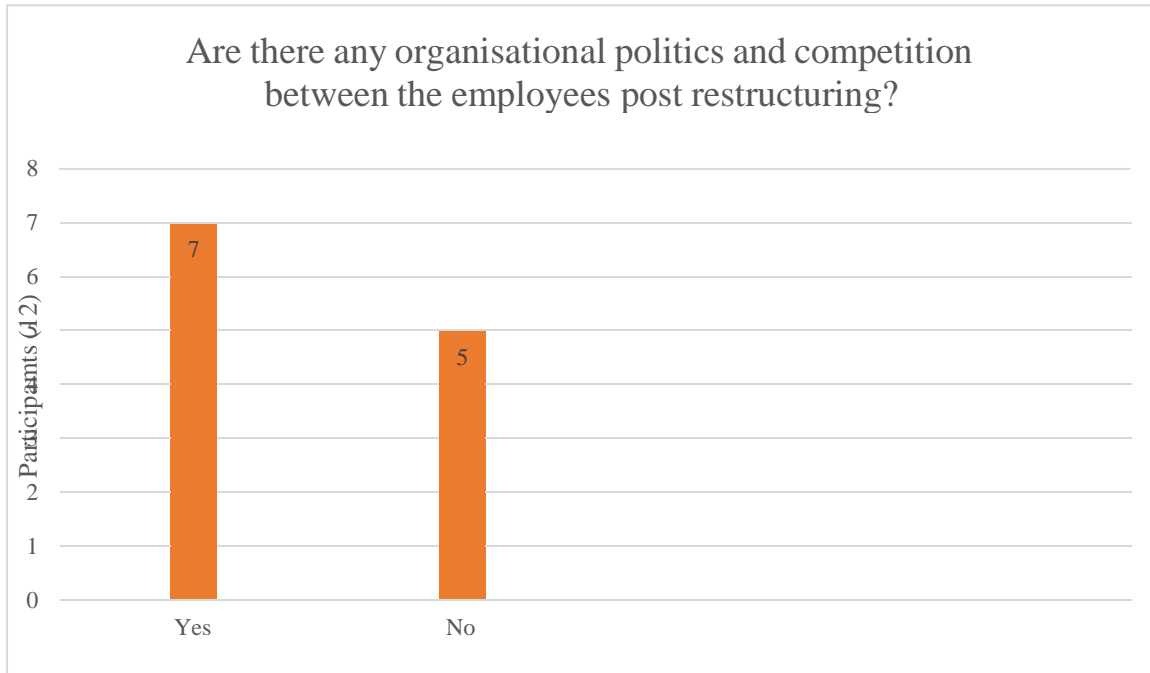
What I will highlight though is that with the restructuring, there's a lot more focus on outputs and measuring outputs, so I think with that people are very aware of what they need to do, the service level agreements and so on. So, I think sometimes there is friction when the delivery by another unit will affect your KPI [key performance indicator] and things like that. So, there's a lot more focus on delivery and KPIs. And I find that there is a bit of friction now that the strategy has changed a little bit. So, it's really just managing the relationships now, ensuring that you still meet your KPIs and maintaining good relationships with the supporting departments.

#### *4.5.3.3 Organisational Politics and Competition*

Figure 4.1 shows the division of responses regarding whether competition and politics exist in the organisation. The majority (58%) of the respondents stated that they do indeed exist within the organisation.

**Figure 4.7**

*Politics and Competition*



Sometimes employees felt that there was a division between different ranks in the company: those making decisions versus themselves. There is always an aspect of “us and them” within the organisation. There was competition when it came to landing higher positions. This is because the restructuring has narrowed the chances of promotion or career growth within the company. Participant 4 stated:

Yes there is competition. We have to fight for a position that is senior and you can't go furthermore with your career because of what the management wants, no one in the organisation has the skill. Maybe there is, but not in my unit. So, it's either they get somebody from outside who's going to be a manager. But then the question that was raised is that person who coming going to be a doer or just manage people. It's an expectation that's required from this role as I have emphasised before that outside the organisation this particular role means something completely different by just virtue of the job title to what they have in mind, and if you're going to get somebody from outside they are going to be frustrated and not going to last forever within the company.

Other participants stated that the company has developed exceptional transformation initiatives that tackle issues such as politics in the workplace, because no one likes politics in the workplace and no one likes cliques in an organisation because it is very unhealthy. The fact that some participants had not felt any sense of competition or politics in the organisation could be based attributed to the fact that the employees no longer interacted as much because of the hybrid structure. They saw each other for only a few days in a week, and some units take turns, which further lessens the chances of the same staff seeing one another regularly. So, they might not have had a good grasp of the “corridor talk” and politics. Participant 1 stated:

... not necessarily, because of how the organisation is structured, we have a corporate target, we have a department or a division target and a unit or department target and then individual targets. So, we all recognise that we collectively have to meet the corporate target for any incentive to be declared. Though there is that sense of collaboration between the units and the departments. So, I wouldn't say there's competition as such. Politics I think that those are standard whether there's restructuring or not in the organisation. So, I think there isn't so much of competition whether it was pre or post-restructuring.

#### ***4.5.4 Theme 4: Ways in Which Systems Thinking Occurred***

Research Question 4 asked, “In what ways did systems thinking occur during the restructuring process?” The findings under this theme are presented in this section. It will look at the steps taken by the organisation to enable individuals to understand the reasons for change, alternative approaches that could be used, and the long-term sustainable solutions offered by the organisation following restructuring.

##### ***4.5.4.1 Steps Taken by the Organisation to Ensure Clarity***

The majority of participants report that the organisation took visible steps to ensure clarity. The organisation held “town halls” for all employees, at which management presented an organisational structure explaining the direction in which the company wished to head. Following that, work streams were established to examine various aspects of the proposed change. They also included consultants because when an organisation changes, there will be some internal movements, and one must ensure that people are properly placed based on their skill set. Furthermore, there was continuous engagement, a phased approach, stating the starting point and steps for how the organisation was going to reach the end point, details of

the change, where people were going to be allocated and so forth. Participant 5 had the following to say about this process:

I think people were taken through that journey; it wasn't abrupt. It was to make sure that we understand every step that we taking up until the completion of the implementation of the restructuring, nice time to work. Every stage was communicated, and what was nice about it is that there were dedicated emails in case you want to raise your concern, you just sent it to that email. There was a task team that would read those emails and answer our concerns. So, it was a well-structured approach and they made sure that we are part of the journey and they took us through that journey.

Participants pointed out that the introduction of such sessions helped somewhat, as did working with the different service providers that were appointed to facilitate the restructuring. So, there were various steps undertaken to ensure clarity. This mainly entailed communication and involvement in the actual process.

On the contrary, some participants felt as if they were just bombarded with restructuring. They did not understand it at first and they were not taken through the journey gently. They stated that there were no steps taken to ensure that the restructuring was well understood or to give them assurance throughout the restructuring process. Participant 3 stated:

They had a meeting with us and told us that "here's what we think and this is the process here, and here are the timelines". And now it had to be put on hold because people had questions and people are not happy and they're things like they didn't think.

#### *4.5.4.2 Alternative Ways of Changing*

Participants asserted that there could have been other options besides restructuring. If restructuring was the only way to help the company meet its goals, perhaps a softer approach could have been taken. They also attributed this to the fact that the restructuring took place during the COVID period. And at that time, employees were not in the right frame of mind for this big change. Some stated that employees were required to take psychometric tests while they were not in the right headspace. So, there could have been better ways, such as doing the

restructuring in stages. Some of the quotes from participants in this regard included the following:

But my concern was that it happened during COVID. I mean COVID was hell to everyone, we were not coping so things could have been done differently or maybe if we waited a bit. But the thing is, we did not know whether COVID will ease as time went by. But I don't blame the organisation because if you want to make changes and there are some efficiencies, you can't wait for a year or two since that can be costly for the organisation. (Participant 2)

Proper consultation before coming to us and presenting what they think. Proper consultation, meaning they consult with people who have been in the industry, consult with HR to evaluate the job roles and grade them, and also ensure that the title that is there is correct and relevant to the market. And I feel that those are the steps that should have been done before telling us that this is what we are going to do. The realignment or the restructuring is now overdue purely because that was not done. (Participant 8)

What also concerned me is, with COVID happening, people were required to do the psychometric tests and when you take part in the test while not in your right state of mind the results might not be a true reflection of who you are, and my concern was that there were people who were required to do that and I was saying when you write such a test you should be in the right state of mind, cause I don't think that it would reflect how they think. Maybe people did well, I have no idea, I'm lucky that I was not one of those that were required to do it, but given that COVID was just in the middle of it all, the results would go either way and not reflect you as a person. So, there could have been another way. I mean, we are very professional, highly skilled, well-educated individuals who have the right skill set. We did not have to go through that. I think this is one thing that was not necessary to put people through.

(Participant 7)

Participants also stated that using a different management style to achieve organisational goals would have been beneficial. They claimed that if the management had identified issues with the organisation's performance or sustainability, they could have tackled them head-on instead of creating new departments or changing or reconfiguring the organisation as they had done.

For example, if they noticed that a particular department was underperforming, the management could have been forthright and confronted them. Participant 11 stated:

So instead of doing that or identifying the departments that were not performing what happened is that the focus changed completely, so the configuration of the organisation changed, so different departments were created and just so that we can have a more focused strategy. That would have been easier and cheaper in my view.

#### *4.5.4.3 Long-Term and Sustainable Solutions*

With regard to long-term sustainability, all of the participants thought that this was achievable. It did not have to be merely a far-fetched hope or dream. To bring the company's vision to life, the organisation needs a results-oriented, skilled board that is adaptable and agile to the changing environment and dedicated to effectively utilising the appropriate digital tools. When everything comes together, the organisation has the chance to have a significant impact. Participants said that there was some training that was put in place for them to adapt, although for some these training programmes might not be enough. Participant 12 stated:

There have been a lot of things that were brought in terms of training to make sure that if you are placed in a new unit to make sure that people are skilled or equipped in that particular area. I think that they use that as encouragement. And our organisation always encourages continuous learning and training. So, one of the aspects was that if you feel that you want to achieve or to fill those gaps in your new position you can go for training.

#### **4.5.5 Theme 5:**

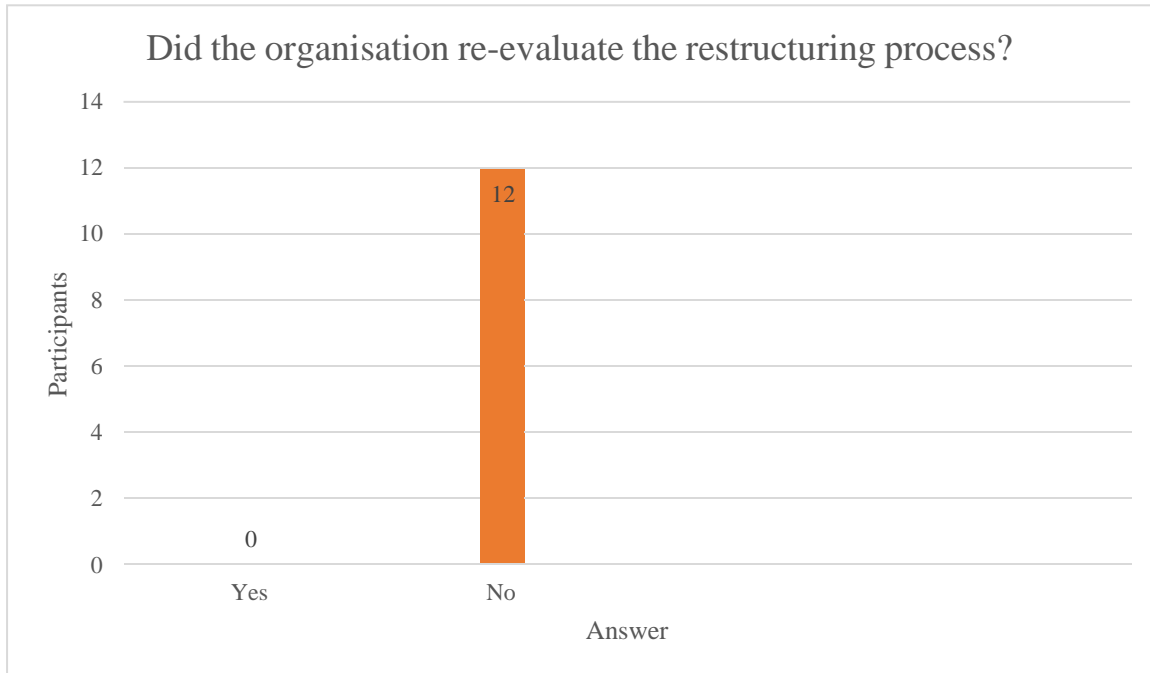
Research Question 5 asked, "To what extent was a shared vision achieved as a result of the restructuring process?" The findings of the shared vision theme are presented in the following section. The way in which the organisation re-evaluated the restructuring process is unpacked, along with the new methods of operation. I discuss whether or not the restructuring cut the company costs.

##### *4.5.5.1 Re-Valuating the Restructuring Process.*

As shown in Figure 4.8, all participants stated that the restructuring process had not been re-evaluated (by the time the interviews were conducted). The participants stated that the outcome of restructuring was not clear at that time, and so shared vision had not been achieved.

**Figure 4.8**

*Re-Evaluating the Restructuring Process*



In the words of Participant 9:

I think it's still early days. We don't have the results of it as yet. But we are already picking up some quick wins. And we already picking up areas for improvement; we are doing a few changes here and there. So, for now, it's very premature to fully answer this. I mean we are only two and a half years in.

*4.5.5.2 New Methods of Operation*

With regard to new methods of operation, 67% of the participants stated that there had been some new methods of operation, which had made it easier for them to work. The organisation had put more emphasis on how the client is central; it is the priority of this organisation. Participant 10 stated:

I think there are new ways of operations to ensure that we improve in what we are doing because as a financial institution, our organisation is different from the commercial banks we provide finance to the business community. So, it was a way of thinking as to how best we offer our services and product offering, our value proposition to the customers, so there was streamlining where we looked at a certain

point of interaction with our clients and realise where the pinpoints are. And we focus on that point of interaction with the client.

However, 33% of participants claimed that there were no new methods of operation. This was extremely frustrating for them, as evidenced by this quote by Participant 6:

There are none. The new methods of operation would have been there if we were to say “the management was restructuring to put you in a better position or into a new position where our functionality will be A & B”, so even with this restructuring, whatever that happens now is that I’m still going to carry on, doing what I’m doing or carried over to the next role. There here is no change in the grading and whatnot. Although the management said that they are consulting with an external HR consultancy company that will come and grade the positions we are in. this will be done because we argued that the amount of work that is expected of us and our roles will significantly increase or change by more than 40%. Over and above would be currently doing.

#### *4.5.5.3 Cutting Costs*

The participants stated that the initial decision to restructure was not based on changing the company’s financial and operational aspects because the company was not facing any financial pressures. So, in essence, no action was taken to modify any debt in order to limit financial harm, but the restructuring was merely to improve the business. Participant 5 explained:

“The main purpose of the restructuring process wasn’t really for budgetary purposes, because they were not even wishing to retrench people so that they can cut costs. It was mainly changing the way we do things. But in terms of the cost, I would still take it that it’s still the same because we maintained the same staff complement, we are recruiting more because new units were established so need certain skills are required to execute the tasks within those units.

Participant 3 stated, “It didn’t cut the costs and should have ideally increased the costs but then because they’re working with what they have. They breaking even”, while Participant 2 opined:

I think that the costs are really a result of COVID because we are no longer in the office as much, but that wasn’t the intention and so I wouldn’t know whether there have been any significant improvements in the cost structure of the company.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

The data gathered through semi-structured interviews was presented and analysed in this chapter. This was accomplished by using the study's five critical questions as benchmarks against which the data should be analysed. To present and analyse the interview data, an inductive approach was used; and as a result, categories or themes emerged. The data presented and analysed in this chapter will be discussed in the following chapter. Based on the findings, conclusions will be drawn.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the study's results, which were attained through an analysis of the data collected.

It may be said from the findings in Chapter 4 that the restructuring process in the organisation under study was a bit rough at first. Most of the participants understood the reason for the restructuring; however, some felt that the reasons were not clear until the employees challenged management to give them more clarity. The participants felt anxiety about their personal development within the company and a large percentage of the participants felt that the management had to do a thorough consultation before introducing the restructuring process to the employees.

The discussion of this study relates the findings to Senge's Fifth Discipline model, which was the main theory underpinning this study. The goal of the research findings discussion is to deal with the study's objectives, which are restated below:

1. To examine how team learning occurred during the restructuring process.
2. To examine how personal mastery occurred during the restructuring process.
3. To determine how systems thinking evolved during the restructuring process.
4. To examine how systems thinking occurred during the restructuring process.
5. To determine whether a shared vision was achieved from the restructuring processes.

In addition, this chapter presents a theoretical framework to meet the research objectives. The following section discusses the study's results and interprets how they correspond with or differ from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

### **5.2 Discussion**

#### ***5.2.1 Demographic Factors***

##### ***5.2.1.1 Age***

A majority of the participants were between the ages of 40 and 49. It was discovered that, despite having more responsibility in their current positions as a result of the transition from one division to another, these participants were still productive. Their exposure to other areas

of the organisation has allowed them to be more productive and produce higher outputs. However, some of the younger participants stated that the restructuring process was more of a hindrance to their professional development. These findings are in line with the statement of Boerlijst (2020) that it is often contended that older employees are more likely than younger employees to accept organisational change. It should be noted that older employees tend to hold more senior positions, however. As a result, the more senior employees hold more influence over change management and implementation than their more junior colleagues.

#### *5.2.1.2 Gender*

The study sample consisted of both male and female participants, with female respondents in the majority. And to my observation, all employees were equally affected by the restructuring process, regardless of gender. Although there were some variations, the difference was not significant.

#### *5.2.1.3 Job Position*

Respondents in this study held non-managerial, supervisory, junior management and senior management positions, with the highest number of participants in non-managerial positions. It was clear that the participants in non-managerial positions found it difficult to process the change. To them, the reasons were not clear, and a majority of the participants stated that they were anxious about their personal development in the organisation.

The above findings are in line with Senge (2012), who stated that the learning discipline of team learning fosters employees' abilities to search for the bigger picture, beyond people's individual points of view. This allows employees to not only focus on the temporal effects of the realignment process but look at the bigger picture or the forecasted future of the organisation.

#### *5.2.1.4 Highest Educational Qualification*

The majority of respondents held postgraduate degrees. The assumption can be made that the qualification levels of the employees did not influence the success of the restructuring process.

#### *5.2.1.5 Years of Service*

According to the data, a majority of the respondents had served the company for 6–10 years, followed by 11–15 years of service, 0–5 years of service, and 16 or more years of service.

According to Boerlijst (2020), employees who have worked in the organisation for longer may naturally be closer to retirement age and, as a result, could accept early retirement. In contrast, employees in their early to late 30s are the most vulnerable to change because their career development is affected.

## ***5.2.2 Discussions Related to Themes and Sub-Themes***

### ***5.2.2.1 Theme 1: Team Learning***

The research findings regarding team learning revealed five factors that emerged when participants were asked questions about team learning. Specifically, participants reported that the reasons were not clear. Some pointed out that the organisation needed restructuring for its long-term sustainability, and it was also primarily based on the poor performance of the company's existing financial portfolio.

According to Senge (2012), the learning discipline of a team fosters a group's ability to search for the bigger picture beyond people's individual points of view. It is critical for achieving excellent functional team dynamics (Mutongi, 2018). The findings of this study revealed that not everyone understood the reasons for the realignment; therefore, achieving excellent functional team dynamics was somewhat difficult for the participants. Employees must view their coworkers as teammates rather than rivals, according to Senge (2012). It's the first step in starting conversations where people are willing to be open and express who they really are. According to Liu (2018), the workplace ought to be a secure environment where sincere mistakes are accepted. Anything other than that will prevent learning from taking place.

Senge (2012) placed emphasis the importance of being able to form learning teams and facilitate dialogue among members of a learning organisation. Complex issues are explored, debated, and decisions are made in these dialogues. Teams make almost all major decisions, according to Senge (2012), who also noted that they are a source of fresh ideas for the organisation. This is the organisational and leadership culture of today. To form a successful team, individuals must be imaginative and cognizant of their teammates, their roles, and their capabilities (Senge, 2006). Watkins and Kim (2018) advocated the benefits of teamwork and their well-documented positive influence on cultivating the positive aspects of the learning organisation.

According to Senge (2012), when a team can adhere to the same principles and evaluate a challenge similarly, the members' integration improves. Working in groups helps everyone in

the group improve their interactive and conceptual skills (Volberda et al., 2021). Senge (2012) listed important factors for successful team learning, including: Teams must learn how to become smarter by learning more together than they do individually. To strengthen the team's innovative concepts, each team member must be creative in their own right and supportive of the others.

#### 5.2.2.1.1 Sub-Theme: Communication

One of the points that emerged in this theme was communication before and during the realignment process. The findings revealed that majority of participants stated that the start of this process was well communicated, though others thought that it was not and therefore did not experience a smooth restructuring process. Some participants revealed that some of their colleagues who took part in the change joined initiatives put in place to ensure a smooth restructuring process.

It should be noted that communication is essential for eliciting more positive responses from employees during any change process. According to Azizi et al. (2021), creating a narrative for the change and relating all communications to that framework is recommended. This consistency in messaging constantly reminds the staff and offers consistency during a period of transition. It is also important to explain to staff how the change will help them in particular. Employees may be more open to the idea of change if they understand its benefits and how it relates to their role.

Organisations must have workplace strategies in place to help employees process information before the organisational change. According to Altay et al. (2018), the messaging surrounding forthcoming transformation can often overshadow all previous work. Long-serving employees may feel rejected or demoralised as a result of this. It is crucial to recognise the organisation's accomplishments up to that point and link them to possible changes. This encourages employees to be excited about organisational change rather than resentful of it, and it accelerates the organisation's ability to achieve team learning during the change process.

Employees who do not have all of the details about restructuring most often start and spread rumours about the company's future (Zehra & Siddiqui, 2019). They may hear parts of the change plan and fill in the details based on what they know. While discussing these shifts with co-workers, the facts may turn into speculations, fuelling additional stress and anxiety.

The organisation should communicate effectively with employees to avoid the company rumour mill being set in motion. Yue (2022) suggested beginning the plan by setting expectations for change. For example, if a company is just commencing with changes, its management should ensure that they hold a staff meeting to go over detailed information and answer any questions the employees may have. When employees have the information they require, they are less likely to spread rumours. To encourage team learning, management can provide orientations or training before, during and after the restructuring process.

#### 5.2.2.1.2 Sub-Theme: Company Objectives

The findings revealed that the organisation under study had to restructure to ensure its long-term sustainability; this was based on the poor performance of the company's financial portfolio at the time.

This is in line with the statement by Harrigan and Wing (2021), who pointed out that The ownership and capital structures are changed as part of financial restructuring. Companies that want to reduce the agency associated with incompetence and tighten ownership and control frequently undergo this type of restructuring. Some instances, financial restructuring can be executed in organisations that have a high debt-to-equity ratio.

Quah et al. (2020) identified that one of the most important aspects of reorganisation is communication. There must be a balance between over-communication and under-communication. Communication methods must be personalised, such as face-to-face meetings. Executives need to make sure that communication is well-planned, delivered to those who are affected at the right time, and done so through the best channel possible.

During any realignment process, the communication and strategy method must be properly managed. According to Ewing et al. (2019), the key point when implementing process intervention is to communicate openly and consistently with staff. Top-down communication is also essential during the reform period. It was clear that the organisation under study was comfortable with meetings and had communicated extensively through various channels. Because this reorganisation took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and organisations functioned virtually, face-to-face communication between management and employees was limited for the company under study.

According to Andersen (2022), how a restructuring affects employees will depend on how they view the reorganisation process. Employees will require critical assistance from numerous stakeholders after restructuring. If there is effective communication, the effects of reorganisation are mitigated. Employees should feel supported by their managers and coworkers, and management should make every effort to earn their confidence. Employee participation in the reorganisation process and participation in decision-making must be encouraged. Effective communication, support, and active participation are the three elements that will contribute to a greater sense of wellness within the organisation. Some participants said that, as the results showed.

Ponting (2020) cites resistance as one of the most typical instinctual responses to change. It makes sense that workers are reluctant to adopt new procedures or tasks. Due to organisational changes, employees may have new managers or team members, or they may be working in a brand-new department with a target market they are unfamiliar with. Therefore, they might favor the status quo.

Nearly one-third of employees who are going through organisational change are unaware of why the change is taking place, according to Quah et al. (2020). If organisations do not communicate their vision for the organisational change and the benefits to the company, employees are unaware of how the shift will affect them. This causes them to initially resist learning about impending organisational restructuring.

One of the barriers to restructuring is a lack of clear goals, plans, and strategies, which deprives those involved and affected by the restructuring of awareness regarding where the company is headed and what to expect (Okpalaibekwe, 2022). It is therefore of great importance for organisations to avoid depriving their staff members of valuable knowledge about the motives for realignment and the associated goals.

#### 5.2.2.1.3 Sub-Theme: Meeting the Objectives

With regard to meeting company objectives, participants stated that it is too early to tell whether the implemented change had helped the company to meet its objectives. Although there were signs that the company was developing, it is known that when implementing new systems in an organisation, there are bound to be some setbacks along the way, which require improvement. Obi et al. (2021) revealed that company reorganisation takes time to produce results. Even the greatest organisations take between 3 and 4 years to have a positive impact

on the company or to see results. It can take a minimum of 4 or 5 years to see change or it could be prolonged even further if the strategy just requires tweaking rather than radical transformation. Confusion reigns when organisations try out too many structures too quickly or rock back and forth between old conceptual models and new ones. Engagement, innovation and performance suffer.

#### 5.2.2.1.4 Sub-Theme: Work Environment and Team Spirit

With regard to team spirit and work environment, the findings uncovered that the employees were still trying to adjust to the new work structure. The reorganisation process occurred at the start of the pandemic, when employees worked from home during the country's hard lockdown. Some employees were still concerned after restructuring because they have not yet understood the reasons for the restructuring. Participants stated that there is some discomfort in some areas, and the employees are just going with the flow. These findings are in line with the study of Neill (2018), who stated that the ultimate goal of any restructuring is to make the company more efficient, productive, and competitive. The weeks before require a tremendous amount of mental and emotional energy as plans are devised and reworked repeatedly. Gamble-Smith (2021) stated that following the restructuring provides employees with opportunities to express their concerns and ask questions through one-on-one meetings with managers, department gatherings, and town hall meetings. Executives should be direct when speaking to employees. They should begin by acknowledging how difficult it has been and thanking them for their assistance. They should recognise others' emotional reactions, which can range from fear to relief. They should furthermore remedy workload issues. Neill elaborated that a restructuring can put a great deal of strain on an employee, especially if they do not have the skills for the additional role. This is when coaching, mentoring, education, and additional training become critical to retaining talent. Management should provide as much clarity as possible about each person's role and how it contributes to the organisation's overall goal. Making this connection explicit motivates individuals by emphasising the importance of their role and contribution to the organisation.

#### 5.2.2.1.5 Sub-Theme: Workplace Culture

Regarding organisational culture, the findings revealed that the corporation wanted to focus on ensuring that it became an employee-centric organisation. To do this, the organisation under study formed an organisational trust transformation, which allowed staff engagement. This was done to understand how employees felt about the change and try to build a healthy workplace

culture. Even though the company has transformed its culture, the issue is linking the culture and new policies to the employees. Therefore, given that the organisation has taken a new direction, it was important for management to understand how employees felt about the change.

Evans (2020) supported the view that the success of restructuring depends on the alignment of values of the organisational culture and the organisation's fundamental principles, rather than just the change process. The failure to align the company's value systems to organisational change strategies and the staff's values or principles can also lead to employees' resisting change; therefore, it is vital to understand the interdependence of these important change elements. If the values of the organisation and employees are recognised and acknowledged when planning for change, specifically looking at the building blocks (culture, purpose, identity, beliefs and values, the environment and behaviours), a strong personal relationship will be built.

#### *5.2.2.2 Theme 2: Personal Mastery*

The research findings on personal mastery revealed four factors that emerged when participants were asked questions about personal mastery. Specifically, participants reported that they felt anxious and insecure, even though the organisation assured employees that no one would lose their job during the restructuring process. The main concern was that the realignment would delay their professional development.

The findings are consistent with the opinions of Hayes (2014) and Jokubauskas et al. (2021), who stated that anxiety and fear can bring about resistance to change. Organisations can lower resistance by providing emotional support, training employees so that they can easily adapt, and extending leave days to employees to allow them to process or cope with any loss from change. Employees need time to detach from their present position after a sense of loss. The authors added that group sharing sessions give workers a chance to express their feelings regarding a loss. Managers should emphasise the need for change to employees and clearly state the consequences the company might face if the change is implemented. The management should also offer emotional support to employees.

At the personal mastery level, Senge (2012) stated that individuals can move from a receptive outlook to being a contributor to the issue or framework. When an individual has distinct goal in mind along with a true understanding of reality, they are said to have achieved personal mastery (Hansen et al., 2020). In this case a clear vision can be thoroughly communicated by

the company's management. Senge (2012) added that the employee is motivated to put all necessary related activities into practice in order to realize the vision by the gap between the vision and reality. A clear understanding of current reality is necessary to sustain this creative tension.

Employees, on the other hand, might think they lack the abilities needed to accomplish their goals. There could be a vicious cycle in place that is challenging to break. According to Senge (2006) and Hansen et al. (2020), employees should train their subconscious minds because they can solve complex issues more quickly than their conscious selves. People won't be able to realize their vision if they think they are helpless. We should therefore train the subconscious mind to handle stress and issues in daily life.

#### 5.2.2.2.1 Sub-Theme: General Feelings Towards Change

As mentioned above, when the restructuring was first announced, it was clear that most of the participants felt anxious and insecure. The news of the impending reorganisation triggered anxiety in a majority of respondents. Other were insecure at first, but insecurity was not as significant as anxiety because the organisation assured the staff that no one would lose their job during the restructuring process. The main concern was that the realignment would delay their development within the organisation.

The findings are consistent with the opinions of the following scholars: Based on anecdotal evidence, Pinder (2018) claimed that some employees of organisations view the term restructuring as a code that companies use to hide the harsh reality of downsizing, which results in job losses. According to Rigotti et al. (2021), perceptions of employment uncertainty and, indirectly, stress were related to the actual risk of unemployment prior to the notice of realignment.

Employees may be hesitant about the impending organisational changes, according to Jogie (2022). Some might even disagree with the organisation's corporate direction, whereas others might believe that changes are detrimental to the work they already have completed. Staff members who do not fully believe in the plan may stop believing in the organisation's leadership during times of transition.

Altay et al. (2018) pointed out that while stress is a reasonable response to a shift in the workplace, employers must keep in mind that several staff members welcome change as well.

Depending on the individual's personality and experience working for the company, they may be eager to take on a new challenge and be excited as to what lies ahead. They may well have previously experienced an organisational realignment that was beneficial to their professional life.

Businesses should capitalise on this enthusiasm and help spread the information. Staff members who are enthusiastic about the change process can be asked to serve as transition ambassadors who can assist with reassuring individuals who are sceptical about the change. Employees may be more willing to participate and work towards the new organisational norm if they see their peers welcoming the change.

#### 5.2.2.2.2 Sub-Theme: Changes in Productivity

Employees may become frustrated and tense while learning new work processes and systems or having to navigate a new department. The introduction of new tasks or elements to learn may appear to be an inconvenience. This could require employees to work additional hours or on weekends in order to keep up with their regular workload. Even if the transition is only temporary, it can elicit a wide range of negative emotions.

According to Kelloway (2017) , employers may need to make accommodations for employees during times of organisational change. This may entail modifying deliverables, targets or expectations, with the acknowledgment that staff members must concentrate on understanding their new positions. Furthermore, managers and company leaders should advise employees that this change is not an inconvenience, but rather an opportunity for staff members to acquire new abilities and do well in other aspects of the company.

Senge (2012) pointed out that companies can only learn if they have people on their team who are willing to learn. As a result, the foundations of personal mastery are personal development and a consistent effort to become fitter. People with a high level of personal mastery are always learning. The skills and abilities of the employee determine their personal domain. It also encourages personal growth and a strong sense of belonging and purpose, demonstrating a commitment to the company. A person who excels in their personal domain is more concerned with the journey and learning than with the final destination. As a result, that employee can cultivate a culture of continuous learning. Personal domain encompasses more than skills and abilities – they are critical components of it.

#### 5.2.2.2.3 Sub-Theme: Commitment Level and Performance

According to the results for commitment level and performance after restructuring, participants were expected to take on more work following the restructuring. They worked harder for the same pay than before the restructuring. Because most employees believed there are fewer opportunities for advancement after a restructuring, their future with the organisation was less certain.

Petrou et al. (2018) stated that organisational change can bring about stress and anxiety for many employees, which affects their job performance. In order for businesses to successfully make large-scale changes to remain competitive, they need to anticipate the types of reaction their employees may have so that they can reassure them and help them focus on the success of the business.

After restructuring most participants were expected to take on more work for the same pay. Participants also revealed that there may be fewer career advancement opportunities after a restructuring, making one's future with the organisation less certain. In addition, the majority of participants stated that their commitment levels had improved, though some stated that they had decreased or remained the same after restructuring.

#### 5.2.2.2.4 Sub-Theme: Coping Mechanisms Used

Getiye (2022) stated that employees are an organisation's most valuable asset, so motivating staff ensures that they work to their fullest capacity. Most of the participants stated that their productivity level did not decrease, though for a few it did. The findings relate to the point made by Raharjo et al. (2018), who stated that some organisational restructuring initiatives tend to fail to improve productivity and the financial performance of the enterprise. This might be as a result of the detrimental effects that the restructuring process has on the welfare of the workers. Because of this, businesses should thoroughly investigate and comprehend how restructuring affects both the organisation and the welfare of its employees. After reorganisation, happier, more motivated, and productive employees will result from this investigation. This, in turn, will positively affect productivity and profitability.

Vrontis (2019) stated that productivity is important in any organisation. The level of productivity of an individual is correlated with their psychological state. Happy staff are psychologically stable and are more productive. The writer further illustrated that company

climate and employee engagement have a direct impact on productivity. A positive work environment encourages an effective workforce.

### *5.2.2.3 Theme 3: Systems Thinking*

A system is a gathering of interrelated, connecting, and related parts that structure a unified and complex whole (Tarnanen et al., 2021). Systems thinking is an approach to understanding reality that underlines the connections among a system's parts that go beyond the actual parts. Systems thinking, as opposed to focusing on individual issues, reflects the observational process of an overall system in this case the overall organisation. Managers must understand that each action and consequence is linked to another.

#### *5.2.2.3.1 Sub-Theme: Interconnectedness and Synthesis*

According to the findings, all the participants revealed that interconnectedness and synthesis did not change; that is because some roles were not clearly defined. However, the organisation has been working towards dealing with this issue. Further findings revealed that the company had developed exceptional transformation initiatives that will tackle issues such as politics in the workplace.

The above findings are in line with Bui (2020), who stated that systems thinking necessitates a mental shift from straightforward linear thinking to a more circular one. The core element of this paradigm shift is that all things are interconnected within an organisation. Primarily, everything depends on something else to survive. Therefore, for the business to survive, every department has to be interconnected.

The research findings about the way in which systems thinking occurred revealed four factors that emerged when participants were asked questions regarding personal mastery. The organisation held "town hall" meetings for all employees, where management presented an organisational structure explaining the direction in which the company wished to head. In order to make sure that communication is given at the appropriate time and to the appropriate employees, Fotinatos-Ventouratos (2021) stated that executives must plan personalized communication sessions with the workforce. To ensure that the employees understand the information they are receiving, communication should be two-way.

#### 5.2.2.3.2 Sub-Theme: Dynamic Relationships

According to the participants, the dynamic relationships had not changed. The data presented in the previous chapter indicates that a majority of the respondents stated that there is some competition and politics in the organisation. According to Altay et al. (2018), Managers frequently place too much emphasis on individual actions and neglect to consider the big picture. Employees who fully understand this correlation are able to identify connections and patterns of change in particular circumstances. Managers will have the ability to differentiate between cause and effect. Systems thinking incorporates the other four disciplines by fundamentally and proactively breaking down, for instance, an organisation's ongoing status, future objectives, associations with the world, and underlining strains (Tarnanen et al., 2021).

#### 5.2.2.4 Theme 4: Ways in Which Systems Thinking Occurred

Senge (2012) stated that the systems thinking discipline combines all other disciplines. Systemic thinking, which unifies all the other disciplines into a coherent body of theory and practice, is the fifth discipline as a result. One can only understand employee relationships and see the big picture with discipline.. Because of the complexities of modern life, this discipline is a requirement in current times.

As a result, systemic thinking is the solution to many people's feelings of impotence. To apply systemic thinking, the organisation must first understand that the current problems stem from past solutions, short-term fixes frequently only move the problem from one part of the system to another, more pressure does not result in better outcomes, and the organisation must identify the roadblocks that prevent the system from functioning properly.

Also, the organisation should concentrate on causes rather than symptoms. Short-term success can make us believe that a problem has been solved. However, systemic thinking must always be focused on the long-term causes rather than just the symptoms. Employees become more comfortable with known solutions, but often the most efficient solutions are not so obvious and require research.

#### 5.2.2.4.1 Sub-Theme: Steps Taken to Ensure Clarity About Restructuring

According to the findings of this sub-theme, a majority of participants believed that the organisation took visible steps to ensure clarity and developed a well-structured approach to ensure that employees were taken through the journey. As previously stated, the organisation's

management arranged “town halls” explaining what they wanted to accomplish. Fotinatos-Ventouratos (2021) stated that executives must plan personalized communication sessions with the employees. There were dedicated emails for employees to use if they had any concerns, and a task team would respond to those concerns. Overall, the majority of participants felt that management ensured that they understood every step they took until the completion of the implementation of the change.

According to Hu et al. (2018), in addition to negative and positive feelings about organisational change, some employees may find themselves somewhere in between these emotions or have mixed feelings about the change. While they might be concerned about what is to come, they also might be willing to consider the corporate structure. These staff know that even though organisational changes can be frightening, they can also lead to beneficial results such as career advancements and acquiring new skills.

Fontaine et.al. (2019) suggested involving workers in the change management plan as much as could reasonably be expected. This can assist them to figure out the change and take responsibility for it. This is especially useful for those workers who show resistance towards change. Ways of including workers might incorporate requesting criticism about ambiguous parts of the authoritative change, holding frequent events open to all employees and enlisting educated authorities to assist with building the change the executives’ plan.

#### 5.2.2.4.2 Sub-Theme: Alternative Ways of Changing

The findings revealed that the participants felt there could have been other options besides restructuring. If restructuring was the only way to help the company meet its goals, perhaps a softer approach could have been taken. The findings further uncovered that there were some training opportunities put in place for employees in the company under study to adapt, although this was done to ensure that the system was running smoothly and help to fill in any gaps.

According to Norwood (2018), monitoring and reviewing have to take place during the course of the reorganisation process, from the beginning to the last stage of restructuring. The restructuring plans must be monitored and constant feedback should be given throughout the process so that executives can observe and react accordingly. This is done to ensure that the systems thinking occurs continuously.

It is natural for employees to have emotional reactions to certain circumstances they might experience in the workplace. This can be managed by their managers. Alternately, if the restructuring process has any holes or flaws, there may be resistance to change. This issue has to be addressed by the executives of the organisations. The restructuring process can only work out if the employees are involved and actively listening to the ideas brought forward. Therefore, the participants in this research attended weekly meetings and training. This also formed part of the long-term and sustainable solutions.

Watkins et al. (2018) suggested that corporate managers must be upskilled before and during times of change so that they feel confident steering the company. Corporate leaders must succeed in areas such as organisational change, digitalisation, creative thinking and other aspects of company change to make the most effective decisions for the company's future and inculcate confidence in its workers.

#### *5.2.2.5 Theme: Shared Vision*

Building a shared vision encourages a commitment to the long term, while mental models centre on the receptiveness expected to uncover shortcomings in individuals' approaches to seeing the world. The vision should be developed in learning organisations through interaction with enterprise employees, according to Tarnanen et al. (2021). There are many representatives, and each of them has a unique vision that needs to be combined. The organisation's and individuals' individual visions must be incorporated in order to create a shared vision. People who don't share the same vision as the business might not contribute as much value (Tarnanen et al., 2021). When employees work toward the same goals, they are motivated rather than forced to complete tasks. It modifies the bond between the company and turns performance into a tool for learning.

##### *5.2.2.5.1 Sub-Theme: Re-Evaluating the Restructuring Process*

According to the interviewees, the outcome of restructuring was not clear at the time. It could be said that shared vision had therefore not been achieved at that stage. Senge (2006) stated that a shared vision exists when the people of the organisation identify with one another and share a common sense of destiny. Employees in organisations undergoing restructuring should develop a shared vision that connects them to the work purpose. To create a shared vision, the organisation should allow the employees to create a personal vision, which then leads to shared visions. Learning companies should not overstep individual liberties, but rather encourage

individual vision to strengthen the company's shared vision. They must understand that it takes time for a shared vision to emerge, especially in the realignment process. Senge (2006) added that in intelligent organisations, shared visions emerge gradually, as it is visible from the finding that evaluating the restructuring process now would be too soon because the company is only 2 ½ years into the realignment process. Building a shared vision will take time.

According to Hutasuhut et al. (2021), a strong common vision captures the opinions of the organisation's members. What each component of the organisation hopes to accomplish can be encapsulated in a shared vision. It merely conveys the aim and course that the company hopes to achieve collectively. All organisations work hard to avoid negative visions because they are harmful. Speaking of hopes rather than fears is necessary. Strong shared visions are created by learning organizations. They organise and direct their efforts toward the common goals of their staffs shared visions.

### **5.3 Conceptual Model: Organisational Learning During the Restructuring of a Finance-Based Organisation**

A model has been developed to examine organisational learning during the restructuring of a finance-based organisation, based on the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study's findings. Figure 5.1 depicts the various disciplines involved in the restructuring of the finance-based organisation. This includes the team learning discipline, which entails how the organisation encouraged team learning during the restructuring of the organisation under study. It looked into the communication from the company before the restructuring process, and it also looks at the initial objectives stated by the organisation's management, discusses whether the organisation met the objectives, examines the work environment and team spirit after restructuring, and the workplace culture.

The model further shows the discipline of personal mastery or personal domain, which revealed the employee's general feelings toward change, before and after the reorganisation process. A majority of the study participants stated that the information about the impending change triggered anxiety. This discipline revealed how the productivity of the employees changed during and after the process, as well as how performance, productivity and commitment level increased for most employees on account of added responsibility because of the new role that the employee had taken after restructuring, although this was not the same for everyone. The

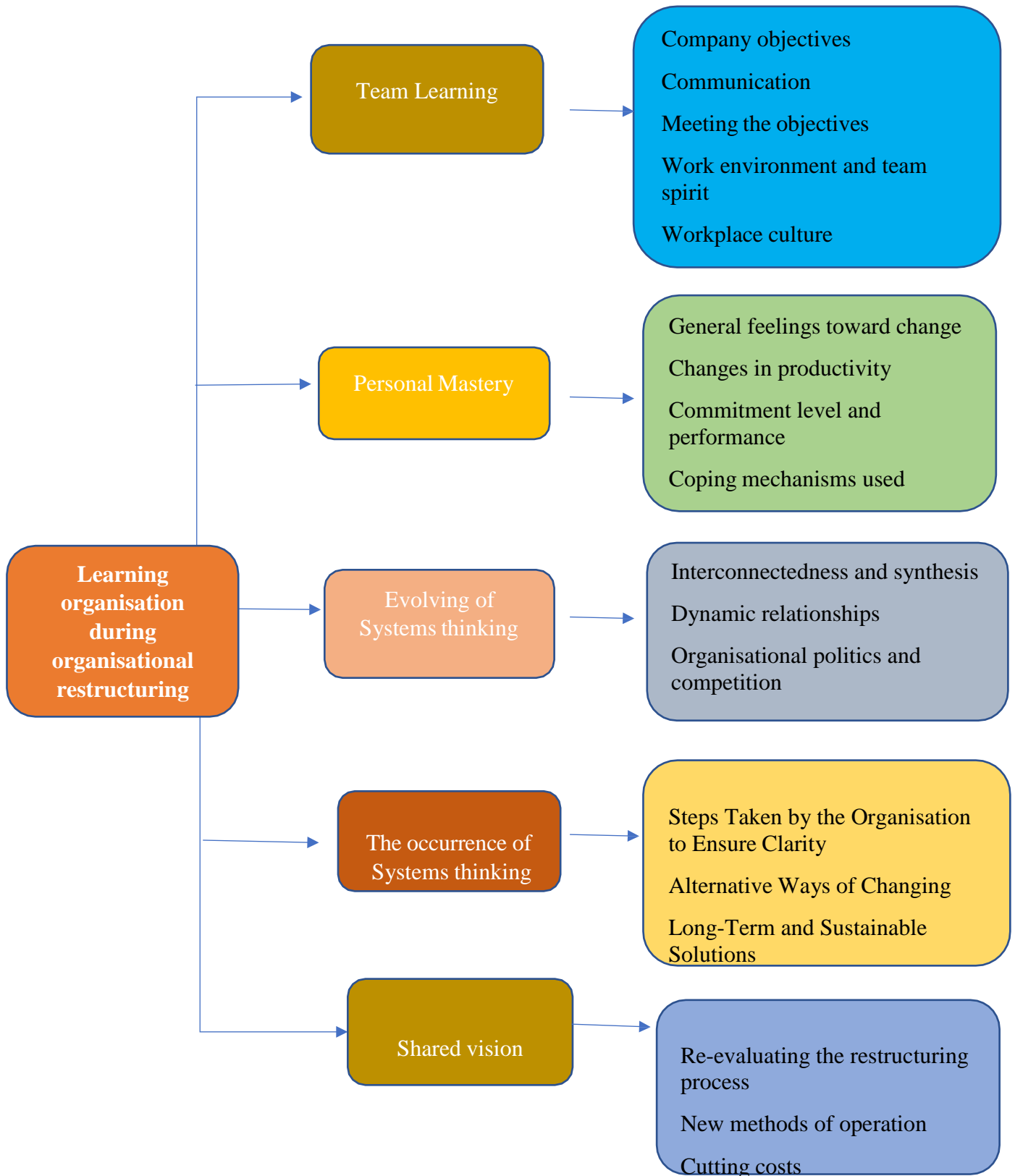
model also includes the different coping mechanisms employees used during and after the change.

Notably, the model reveals how systems thinking occurred and evolved during and after a restructuring process. This includes how interconnectedness and synthesis occurred. It was stated that interconnectedness and synthesis did not change and the dynamic relationships within the departments were still the same as they were before restructuring. This discipline also included the steps taken by the organisation to ensure clarity to its employees. It was revealed in the findings that the company did have some initiatives in place to ensure that the employees had the full picture of why the reorganisation was happening. It looks at the alternative ways of changing the organisation, the long-term and sustainable solutions offered by the organisation and whether there were organisational politics and competition after restructuring.

The discipline of shared vision includes the steps taken by the company to re-evaluate the restructuring process, to see whether or not they had achieved the objectives. It was revealed in the study that it was still too early to measure the success or failure of the restructuring process. The results may only be able to be seen properly after five or six years. The new methods of operation involved employees working in different departments and taking on more responsibility or tasks in their new roles. Lastly, it was noted that cutting costs was not the initial reason for the organisational change in the organisation under study because the company was not facing any financial pressures. So, restructuring was merely to improve the business.

**Figure 5.1**

*Conceptual Model: Organisational Learning During the Restructuring of a Finance-Based Organisation*



## **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the research findings. The findings revealed that the experience of restructuring in the finance-based organisation was not the same for every employee. This section revealed that there was communication before restructuring; however, it was not enough for some. The findings revealed that productivity and commitment were the same or increased for some participants. The findings revealed that evaluating the restructuring process would be premature for now because the organisation is only 2 years into the process of restructuring. The following chapter will provide conclusions and recommendations for this study.

## **CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Organisational change, according to Mäkikangas (2019), is the modifications that are made to the primary systems of the company, including the values of an organisation, the way the organisation works, structure and strategy, operating procedures and the organisational system. Change and organisational restructuring form an essential part of the development and sustainability of an organisation, therefore making it a vital process in the organisation.

According to Raharjo et al. (2018), some organisational restructuring initiatives frequently fall short of their intended goals of increasing the productivity and financial performance of the company. This might be as a result of the detrimental effects that the restructuring process has on workers' wellbeing. Because of this, businesses should thoroughly investigate and comprehend how restructuring will affect both the organisation and the welfare of its employees. Having this investigation will result in happier staff who will be more motivated and more productive after restructuring. This will then affect productivity and profitability positively.

With this in mind, a qualitative approach was necessary to understand whether the organisation under study fully achieved its aim of becoming a learning organisation, using Senge's Fifth Discipline theory. This chapter delves into the findings presented in Chapter 4. The purpose of this research was to look into organisational learning during the restructuring of a finance-based organisation. To that end, the findings are discussed in relation to the research questions that guided them. The study concludes with a summary of the findings and recommendations are made based on the discussion of the findings.

### **6.2 Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to investigate organisational learning during the restructuring of a finance-based organisation. The research problem and accompanying research objectives highlighted in Chapter 1 sought primarily to explore the restructuring process of the finance-based organisation in Sandton, South Africa, using Senge's Fifth Discipline model. The five dimensions are personal mastery, mental models, systems thinking, team learning and shared vision.

The literature review covered the vast impact that restructuring has had globally. It examined organisational change, elaborated on the different types of corporate restructuring, discussed the reason for restructuring, looked at the impact of restructuring on employee well-being, explored different change theories and discussed the theoretical framework.

A qualitative research approach was used to respond to the questions, based on objectives set, to establish and bring an understanding of the restructuring process at the organisation under study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 participants to elicit their subjective responses in order to understand the process of, reasons for and effects of restructuring. This research followed an interpretivist approach, which allowed a better understanding of the research question and research background, as well as eliciting detailed subjective opinions from each of the participants.

A case study approach was used, which allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the context presented by each individual, allowing themes to emerge from the data. The research population included male and female employees from the organisation under study who hold non-managerial, supervisory, junior, and senior management, positions. An interview schedule of 26 semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix A) guided the interviews. The interviews were carried out using MS Teams, and the recordings were transcribed afterwards. The data were then analysed using thematic analysis, which resulted in the findings discussed in Chapter 4.

### **6.3 Study Findings**

Five themes emerged from the interviews:

1. Team learning
2. Personal mastery
3. Ways in which systems thinking evolved
4. Ways in which systems thinking occurred
5. Shared vision

Further study findings will be discussed in relation to the study's research questions highlighted in Chapters 1 and 3.

### ***6.3.1 Theme 1: Team Learning***

The findings revealed whether and/or how team learning was achieved during the restructuring of the organisation. This included the way in which change was communicated to the employees, the purpose of restructuring, and elaborating on the current work environment, team spirit and the organisational culture after restructuring.

#### *6.3.1.1 Company Objectives*

A key finding about this sub-theme that emerged from the data is the objectives stated by the organisation's management for restructuring. In the case of the organisation under study, restructuring was focused on the long-term sustainability of the organisation, and this was primarily based on the poor performance of the company's existing financial portfolio, looking at very high non-performing loans and some equity positions that had deteriorated in the expected returns. A shift in focus was therefore needed, be it the sectors the company was supporting or changing the company structure.

Another point that was observed from the interviews was that the organisation's strategic intent needed to change so that the organisation could improve and stay relevant in the market. The organisation needed to remedy the existing inefficiencies and find an effective way of providing its service and product offerings to the market.

Further results revealed that it was difficult for employees to process this change because they were still not clear as to why the entire organisation had to change. They challenged management to provide answers, however. They were told that the restructuring was necessary purely because the divisional executive felt that the company needed to reorganise. As a result, the restructuring process took longer than expected.

#### *6.3.1.2 Communication From the Company*

Another sub-theme that emerged from the data is communication from the company prior to restructuring. Many participants were of the opinion that there was sufficient communication about the company restructuring; however, some employees felt that the reasons for initiating this process were not communicated clearly. Findings indicated that it was communicated via a range of channels, through emails and meetings, and that the employees did receive regular communication about the long-term restructuring.

It was also revealed that some employees took part in initiatives that were put in place to ensure a smooth restructuring process, so they acted as ambassadors of the restructuring process. The organisation had physical engagements between staff and management to provide input before the actual restructuring.

However, some employees indicated that there was a miscommunication between employees and management regarding restructuring objectives, and this caused a delay in the process. Others felt as though they were told just about the problem and why restructuring was the only solution, rather than being told about the vision that the company wants to establish.

In summary, 58% of participants believed that the objectives were communicated clearly to them and the company had an initiative that helped them fully understand this change process. On the other hand, 42% of participants felt that the reasons for initiating this process were not communicated clearly.

#### *6.3.1.3 Meeting the Objectives*

The results revealed that employees widely believed that it would be difficult to measure the results of restructuring at that moment because it had only been two years since the process started. Trying to measure the success of the initiative would therefore be premature and possibly better assessed after 4 or 5 years. One could then see whether the organisation has met certain objectives. Participants stated that there are signs that the company is progressing, as it is known that when implementing new systems in an organisation there are bound to be hiccups, which necessitate continuous improvement. There are lessons to be learnt regardless. A perfect organisational transformation simply does not exist – there will always be some aspects of change that require immediate attention.

#### *6.3.1.4 Work Environment and Team Spirit*

This sub-theme emerged from the findings about the work environment and team spirit after restructuring. The participants described the (new) work environment as pleasant, given that they have experienced the workplace both before and after restructuring. The employees choose not to make the work environment unpleasant, meaning that the employees are largely “going with the flow”. Most participants stated that they are still finding themselves with regard to their position in the organisation.

Since this restructuring process occurred at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, when employees were separated from their colleagues on account of being in hard lockdown, employees did not interact with one another as much as they did before, owing to the hybrid structure of working that was introduced. Some employees were concerned because they still did not understand the reasons for the reorganisation. This could be due to a desire to see results right away. They were still trying to adjust to the new strategies that were put in place, even though they experienced discomfort in some areas.

As participants described the work environment after restructuring, another sub-theme emerged, which entailed team spirit in the organisation. A majority of the participants stated that the team spirit had not changed and the employees still worked as hard as they did before. They mostly understood what was required from them, even though the situation and other conditions have changed and they may have had more responsibilities after the restructuring.

However, some participants stated that there was a lack of team spirit after the restructuring, providing a clear example of the way in which different people experienced the journey in different ways. The findings suggested that these individuals may simply be “going with the flow” or “going through the motions”, and they do not have the same enthusiasm that they did before restructuring.

As described in the findings above, all of the participants (100%) felt that the work environment had changed after restructuring; one of the reasons for this is that employees are still trying to establish the new status quo. With regard to team spirit, 75 of participants stated that it remained unchanged, whereas 25% stated that it had decreased.

#### *6.3.1.5 Workplace Culture*

The next sub-theme that emerged from the findings is workplace culture. The results described that before restructuring, the organisation had no issues with organisational culture and the restructuring did not focus on changing the culture. It was more about long-term sustainability.

The findings pointed out that many employees are still searching for themselves and they have not yet fully aligned with some of the policies that have been implemented in the past few years. The findings also stated that there was a lack of consultation regarding new policies, which employees believe was primarily due to the fact that the management team or executive team in place did not consult them on a variety of issues. The findings also revealed that

management were implementing new programmes aimed at increasing trust between employees and management. These programmes will ensure that the organisation becomes an employee-centric organisation.

In contrast, some participants were of the opinion that the culture was terrible and that there was no sense of belonging or accountability from other parties. This affected their work and they were therefore just going through the motions.

### ***6.3.2 Theme 2: Personal Mastery***

The findings revealed how personal mastery occurred during the restructuring process, as well as the employee's general feelings towards change, the changes in productivity, commitment level and performance, and the coping mechanisms that the employees used after restructuring.

#### ***6.3.2.1 General Feelings Towards Change***

It was clear from the results that when the restructuring was first announced, all (100%) of the participants felt anxious and insecure. The news of the impending reorganisation triggered anxiety in the majority of respondents. Insecurity was not as significant as anxiety because the organisation assured employees that no one would lose their job during the restructuring process. The main concern was that the realignment would hinder their professional growth within the organisation.

#### ***6.3.2.2 Changes in Productivity***

A majority (58%) of participants were still productive, despite the fact that some had more responsibility in their new positions because of the transition from one division to another. Exposure to other areas of the organisation has enabled them to be more productive and produce higher outputs.

In contrast, however, 42% of participants felt that their roles were no longer clear and that there was some uncertainty about what was expected of them. These findings support the assertion of Coleman (2020) that survivors or in-place employees are frequently neglected and left with little choice, causing them to suffer more pressure after restructuring processes. Participants foresaw that their colleagues will have to fight for a senior position. Another concern noted was that the organisation has not done grading for the vertical positions that were introduced.

### *6.3.2.3 Commitment Level and Performance*

Participants indicated that they were expected to take on more work after the restructuring. They performed more work for the same pay they received before restructuring. Since most employees interviewed thought there were fewer career advancement opportunities after a restructuring, this made their future with the organisation less certain.

The majority of participants (67%) stated that their commitment levels had improved, however. That was mainly because of the unit that they were placed in as a result of restructuring. They saw a great deal of alignment with their interests and the units that they were placed in, making their outlook much more positive. In contrast, 33% of the participants revealed that there was some uncertainty about what was expected of them, which decreased their commitment levels.

### *6.3.2.4 Coping Mechanisms Used*

With regard to coping mechanisms, the results show that each participant had a unique experience during the restructuring process. Being able to discuss their uncertainties with their colleagues helped them cope, as it made them realise that they were not the only ones who were worried or uncertain about their futures. Engaging with other employees is therapeutic. Some used gym or other hobbies to relieve stress. For others, working from home assisted them. The majority (83%) of participants said that working from home had helped them deal with change – the hybrid structure provides flexibility and balance. For others, coping entailed finding a way out of the company or finding alternative employment.

## **6.3.3 Theme 3: Ways in Which Systems Thinking Evolved**

This theme deals in great detail with the ways in which interconnectedness and synthesis occurred during restructuring, including dynamic relationships and organisational politics.

### *6.3.3.1 Interconnectedness and Synthesis*

A sub-theme emerged from participants' descriptions of systems thinking during the restructuring process. All the participants stated that interconnectedness and synthesis initially did not change because some roles were not clearly defined. However, the organisation has been working on this issue.. For interconnectedness to occur, much learning is required: Employees must learn the operations of other units or departments after restructuring.

### *6.3.3.2 Dynamic Relationships*

The results regarding the dynamic relationships indicate that these had not changed. Participants suggested that the process of achieving the expected or desired synergies and dynamic relationships between parts of the company is critical because it allows the shift from a linear to circular mindset. After the process of restructuring, there is much more focus on outputs and their measurement. Participants revealed that there was some friction when the delivery by another unit would affect the employee's KPI.

### *6.3.3.3 Organisational Politics and Competition*

The study found that employees sometimes felt as if there was a chasm between those making decisions and themselves. There was also fierce competition for advancement to higher positions. This is because the restructuring has reduced opportunities for advancement and career progression within the company. Other participants stated that the company had created exceptional transformation initiatives to address issues such as workplace politics and promote a healthy workplace. These participants said that they had not felt any sense of competition or politics in the organisation, which could be due to the fact that employees no longer interacted as much as they did in the past as a result of the new hybrid work structure.

## ***6.3.4 Theme 4: Ways in Which Systems Thinking Occurred***

The findings in this theme reveal in greater detail the steps taken by the organisation to ensure clarity, the alternative steps that the company could have taken, and long-term sustainable solutions.

### *6.3.4.1 Steps Taken by the Organisation to Ensure Clarity*

The results of this sub-theme reveal that majority of participants felt that the organisation took visible steps to ensure clarity and followed a well-structured approach to make sure that the employees were taken along on the restructuring journey and not left behind. It was further revealed that work streams were established to examine various aspects of the proposed change. There were dedicated emails in case employees wanted to raise their concerns, and a task team would respond to those concerns. All in all, most participants felt that the management made sure that they understood every step that was taken, up until the completion of the implementation of restructuring.

A minority (33,3%) of participants felt as if they were just bombarded with restructuring. They did not understand it at first and they were not taken through the journey gently. They stated that there were no steps taken to ensure that restructuring was well understood or to reassure them throughout the restructuring process.

#### *6.3.4.2 Alternative Ways of Changing*

The study participants expressed that they felt there could have been other options besides restructuring. If restructuring was the only way to help the company meet its goals, perhaps a softer approach could have been taken. They also attributed this to the fact that the restructuring took place during the COVID period. And at that time, employees were not in the right frame of mind for a big change initiative. Some even stated that employees were required to take psychometric tests while they were not in the proper state of mind. They proposed that there could have been better ways to do this, such as restructuring department by department.

Results also suggest that the process could have been made much smoother if the management had done proper consultation before presenting the restructuring process to employees. This would include proper consultation with HR to evaluate the job roles and grade them. The participants also stated that using a different management style to achieve organisational goals would have been beneficial. They claimed that if management had identified issues with the organisation's performance or sustainability, they could have tackled them head-on instead of creating new departments or changing or reconfiguring the organisation as they had done.

#### *6.3.4.3 Long-Term and Sustainable Solutions*

The findings reveal that long-term sustainability is achievable. It does not have to be merely a far-fetched hope or dream. To bring the company's vision to life, the organisation needs a results-oriented, skilled board that is adaptable and agile to the changing environment and dedicated to effectively utilising the appropriate digital tools. When everything comes together, the organisation has the chance to have a significant impact. Participants said that training had been implemented to help them adapt, although for some these training programmes might not have been enough.

### **6.3.5 Theme 5: Shared Vision**

The findings in this theme reveal in greater detail the steps taken by the organisation to re-evaluate the restructuring process and the results/outcomes of the new methods of operation and cutting costs.

#### *6.3.5.1 Re-Evaluating the Restructuring Process*

The findings reveal that the restructuring process had not yet been re-evaluated at the time of conducting the interviews. The participants stated that the outcome of restructuring was not clear at that point. However, they were already picking up some quick wins and areas for improvement and making a few changes.

#### *6.3.5.2 New Methods of Operation*

With regard to new methods of operation, 67% of the participants stated that there had been some new methods of operation, which have made it easier for employees to work. The organisation has been putting more emphasis on prioritising the client. However, 33% of participants claimed that there were no new methods of operation, which was extremely frustrating for them. They believed that new methods of operation would have existed if management was restructuring to put employees in a better position or into new positions.

#### *6.3.5.3 Cutting Costs*

The results revealed that the purpose of the restructuring process was not for budgetary purposes and was not based on changing the company's financial and operational aspects because the company was not facing any financial pressures. So, in essence, no action was taken to modify any debt in order to limit financial harm, but the restructuring was merely to improve the business.

## **6.4 Limitations of the Study**

The nature of qualitative research means that sample sizes are small as a result. This has implications for the generalisability of findings. Nonetheless, the aim of such a study is to be suggestive rather than conclusive, again, as is the nature of qualitative research. The sensitive nature of the study may also have shaped how the participants responded.

The research participants were selected from the different functional divisions that were identified by the researcher. The findings cannot be generalised to the whole population on account of time limitations and the study being of small scale. As study participants were full-time employees from the financial organisation, appropriate planning was necessary since it was not possible to keep employees away from their duties for a long time. The interview sessions were conducted during the participants' lunch breaks, after hours or on weekends. It was also very difficult to arrive at the number of participants originally planned because many of the employees approached seemed uncomfortable with participating in the research owing to the sensitivity of the study.

## **6.5 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, I recommend the following:

The management of an organisation should clarify the path that the organisation will take to get from Point A to Point B. The management should paint a clear picture of the organisation's future. Before introducing restructuring to a company's employees, management can undertake a thorough consultation. The HR department should conduct a job evaluation and grading for all new positions.

All employees who are affected must be communicated with on a regular and consistent basis. The organisation requires a well-coordinated communications plan. When the restructuring is managed effectively, all employees tend to understand the goals of the restructuring much better, which leads to more efficient and effective communication. Employees and other stakeholders will gain a better understanding of strategic management decisions if they are effectively communicated. Understanding why the organisation is restructuring will increase all employees' commitment to the cause.

I also recommend that a company wishing to embark on a restructuring process utilise the Senge's Fifth Discipline model to ensure that all the affected parties understand the reasons and fully participate in the process without uncertainty.

## **6.6 Concluding Statement**

The study's conclusion and recommendations were presented in this chapter. The study's scope and methodology were outlined. The study findings were analysed, and each research question

was discussed in relation to the study findings. Limitations of the study were highlighted, and recommendations were offered. The study aimed to evaluate the restructuring process of the finance-based organisation using Senge's Fifth Discipline model. It looked at whether or not the organisation has achieved being a learning organisation during and after restructuring.

The study findings revealed that employees did not have the same experience of the restructuring, both during and after.

At the time of the study, the organisation was only two years into its restructuring process. The findings revealed that evaluating the restructuring process would be premature at that point. The organisation has not fully become a learning organisation, according to Senge's Fifth Discipline model. Team learning was not fully achieved because some participants were still unsure why they had to undergo the process, as much as it had been communicated to them. For some it was not clear, and there was still some uncertainty. Team spirit and work environment had been affected by this process. Personal mastery was also not achieved: Participants are doing their work even though they may have had added responsibility after restructuring. The commitment level decreased but the work performed for some is high, participants felt as if this process has hindered their development in the organisation.

The Fifth Discipline is systemic thinking, which integrates all of the other disciplines into a coherent set of practice and theory. Systems thinking has not been achieved. This is because the previous disciplines were not achieved. Because the organisation is only in its 2 ½ year of restructuring, it is not easy to measure or evaluate the realignment, so perhaps repeating this or a similar study after 5 to 7 years will assist in properly measuring all five disciplines.

The importance of the study is that it should aid organisations to ensure that their restructuring process runs as smoothly as possible. Organisations are better able to understand the experiences and challenges employees face during the realignment and how to better support them during and after this process. The study gives suggestions for ways in which organisations can facilitate the process of restructuring.

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## APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



05 June 2023

Nokukhanya Nolwazi Charlotte Mbatha (216046681)  
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov  
Westville Campus

Dear NNC Mbatha,

System ID Number: 00017752

Project title: Organisational learning during the restructuring of a financial organisation

Degree: Masters

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received by the School on 02 August 2022 in connection with the above, was not reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **EXEMPT APPROVAL** by the School. As this was done in error, HSSREC had a look at the application and now granting it **EXPEDITED FULL APPROVAL**.

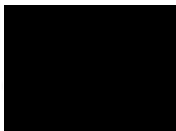
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 05 June 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

#### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

**INSPIRING GREATNESS**

**APPENDIX B: CONSENT LETTER**  
**UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)**

**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**

**For research with human  
participants  
INFORMED CONSENT  
LETTER**

**Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research**

Date:

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Nokukhanya Mbatha, a Master of Commerce student, at the School of Management, Information Technology and Governance, of the University of Kwazulu-Natal. My contact details are as follows: Cellphone number: +27 678321501; email address: [mkhanyo77@gmail.com](mailto:mkhanyo77@gmail.com).

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on “**Organisational learning during the restructuring of a finance based organisation**”. The intention of this study is to make a huge contribution to the research pool based on the phenomenon “organisation learning during the restructuring”. The proposed study also aims at developing better understanding of the impact restructuring has on employees and suggest explicit strategies of restructuring to improve their impact and on employees. Furthermore, the study is expected to enroll 20 participants from the organisation under study. Participants from different departments will be chosen to participate in my research. The research will involve semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool.

The duration of your participation is expected to be about 1 day in the month (January 2022). Within the month, we will meet through online platforms (Zoom, Teams or Google meets) for only a maximum of 25-30 minutes of your time for the interview.

I would like to point out that there are no discomforts or anticipated risks related to this research. Also, your involvement in this research study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and identity.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number). The interviews will be recorded, and the recorded audio will be kept safe by the researcher while your identity is also protected. The transcribed interviews will not contain names of participants but pseudonyms as another way of protecting the participant's identity. Only the researcher and the research supervisor will have access to the information. All the recorded

information from and interviews will be destroyed after five years. This study will be ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Management, IT and Governance Research Ethics Committee.

In the event of any problems or questions or concerns, you may contact the researcher at this number +27 678321501 or email [216046681@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:216046681@stu.ukzn.ac.za) or [mkhanyo77@gmail.com](mailto:mkhanyo77@gmail.com). You can also contact the Management, IT and Governance Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

#### HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPANT

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled: **Organisational learning during the restructuring of a finance based organisation**, by researcher: Nokukhanya Mbatha.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (participation in an interview).

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further concerns/questions or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at this number +27 678321501 or email [216046681@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:216046681@stu.ukzn.ac.za) or [mkhanyo77@gmail.com](mailto:mkhanyo77@gmail.com).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers, I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Additional consent,

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview (YES / NO))

---

Signature of Participant

Date

---

Signature of Witness

Date

(Where applicable)

---

Signature of Translator

Date

(Where applicable)

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Employees - Interview guide:

**Topic:** Organisational Learning During the Restructuring of a Finance Based Organisation.

### SECTION A

#### Demographics

1. Age

|              |             |             |             |           |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 20 and under | 21-29 years | 30-39 years | 40-49 years | 50+ years |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|

2. Gender

|        |      |
|--------|------|
| Female | Male |
|--------|------|

3. Job Position

|                |             |                   |                   |
|----------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Non-managerial | Supervisory | Junior management | Senior management |
|----------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|

4. Highest educational qualification attained

|             |             |         |        |                              |
|-------------|-------------|---------|--------|------------------------------|
| High School | Certificate | Diploma | Degree | Postgraduate degree/ diploma |
|-------------|-------------|---------|--------|------------------------------|

5. Years of work experience at IDC

|                  |            |             |           |
|------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| 5 years and less | 6-10 years | 11-15 years | 16+ years |
|------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|

## **INTRODUCTION**

**I will begin by introducing myself and thanking the participant for attending the online interview.**

Thank you for your time and agreeing to be part of my Research thesis. I am Nokukhanya Mbatha, a Master of Commerce candidate in the School of Information Technology, Governance and Management, and College of Law and Management in the University of KwaZulu- Natal (UKZN). My research topic is **Organisational learning during the restructuring of a finance based organisation**. My research thesis requires that I collect data, therefore I have chosen to conduct semi-structured interviews with employees from this financial organisation. Please note your involvement is voluntarily, as you are allowed to withdraw from this process anytime you wish to.

**I will address the issue of confidentiality and explain the interview guidelines and the duration.**

- The results of the interview will be used solely for research purposes and will not impact on your current job in any way or form. All information obtained from interview recordings will be treated with the strictest of confidence. You will not be required to provide any personal information therefore you will remain anonymous.
- The interview session is planned to run for about 25-30 minutes. You are free to provide as much information as possible and as honest as you can.

**I will then lay the ground rules.**

- As an interviewer my role is to read out questions and to ask follow up questions when necessary. Your role is to share your experience as much as you can.
- You are free to express yourself as much as you like.
- I will be taking notes and recording during the interview so that I do not miss any important information that you have shared.

## **SECTION B**

### **Research question.**

#### **1. How did team learning occur during the restructuring process?**

##### **1.1. Interview Questions**

1. State the objectives/reasons mentioned by the organisation's management for restructuring.
2. Prior to the launch of the restructuring process, did the management communicate with you the importance and necessity of restructuring before beginning with the restructuring process?
3. In your point of view, did restructuring allow the company to meet these objectives?
4. Define the work environment currently.
5. Does the organisation have team spirit post restructuring?
6. If yes, is it any different from what it was before restructuring?
7. Elaborate on how workplace culture changed.

### **Research Question.**

#### **2. How did personal mastery occur during the restructuring process?**

##### **2.1. Interview Questions**

8. How did you react when you were informed there would be restructuring? Were you worried about your position?
9. Are there any changes in your job after restructuring, is your productivity affected?
10. Describe your commitment level to your position after the restructuring process?
11. Do you recognise any improvement your work performance ever since the restructuring?
12. If yes, please elaborate.
13. What coping mechanisms did you use to deal psychologically with the effects of restructuring?

### **Research question**

#### **3 How did systems thinking evolve during the restructuring process?**

##### **3.1. Interview questions**

14. How did interconnectedness and synthesis occur during the restructuring process?

15. Please elaborate on the nature of the dynamic relationships between various parts the organisation.
16. Are there any organisational politics and competition between the employees post restructuring?

### **Research question**

## **4 In what ways did systems thinking occur during the restructuring process**

### **4.1. Interview questions**

17. What steps did the management take to ensure that you understand the reasons for reorganising the organisations?
18. What other ways would you think should have been taken to achieve organisational objectives other than restructuring?
19. What do you think should have been done differently throughout the restructuring process?
20. Post restructuring, what are the long-term and sustainable solutions offered by the company for employees to cope with the new organisational structure.

## **5. To what extent was a shared vision achieved as a result of the restructuring process?**

### **Interview questions**

21. After the completion of the reorganisation process did the management re-evaluate the outcome of the restructuring process?
22. If yes, please elaborate on whether the shared vision was achieved as a result of restructuring.
23. Please elaborate on the new methods of operation.
24. Is there a change in the capital structure of the organisation?
25. Please elaborate on the answer given on the question above.
26. Did restructuring cut costs in the administrative and operations section?

## APPENDIX D: EDITING CERTIFICATE



**Kevin Walker**

BA Hons (Linguistics) (Wits)  
Accredited Text Editor (English): Professional Editors' Guild (PEG), South Africa  
083 492 7965  
doppiotempo@gmail.com | hello@kevinwalker.co.za

12 March 2023

To whom it may concern

### DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR

**Details of manuscript:**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Author(s):</b>      | Nokukhanya Mbatha (216046681)  |
| <b>Type:</b>           | Dissertation   |
| <b>Degree:</b>         | MCom Human Resource Management   |
| <b>Institution:</b>    | University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus)                                   |
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The document was returned to the author with tracked changes, and the onus is on the author to attend to the suggested changes. The author accepts full responsibility for any further revisions to the manuscript that have not undergone editing.

Should you wish to contact me for any further information, my details may be found above.

Yours faithfully

Kevin S Walker

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