THE DYNAMIC EFFECT AND IMPLICATION OF RETRENCHMENT

ON EXISTING STAFF IN DURBAN TELKOM

BY

LORENCIA   MTHEMBU

216076911

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Supervisor: Khadija Kharsany

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research reported in this manuscript and submitted at the School of Management, Information Technology and Governance at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is my original work. I confirm that it has not been previously submitted for a degree at any Higher Education Learning Institution.

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Student   Date

Lorencia Mthembu

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

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ABSTRACT

Retrenchment has become a common practise utilized to improve organisational performance. Although retrenchments have increasingly become part of standard managerial strategies in organisations, their efficacy in increasing the efficiency of organisations remains unclear. Normally, retrenchment is aimed at improving organisational performance through increasing productivity, cutting costs and increasing competitive advantage. In certain instances, retrenchments have indeed proved effective in fulfilling these objectives. However there is a growing number of studies that seem to suggest that retrenchment results in an insignificant improvement and in some cases a decline in organisational performance.

The aim of this study was to examine the effect of retrenchment on survivor employees' job satisfaction, commitment, mental and physical well-being and ultimately their job performance at Telkom Durban. A qualitative research method with an interpretivism approach was adopted for this study. The respondents for the study were 12 and were selected using non-probability sampling. Questionnaires were used as data collection instruments. The questionnaires covered various aspects including biographical information of the respondents, their job commitment, the retrenchment process, personal experiences pro and prior retrenchment and their retrenchment coping mechanisms. A pilot study was undertaken to ensure reliability and validity of the research instrument. The data obtained from the questionnaires was restructured, coded and analysed.

The findings of this study showed that Telkom survivor employees were affected by retrenchment, emotionally, mentally and physically. The emotional and mental states experienced by survivors were predominantly negative and include anger, fear, uncertainty, worry, shock, sadness and disappointment. Although the survivors used various coping mechanisms to deal with their feelings and emotions, the organisation did very little in ensuring the survivors coped. This resulted in a reduction in productivity, loss of trust for top management and a decline in job commitment. The study could not conclusively determine the impact of retrenchment on the overall profitability of the company as the respondents had conflicting views on the matter. Based on the research and literature findings, it is recommended that retrenching organisations develop strong communication systems, provide support to retrenchment survivors and ultimately create a conducive organisational climate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the face of technological advancement, acquisitions, deregulations and the world economic crisis, retrenchment has become a common practise utilized to improve organisational performance (Ochieno, 2013). While retrenchments have increasingly become part of standard managerial strategies in organisations, their efficacy in increasing the efficiency of organisations remains unclear (Ochieno, 2013). Typically, retrenchment is aimed at improving organisational performance through increasing productivity, cutting costs and increasing competitive advantage (Waraich, Bhardwaj & Yadav, 2011). Although retrenchments may fulfil these objectives, several studies have shown an insignificant improvement and in some cases a decline in organisational performance post-retrenchment (Ochieno, 2013). Some of the negative effects of retrenchment that have been reported amongst retrenchment survivors include, depression, high levels of stress, low motivation, resentment and anger towards management, poor performance and a decrease in job satisfaction (Ngirande, Terera and Mutodi, 2014; Ochieno, 2010). However, on the contrary retrenchment survivors in other organisations seemed to perform well as they felt privileged to retain their jobs (Baker, 2006). It is therefore imperative for organisations to manage the retrenchment procedure appropriately to ensure both employee and organisational performance are positively affected. This study therefore sought to determine the effect of retrenchment at Telkom on survivor employees' job satisfaction, commitment, mental and physical well-being and ultimately their job performance. It also explored alternative methods to retrenchment.

1.2 Background of the Study

Similar to a number of organisations in South Africa (ABSA, Harmony Gold and South African Post Office) and around the globe, Telkom went through a restructuring process that involved the retrenchment of a considerable number of staff members. According to Sipho Maseko the CEO of Telkom, the company has faced a tumultuous decade of value destruction characterised by poor performance of the company as seen through a declining market share. The decade of value destruction was further worsened by the global economic crisis. Although the crisis emanated from the USA, globalization resulted in a spill over of the crisis to developing

1

countries including South Africa (UNCTAD secretariat, 2009). In South Africa the crisis has been manifested through increase in unemployment, company closures and a slowdown in the growth of the economy. In the face of the crisis many companies have sought ways to cut down costs in their operations. One such avenue of cutting business cost is retrenchment of employees.

Telkom developed a turnaround plan that involves reducing its workforce of 19000 thus saving the company R1-billion annually and lowering staff remuneration costs from 30 to 25 percent of the revenue over a period of 5years (Prinslo, 2014). The plan involves the reduction of management layers thereby reducing the overall number of employees. Several jobs have already been cut, however the retrenchment process is still ongoing. For those who have retained their jobs, the retrenchment process can take its toll on their psychological, mental and physical well-being. Managers are faced with the daunting task of motivating surviving workers.

1.3 Research Problem

Employee performance post-retrenchment has been an area of interest amongst many human resource management scholars in recent times (Armstrong, 2010). The interest stemmed from the realization that retrenchment is not only detrimental to the victims but in many cases also negatively affects the survivors. Despite the general assumption that retrenchment will result in cost reduction, increased productivity and high levels of efficiency, many post-retrenchment studies negate this notion (Waraich, Bhardwaj & Yadav, 2011). This study therefore explored the effect of retrenchment on survivor employees' job performance, satisfaction and commitment. It further explored if retrenchment is indeed an effective cost cutting mechanism. The extent of the effects of retrenchment on survivor employees cannot be generalized as it varies based on the social, economic and cultural orientations of the organisations (Armstrong, 2010). There is therefore a need for studies of the effect of retrenchment on organisations with varied social, economic and cultural orientations. In doing so it will demonstrate whether or not retrenchment is a cost cutting exercise as well as to determine the productivity level of the survivors of the retrenchment process.

1.4 Research Objectives

2

The research objectives of this study were to:

- To determine the emotional, psychological and physical effects of retrenchment on survivor employees.
- To examine the influence of retrenchment on survivor employees' commitment, trust and job satisfaction at Telkom.
- To determine the impact of retrenchment on Telkom's cost cutting exercise.
- To frame recommendations for Telkom management in terms of handling retrenchment survivors.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

- How did retrenchment emotionally, psychologically and physically affect the survivor employees?
- Did the retrenchment process at Telkom affect their survivor employees' commitment, trust and job satisfaction?
- Was the retrenchment an effective cost cutting mechanism for Telkom?
- How can retrenchment be effectively managed amongst the survivors?

1.6 Significance of the Study

According to Nomatovu (2008) retrenchment offers some benefits to organisations and these include departmental restructuring, prevention of overstaffing, better organisational performance, more discipline, less idleness and allows for better salary increments. It is important to however bear in mind that any organisational changes need both the consent and cooperation of members of the organisation who are the backbone of it. Their cooperation will enable any structural, technological, systemic and procedural changes to transition from being plans to a reality.

Since the retrenchment at Telkom commenced, its impact on survivors has not been determined. The management at Telkom realise the need to systematically study and analyse the effects of retrenchment on survivors. This study will therefore provide information on the

3

effect of retrenchment on survivors. As the retrenchment is still on-going this study will serve as a guide in developing a post-retrenchment staff motivation and support programs. This will consequently possibly improve employee performance and ultimately the overall organisational productivity.

The study will act as benchmark in South Africa in handling retrenchments. It will provide policy makers, management and human resource practitioners with recommendations that would be critical in handling both the retrenchment process as well as retrenchment survivors. The results of the study will further act as a guideline to industry going forward on whether retrenchments are really beneficial. It will also benefit HR professionals and add to academic knowledge

1.7 Format of the study

This thesis consists of five chapters.

Chapter one provides a general introduction to the thesis. It highlights the background of the study, research questions, objectives and the significance of the study

Chapter two presents a critical review of relevant retrenchment literature.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology adopted for this study.

Chapter four presents the results of this study and discusses them in light of literature findings.

Chapter five is an overall conclusion of the study

1.8 Conclusion

There is a need for effective retrenchment management at Telkom to ensure that the company achieves its retrenchment goals. Survivor employees are the bloodline of any retrenching organizations. This study will explore the retrenchment process at Telkom, unravel employee perception of the process and provide recommendations for handling retrenchments and survivor employees. The next chapter provides a review of literature on retrenchment, causes of retrenchment, effects of retrenchment, change theories, survivor syndrome, managing retrenchment and alternatives to retrenchment.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the effect of retrenchment on survivor employees. The review begins by providing definitions for the term retrenchment and highlighting the prevalence of retrenchment globally and in South Africa. It further goes on to explore the causes of retrenchment. Thereafter, it provides a critical review of survivor syndrome and its implication on the productivity and efficiency of organisations. It then analyses strategies that can be implemented to prevent or control the effects of survivor syndrome. Lastly, alternative measures that can be explored before resorting to retrenchment are discussed.

2.2 Retrenchment

The term retrenchment has no statutory definition and this brings a considerable amount of confusion in clearly defining it. Several scholars and organisations have tried to define the term and shed light on the circumstances where job losses are defined as retrenchment. Sayed (2013) defined retrenchment as a permanent measure to remove surplus staff because of some changes in the nature of the business. According to Thompson & Benjamin, (2006) retrenchment entails job losses that result from technological, economic or structural changes within an organisation. The World Bank further defines retrenchment in their context to refer to dismissals or job losses resulting from factors that are not necessarily related to employee conduct or capabilities. The job losses may result from:

- Plant or factory closure
- Organisational restructuring or reduction in operations
- Decline in staffing requirements due to factors like decreasing demand for a product or service offered by the organisation

The term retrenchment is often used synonymously with terms lay-off and downsizing.

2.3 Retrenchments Globally and in South Africa

Retrenchment has become a global phenomenon and is considered one of the most challenging forms of restructuring in an organisation. In most organisations costs relating to employees often exceed 40% of the company's budget hence retrenchment is seldom used as a cost cutting mechanism particularly in tumultuous times (Westermann-Winter, 2007). Globally countries such as the USA have seen multiple job losses through retrenchment. Table 2.1 shows the staggering retrenchment statistics for several companies in the USA. The wave of entrenchments has also hit the South African job market. Since 1994, it is estimated that over 500 000 employees were retrenched from the various South African economic sectors. Some of the sectors that were heavily hit by retrenchment in South Africa include the retail, manufacturing, clothing and textile, mining, automobile and telecommunications. Table 2.2 shows some of the local South African companies that have retrenched heavily.

Table 2.1: Companies that retrenched in the USA

Name of Company	Number of employees retrenched
McDonnel-Douglas	17 000
General Motors	74 000
IBM	60 000
Sears	50 000
Philip Morris	14 000
Delta Airlines	15 000
AT&T	40 000
Digital Equipment	20 000
GTE	17 000

Source: (Westermann-Winter, 2007)

Table 2.2 Companies that retrenched in South Africa

Name of organisation	Number of employees retrenched by 2016

Telkom	8055
Harmony Gold	3100
South African Post Office	5065
Kumba	2633
ABSA	1952
UNISA	2000
Anglo American Platinum	2000
Bokoni Platinum	2600

Source: BusinessTech (2016)

2.4 Causes of Retrenchment

The need for organisational retrenchment can emanate from internal organisational dynamics or from external variables. According to Ochieno, (2013), retrenchment is adopted as a corporate strategy by many organisations for several reasons including the following:

- Technological changes and advancement
- Poor organisational profitability
- Increasing business costs
- Changes in legislation or government policies
- Economic crisis
- Restructuring resulting from mergers and acquisitions

2.4.1 Poor organisational profitability and increasing business costs

In many organisations the key rationale for retrenching employees is to increase profitability of the company. In most economies business operating costs are constantly increasing thus reducing the profitability of most companies (Ochieno, 2013). Ever increasing energy and raw material costs are a common phenomenon in most developing economies. In stable economies the increase in operating costs is passed on to consumers. However in unstable economies management explores alternative measures of cutting costs like retrenchment. This way costs are reduced whilst maintaining the competitiveness of the business. In South Africa, the participation of organisations in global markets has caused greater pressures on cost and profit margins (Vermeulen, 2010). Increasingly, companies are responding to these challenges through engaging in restructuring in the form of retrenchment.

7

2.4.2 Technological changes and advancement

Technology is continuously bringing improved levels of efficiency to the workplace (Ikechukwu & Chijindu, 2016). A large number of organisations are leveraging on the power of technology in order to remain competitive. Technological advancement has enabled automation of operations that were previously done manually thus making those positions redundant (Ochieno, 2013). In essence these new technologies allow for greater production but with less workforce thus causing companies to retrench. Further, information technology is also allowing for easier storage of data and data analysis (Ochieno, 2013). This in a way cuts off the need for middle management ranks.

2.4.3 Restructuring resulting from mergers and acquisitions

The business world is ever-changing both on a local level and within the global context. Organisations have to find ways of coping with these changes. Often business coping mechanisms may include mergers or acquisitions. During mergers or acquisitions major restructuring takes place (Vermeulen, 2010). In instances where mergers and acquisitions are planned and executed effectively, all functions are rationalized (Ochieno, 2013). This results in elimination of some positions and removal of unnecessary operations. Some units are removed during mergers as they might be misaligned to the strategic mix of the new organisation (Wilkinson & Redman, 2009).

2.4.4 Changes in government policies, regulations and deregulations

Government policies and regulations often affect business operations positively or negatively. Deregulation which is defined as the removal of regulations or restrictions in a particular industry also affects businesses. Over the lasts decades, governments in developing countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Botswana and South Africa started deregulating many industries through structural adjustment programmes. The deregulation resulted in many multinational companies including Telkom, Ericsson, Siemens and Tesco seeking ways to reduce their number of employees, For instance in Kenya, when the telecommunications industry was deregulated, Telkom Kenya responded by partly selling its shares to Telkom France thus reducing the number of its employees (Ochieno, 2013). Deregulation and changes in financial policies of the banking sector in Nigeria also saw a lot of banks retrench in 2016 (Ikechukwu & Chijindu, 2016). Although the government condemned the act, banks went on to retrench arguing that the government had no legal rights to control retrenchment in the banking sector of the country.

In South Africa, since the inception of independence, various economic sectors have been deregulated including the financial, automotive, telecommunications and agricultural sector (Singleton & Verhoef, 2010).

2.4.5 Economic crisis

The global economic crisis is a typical example of an economic crisis that resulted in companies worldwide retrenching. The roots of the global financial crisis can be traced back to the United States of America. In 2007, the USA was faced by a liquidity crisis resulting from loss of confidence in the mortgage credit markets (Baxter, 2009). The crisis was characterised by crashing stock markets, closure of financial institutions, increasing inflation, low economic growth and decline in consumer spending (UNCTAD secretariat, 2009). Due to globalisation and economic integration the crisis was passed over to many countries including South Africa (UNCTAD secretariat, 2009). According Jehoma (2008), in South Africa the crisis led to an economic recession. The crisis impacted the country's economy in the following ways

- There was a notable decline in vital exports thus leading to dropping of prices of export commodities
- Share prices at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) dropped rapidly
- Portfolio investments in equities showed negative growth values
- Many organisations retrenched as a cost cutting strategy and to match their staff requirements will falling demand for commodities.

 At the acute phase of the crisis in South Africa, over 700 000 jobs were lost through retrenchment (Solidarity Research Institute, 2008).

2.5 Effect of retrenchment on organisational effectiveness

In recent years retrenchment has been used by organisations as a response to competitive environments. Retrenchment is a form of organisational restructuring in order to improve work systems and establish sufficient human resources to maintain the competitiveness of a business (Malik, Ahmad, & Hussain 2010). Retrenchments affect organisational effectiveness through affecting the size of the workforce. The effectiveness of retrenchment in improving organisational performance has a strong dependence to the reaction and behaviours that survivors adopt. Retrenchment affects various stakeholders in organisations. The main

stakeholders affected include the retrenching organisation itself, retrenchment victims, retrenchment implementers and survivors. Survivors are employees whose employment contract is not terminated and continue to work for the organisation. Survivor employees become the lifeblood of the organisation and their commitment will determine the success of the organisation. There are various commitment theories that have been put forward to explain how employees relate to their organisations.

2.5.1 Organisational commitment theories

According to Armstrong (2012) organisational commitment of an individual includes their loyalty and commitment to the organisation. It also includes the extent to which an individual identifies with an organisation and their level of involvement in organisation. Theories on commitment state that employee commitment can be classified into affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment (Meyer & Payfyonova, 2010). The affective type of commitment is based on an employee's emotional attachment to the organisation hence their desire to continue working for it. Essentially, employees that have high levels of affective commitment to the organisations they work for are highly motivated to contribute towards organisational goals as they also see these goals as theirs (Frederick, John & Fred, 2010). Employees with affective commitment feel valuable to the organisation, are organisational ambassadors and in most cases are great assets to the organisation. Affective commitment is often linked to a conducive work environment and good working relationships with fellow employees. According to Muthuvelo & Rose (2005), employees that have high affective commitment are likely to remain in an organisation whilst those with low affective commitment are like to leave the organisation. In fact overall employee commitment is highly dependent on affective commitment.

Normative commitment comes from a sense of obligation to continue working in an organisation. Fredrick et al. (2010) state that employees that portray normative commitment have feelings of owing the organisations for being granted employment when they needed it. They feel their departure from an organisation will have devastating effects therefore they feel guilt when considering leaving. The feelings of guilt emanate from their concern for creating the knowledge or skills gap if they leave the organisation consequently resulting on pressure on their colleagues that remain. Employees that exhibit continuance commitment realise that

there are costs associated with their departure from the organisation (Muthuvelo & Rose, 2005). They have a cognitive attachment to the organisation.

2.5.2 The psychological contract of employment

The concept of psychological contract was first introduced by Levinson in 1962. The term psychological contract was defined as an unwritten contract, the total of mutual expectations existing between the employer and the organisation. In essence, the definition highlighted that a psychological contract is a mental model of some sort that develops from a person's interactions and experiences. Wangithi & Muceke (2012) provided a similar definition of psychological contract as "the perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship, organization and individual, of the obligations implied in the relationship''. The psychological contact in an exchange concept that unveils the hidden components of the employer-employee relationship (Lodha & Pathak, 2017) Unlike other contracts were expectations from both parties are clear, psychological contracts are complex as the expectations in the mind of the employee and the organisation may differ. Furthermore the expectation may be innumerable and diverse. Breaking of these implied psychological contracts can have devastating effects on the organisation. During retrenchment employees generally feel like this contact has been broken and this will affect the survivors employees' job satisfaction and commitment

2.5.3 Survivor syndrome

Organisational retrenchment is becoming increasingly common and studies have shown that retrenchment survivors are often ignored pre and post retrenchment. However the survivors will become the backbone of the organisation and the profitability of the organisations depends on their commitment. Several post retrenchment studies have identified common symptoms amongst retrenchment survivors and termed it survivor syndrome. Some human resource scholars have defined survivor syndrome as the varying behavioural changes and emotional reactions that are exhibited by retrenchment survivors (Gerber, 2010). Essentially survivor syndrome stems from pervasive feelings of personal violation. According to Gerber (2010), typical emotions and feelings experienced by the survivors include

- A sense of betrayal and mistrust
- Feelings of frustration, bitterness and fury
- Feelings of anxiety, fear and job insecurity

11

- Feelings of guilt, sadness and depression

These feelings and emotions can negatively affect individual performance and consequently the performance of the organisation. This will cripple the organisation during a period where it needs the full support and commitment of the survivor workforce to fulfil the objectives of the retrenchment process (Wells, 2008).

The feelings and emotions experienced by survivors often lead to certain behaviours. Gerber (2010), categorized the behaviours into the following classes

Passive aggressive behaviours. This type of behaviour typically involves survivors misdirecting their anger for management towards fellow employees. Fellow colleagues are an easier target for their anger as there is a general fear of management during retrenchment.

With-holding behaviour. Survivors portray withholding behaviours by merely fulfilling minimum requirements for their job.

Aggressive behaviours. Aggressive behaviours typically involve sabotaging actions to revenge their employers for the pain they feel has been inflicted on them.

A study by Malik (2010) on 450 survivor employees from a telecommunications company in Pakistan showed that retrenchment has a negative effect on both job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Survivors were frustrated and dissatisfied following retrenchments due to increased work burdens. In a study by Travaglione & Cross (2016) retrenchment was also found to negatively affect job satisfaction. Further the results from the study also revealed that retrenchment negatively affected survivor employees' affective commitment, job performance and their health. Ultimately this affected organisational performance.

Within the South African context, Ngirande, Terera & Mutodi (2014) carried out a study to determine the impact of retrenchment on job satisfaction and organisational commitment amongst survivor employees at a timber production estate in Limpopo. Survivor employees showed an average to satisfactory job satisfaction and commitment. Despite regarding the retrenchment process fair, the retrenchment negatively affected their affective commitment. However due to the perceived fairness of the retrenchment process, the survivors mostly showed continuance commitment. Their emotional attachment to the organisation was gone

and they were only committed due to the costs linked with their departure from the organisation.

2.6 Implementing Retrenchment

Retrenchment is a serious undertaking that needs to be implemented and managed tactfully with skill and good strategies. This is important as retrenchment entails changes within the organisation and normally change brings resistance. Ngirande *et al*. (2014) proposed some strategies that can be used when retrenching. These include fairness in the process, lack of favouritism, explaining the reasons for the retrenchment, providing incentives for survivor staff and customer involvement in providing solutions to company problems.

The social exchange theory states that when employees feel the support and respect of their organisation their loyalty to the organisation increases. During a period of retrenchment where the morale and motivation is generally low among survivors, employees need to feel the support of their organizations. According to Latif & Gulzar (2011) there is positive relation between management support during retrenchment and employee commitment amongst retrenchment survivors. There is therefore a strong need for proper communication channels and a strong support system for the retrenchment survivors in organisations. Furthermore organisations need to develop an organisational culture during the retrenchment period and recommend the designing and implantation of a cultural intervention strategy pre and post retrenchment. It is therefore imperative to effectively implement retrenchment and equip management with the proper skills to handle the process. There is need for strong leadership in order to ensure proper change management and therefore a successful retrenchment.

2.6.1 Leadership: Retrenchment implementers

Retrenchment raises leadership challenges as it comes with a certain level of uncertainty particularly as it pertains to organisational performance and employee commitment. When implementing retrenchment, top leadership has the responsibility of ensuring the retrenchment aligns to the long-term organisational goals whilst also ensuring it is well managed. (Westermann-Winter 2007). Infact, the two primary leadership goals during retrenchment are ensuring that the organisation continues to aggressively pursue its mission and that the survivor employees are provided with the necessary support.

13

According to Abbas & Asghar (2010), leadership is the organisation's primary resource for ensuring successful retrenchments, hence suggesting leadership should adopt of some of the following measures:

- Take good care of them. Management must take good care of themselves physically, mentally and emotionally as they require energy and focus to provide the necessary support and leadership required by the survivors

- Maintain a professional attitude. Retrenchment can be emotionally challenging hence the need to remain professional yet sensitive to the needs of the survivors

- Have retrenchment leadership skills. It is the responsibility of management to provide the leadership that will minimize the negative effects of retrenchment whilst enabling positive organisational momentum hence retrenchment management skills cannot be overemphasized. In order to function in this capacity, leaders ought to undergo through capacity building by means of workshops and trainings.

With these measures leaders are able to manage change efficiently, professionally and effectively.

2.6.2 The Kurt Lewin 3-step model for change management by Lewin (1951)

The Kurt Lewin 3-step model has been widely adopted for managing change and is relevant in managing retrenchment. The model comprises of three fundamental steps which are unfreeze, change and refreeze. The Kurt Lewin model emphasises the need to discard old behaviours before adoption on new ones (Kritsonis, 2005).

Step 1: Unfreeze

The first step of the model in unfreezing and involves ascertaining the current status of an organisation (Lewin, 1951). This provides a motivation for change as forces responsible for the present organisational behaviour would have been identified. Unfreezing is essential to overcoming individual resistance and group conformity within an organisation. There are three methods that can be utilised to unfreeze an organisation (Kritsonis, 2005). One way is increasing the driving forces that direct behaviour away from the currently prevailing situation or state of affairs. The second way is decreasing restraining forces that have a negative effect

14

on the movement from the existing situation. The third way is combining the two methods described above. During the unfreezing process communication is key therefore, organisations must engage in confrontational meetings, trainings and facilitate a re-education for role players in the new ways of doing things. Team building exercises or development programmes for involved parties are great platform to achieve this. During these activities, facts should be presented and collaboratively analysed thus providing evidence that a serious problem exists. This step is critical as it highlights the intensity of the problem to the key role players thereby showing the need for intervention. Calder (2013), suggests that depending on the specific setting of the organisation the following methods can be used to minimize resistance during the unfreezing step.

1. Communication

Everyone should be kept updated on the status of change. They should be informed on how the changes will negatively or positively impact them. According to Agnihotri (2012), a lack of transparency bothers people to a larger extend in comparison to the actual change itself. Studies have constantly proven the notion that most humans can deal and support changes if they have an understanding of the reason behind the change.

2. Training

There is need to capacitate people with the right skills and knowledge to in order for them to achieve the expected changes.

3. Employee involvement

Employees are less likely to resist change if they were part of the decision making process. It is therefore important to strategically include some employees in the decisions relating to the change. Allow them to put their ideas on the table as well.

4. Stress management

Organisations should provide a platform where employees can talk about their feelings regarding the change with someone. This will give management the right information to be able to adequately support their employees during the period of change.

Step 2: Change/Move

The second step is the moving step. This steps fundamentally involves taking action based on the findings from the unfreezing process (Calder, 2013). During the unfreezing step, a clear picture of the currently prevailing situation would have been painted. At this point the present situation would have been analysed and alternatives sought. The most ideal alternative will be selected and action taken towards achieving the desired outcome. The move step involves altering the organisational structure and operations and this demands a change in the behaviour, values and attitudes (Calder, 2013). It is important to ensure the move step is done in such a way that the organisation does not reverts back to its former ways of doing things.

Step 3: Refreezing

The final step is refreezing. Refreezing seeks to stabilize the organisation at its new state of equilibrium whilst ensuring that there is no turning back to old ways (Calder, 2013). Fundamentally, refreezing involves maintaining the changes implemented. This can be achieved through a support system that constantly reinforces the new organisational cultures, values, principles and practices. According to Kritsonis (2005), praising, rewarding and any other relevant reinforcement by management is required on an individual level and more effective performance at an organisational level. When the refreezing step is handled properly, organisations reap the rewards of change and this helps in creating confidence for embarking on other inevitable changes that may occur.

2.6.3 Change implementation and management during retrenchment

Generally, organisations provide support to retrenchment victims and rarely any for the survivors. Many organisations do not channel any resources towards assisting retrenchment survivors to deal with symptoms of survivor syndrome. There is a general expectation from employees that survivors should continue working normally as if nothing happened. Under these circumstances survivors suppress their feelings thus resulting in anger, guilt, depression and in certain instances substance abuse. Ultimately all this affect the efficiency and productivity of the organisations. According to Wells (2008), there are several ways that can be used to counter and manage survivor syndrome so that minimal damage is done to the organization. These include

16

- Ensuring a level of fairness in the retrenchment process

Retrenchment is deemed fair if the process is conducted consistently, openly and following ethical, legislative and moral standards. A fair retrenchment process benefits both the employer and the survivor employees. Previous literature has shown that the perceived fairness of the retrenchment process has a strong bearing on the attitude and behaviour of survivors (Vermeulen, 2010). Survivor employees tend to react favourably if they feel their retrenched colleagues have been treated with fairness, received adequate severance package, were provided with clear explanations and given a chance to appeal. Organisational justice is therefore important during retrenchment undertakings. According to Vermeulen, (2010) organisational justice is categorised into distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice deals with perceptions of the fairness of organisational outcomes in relation to either individual or group inputs. It is has a strong relation with the equity theory that was put forward by Adams in 1965. The equity theory defines the term "outcome" as the level of amount of harm or benefits that an individual receives (Tata, 2000). Most employees use this principle to determine how just the organisational outcomes are.

Procedural justice on the other hand refers to perceptions of the fairness of processes that culminate in an event, decision or action and it is related to the means or procedures followed to reach that outcome (Harris, 2008). The theory of procedural justice is emanated from the conceptual models of dispute resolution procedures and allocation preference theory. Vermeulen, (2010) proposed that employees generally view a process fair if they have some level of control in the implementation and administration of organisational decisions. Some of the procedural justice parameters that employees look at include the criteria used to determine the victims. In many instances seniority or performance criteria are used. In some isolated cases, random selection is used. According to Vermeulen (2010), some of the principles of procedural justice that will make employees consider retrenchment fair include

- Provision of notices well in advance.
- Provision of correct information and sufficient feedback.
- An open two-way communication line.
- Provision of explanations and justifications for decisions.
- Allowing employees to have a certain level of influence on the decision process.

17

- Consideration of the views, perceptions and concerns of employees involved.
- Allowing appeals, reviews, reconsiderations and correction.
- Treating employees with dignity, respect and sensitivity.
- Consistent application of administrative procedures.

Often employees that are retrenched take legal action against their employees. Research has actually shown that the chances of retrenched employees taking legal action against their employer reduces significantly if the process was regarded fair (Heaney, 2010).

- Giving survivor employees a reason to stick with the organisation

Retrenchment often leaves survivor employees with uncertainty about their future in the organisation. Furthermore they begin to question the long term viability and sustainability of the organisation. It is therefore imperative that employers create an organisational climate that give survivor employees a reason to stay or else they will leave for other organisations creating a skills and experience gap. One of the things that organisations can do to show employees the direction that the organisation is headed towards is to draft detailed organisational plans indicating timelines, key activities and evaluation measures for indicating progress and improvements made by the company (Cloete, 2012).

- Providing a platform for survivors to grieve and vent out their feelings

There is a plethora of emotions and feelings that survivors experience during retrenchment (Cloete, 2012). These affect work place productivity and efficiency in one way or the other. Organisations need to find ways to enable survivors to release these negative emotions. Furthermore, management should provide support to survivor employees.

- Ensuring truthful and open communication

During, prior and after retrenchment employers should ensure that the lines of communication are open and there is multiple channels of communication that can be utilised (Vermeulen, 2010). Explain openly the organisational challenges and the reasons or objectives behind the retrenchment. Also request employees to assist the organisation with possible solutions to some of the challenges the organisation would be facing,

2.7 Alternatives to retrenchment

Empirical evidence has shown that many organisations fail to achieve the assumed benefits of retrenching. Increasing profitability and financial gains are the most common reasons for retrenching. However several studies have shown that many organisations do not experience the expected financial benefits (Tsai, Yen, Huang & Huang, 2007; Tsai & Yen, 2008; Guthrie & Datta, 2008). In essence retrenchment has not been found to unequivocally achieve the intended benefits. Furthermore, courts in South Africa and around the globe have become increasingly intolerant of employers that do not pursue other alternatives before making the decision to retrench. In light of this it is therefore important for organisations to explore other alternatives before resorting to retrenchment. Martin & Davis (2010) categorised retrenchment alternatives into 6 groups namely compensation, benefits, talent management, training and development, organisational structure, supply chain management and business processes and operations. Table 2.1 shows the various alternatives within each group

Table 2.2: Alternatives to retrenchment

1.Compensation
Eliminate overtime
Freeze salaries
Delay raises/merit
Eliminate temporary and part-time employees
Give sabbatical leave with partial salary
Get rid of huge salary posts that are not income generating
2. Benefits
Reduce benefits
Pay for employee benefits only
Provide health and wellness programs to ensure employees are healthy thus productive and efficient
Close business over holidays
3. Talent Management
Freeze hire employees

Create new and alternative work flows
Let go employees that underperform
4. Company Processes & Operations
Request employee input on cost cutting measures and ways of increasing business
Evaluate business operations and identify where costs can be cut
Take advantage of new technology
5. Structure of the organisation
Afford employees the chance to purchase shares of company
Connect retrenched workers with other prospective employers
Simplify the organisational hierarchy/structure
6. Supply Chain Management
Engage with key players in your supply chain and allow them to provide insight on ways of reducing costs and improving overall organisational performance

These alternatives have been found to be effective in several organisations and should therefore be explored prior to making the final decision to retrench

2.8 Conclusion

 It is undeniable that retrenchments have come a common reality in most organisations. In the dynamic and evolving marketplace, organisations are increasingly opting for retrenchment in order to cut costs and become more efficient and profitable. Technological advancement, regulatory changes, economic crisis and mergers are further driving organisations towards retrenchment. Although there are reported cases where retrenchment indeed resulted in desirable outcomes, there is also evidence showing that in some cases the effect of retrenchment were devastating. Human resource scholars argue that employees are the bloodline of organisations and their commitment to the organisation ultimately has a strong bearing on the success of the organisation. Retrenchments generally negatively affect survivor employees' commitment and job satisfaction thus affecting organisational operations and consequently profitability. Retrenchment is therefore a delicate undertaking that should be implemented strategically and carefully by people that are fully skilled to handle it. In due consideration of the possible detrimental effects of retrenchment companies should really

explore other alternatives, retrenchment should be their last resort. The following chapter three, will focus on the methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design used to investigate the research problem. It gives a vivid description of the methods utilized in this study. A clear outline and the justification for selection of the target population, sample size and sampling strategy is provided. Furthermore,

the research instruments utilized as well as the data collection and analysis methods employed in the study are outlined and discussed

3.2 Research Design

Van Wyk (2012) states that a research design is a set of plans that act as a guidance for data collection and analysis in a way that is relevant to the purpose of the research and also economical. According to Labaree (2009), a research design is a coherent and logical plan showing how an individual intends to undertake the research in order to solve the research problem. Kotzè (2009) however argues that there is not a single definition of the term research design that is inclusive of all aspects that term covers. Although the definitions provided by different scholars are diverse, collectively they provide important details on what is entailed in a research design. Fundamentally, a research design provides the following information

- Specification of how the research will be conducted
- Motivation for selection of various aspects of the research methodology eg the choice of population, sample, research instrument and data analysis techniques.
- A specific research question to be answered
- Details of how the chosen research study addresses the objectives of the study
- Guidelines for selection of types and sources of information
- Details of ethical considerations of the research

In order to develop an effective research design, the researcher must be aware of the underpinning research philosophy.

3.2.1 Research philosophy

Research philosophy is a key aspect when conducting any research as it ultimately influences the choice of the research strategy. According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) research philosophy is fundamentally a belief about the manner in which data relating to the phenomena under investigation should be gathered, analysed and utilized. The research philosophy therefore contains assumptions on how a researcher views the world and these assumptions underpin the research strategy. Practical considerations also play a crucial role in determining the choice of research philosophy to be adopted for a specific research (Saunders et al., 2009).

22

Within the management context there are four research philosophies that are usually adopted and these are positivism, realism, pragmatism and interpretivism (Table 3.1) (Saunders et al., 2009). The positivism philosophy subscribes to the view that only factual knowledge gained through observation and measurement is trustworthy. Positivism relies on quantifiable observations that can be statistically analysed. Objective data collection and analysis are therefore key aspects of positivism. The basis of the realism philosophy is that the truth is determined by what our senses show us as reality, that objects have an existence independent of the human mind (Saunders et al., 2009). In essence the philosophy of realism subscribe to the view that reality is fairly independent of the mind.

Pragmatism research philosophy accepts that there are multiple ways of interpreting the world and conducting research therefore no single way can give the whole picture as there may be multiple realities (Saunders et al., 2009).The philosophy of interpretivism also referred to as interpretivist involves researcher interpretation of elements of the study thus integrating human interest (Saunders et al., 2009). Crucial to the interpretivist philosophy is that the researcher has to adopt an empathetic standpoint. Many scholars argue that the interpretivism philosophy is the most appropriate in management research more so in areas such as organisational behaviour and human resource management.

Based on the analysis of the various philosophies, the research philosophy that seemed ideal and was therefore adopted for the study was interpretivism. Interpretivism is primarily associated with an inductive research approach whereby data collection and analysis is done in order to develop or build a theory. The interpretivism approach therefore allows for better understanding of the research question and research context. As there are limited studies on effects of retrenchment on survivor employees particularly in South Africa, an interpretivism approach would also be a possible opportunity to develop new or contribute to existing theories on the phenomena. In consideration of the fact that when adopting an interpretivism approach, the qualitative research method is ideal, it was therefore selected for the study.

Table 3.1: Research philosophies in management research

Positivism	Realism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism
- Highly structured - Large samples - Measurement - Quantitative but can use qualitative	- Methods chosen must fit the subject matter - Quantitative or qualitative	- Small samples - In-depth investigations Qualitative	- Mixed or multiple method designs, - Quantitative and qualitative

3.2.2 Research methods

Generally, three methods that can be utilized to carry out research namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed method. Creswell (2009), states that qualitative research is primarily exploratory in nature whilst quantitative research quantifies the issue being investigated through generation of numerical data that can be converted into usable statistics.

3.2.3 Qualitative research

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) qualitative research is multi-pronged in its focus utilising an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter. In essence qualitative researchers study their subjects of interest in their natural settings and try to understand and interpret the meanings of actions or words from the subject of interest. The value of subjective meanings, metaphors, words, tone and gestures cannot be overemphasized in qualitative research (Westermann-Winter, 2007). A qualitative approach to research is therefore holistic and holds the belief that realities are diverse and differ based on individual perceptions, situations and context.

Babbie and Mouton (2009) cite that qualitative research provides fundamental insight about a problem/phenomena and sheds light on casual reasons, opinions as well as motivations. Cooper and Schindler (2012), further state that qualitative research place an emphasis on processes and meanings without rigorously measuring them in terms of quantity, intensity or frequency.

In this study a qualitative approach was the most appropriate as it brought to light the interpretation ascribed to subjective experiences of the retrenchment survivors.

3.3 Target Population

In any research, it is mandatory to identify a target population. According to Labaree (2009) a population is inclusive of all items, people or events of interest under investigation by the researcher. Martínez-Mesa, González-Chica, Duquia, Bonamigo & Bastos (2016) identifies a research population as the particular group of individuals that will be under investigation in a study.

 According to Cloete (2012) research allows for the acquisition of information of interest from the target population. Certain inferences can then be drawn from the study of the target population. In typical researches, not all members of the population are included in the study. However it is of paramount importance that a study consists of an adequate population size that provides answers to research questions. According to Westermann-Winter (2007), the target population are selected based on their likelihood of being knowledgeable or having first-hand experience of the phenomena under investigation. Westermann-Winter (2007) put forward characteristics of potentially suitable candidates to participate in a research and these are

- The selected participants should have first-hand experience of the phenomena being investigated
- The participants should be eloquent and capable of communicating their thoughts, views and perceptions as it relates to the phenomena under investigation
- The participants should speak the same language as the researcher to avoid the loss of subtle semantic nuances during the translation
- The participants should show willingness to openly communicate with the researcher

Based on company human resources (HR) records, the target population of the study was 450. These were specifically employees that had survived the ongoing retrenchments at Telkom South Africa. The employees were from varying functional areas within Telkom. In terms of gender, both females and males were in the target population.

3.4 Sampling strategy

25

According to Cooper and Schindler (2012), it is often not feasible to study an entire population due to its size, financial costs or time considerations therefore creating a need to select a sample. Sampling is defined as an act of choosing a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Cooper and Schindler, 2010). Certain conclusions can therefore be made about the target population based on the information gathered from sample population. Scwandt (2007) states the sample size is dependent upon the type of study and concept being investigated.

When selecting the sample strategy to be utilised in a research various considerations must be made including the size of the target populations, parameters being studied, costs and the sampling procedure that will be adopted (Kothari, 2009). There are two sampling designs that can be utilized in research namely probability and non-probability sampling. Under probability sampling, every member of the population has an equal probability of being included in the sample population (Kothari, 2009). Other synonyms for probability sampling include random sampling and chance sampling. Probability sampling can be further classified in systematic sampling, sequential sampling, area sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling. Probability sampling is normally used in instances where the population is small, homogenous and readily available. The following are the disadvantages of probability sampling

- It is impractical in instances where the population is too large
- Certain minority subgroups of interest in the population may be missing in the sample hence causing bias

Non-probability sampling is when the researcher deliberately selects sample items (Kothari, 2009). Essentially, in non-probability sampling the researcher purposively select specific units of the population to be in the sample on the basis that they will be truly representative of the population. Non-probability sampling is also referred to as s deliberate sampling, purposive sampling and judgement sampling. It can further be classified into various types including snowball sampling, quota sampling and convenience sampling (Kothari 2009).

Non-probability sampling was found to be the ideal sampling method for this study as it quick, convenient and cost effective. A total of 12 employees were selected to take part in the research. The sampling was done by choosing participants who met the following criterion

- Participants that had experienced and survived the retrenchment process

26

- Participants that were able to articulate their emotions, feelings and perceptions of the retrenchment process and its aftermath
- Participants who showed willingness to take part in the research
- Participants working at various departments and at different managerial levels

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

According to Saunders (2011) familiarity with organisational culture is important in deciding the instrument for data collection. The most commonly used data instruments in qualitative research are questionnaires, interviews, and observation. However other methods that have also been reported in qualitative researches include focus groups, protocol analysis and diary methods. In this study the selected data collection instruments were questionnaires. Shammout, (2007) defines questionnaires as "a reformulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers usually within rather closely defined alternatives".

The questionnaires for this study comprised of both open and close ended questions. Close ended questions provided specific and precise information whilst the open ended questions allowed for articulation of individual opinions and feelings. According to Seekran (2014) questionnaires are an ideal instrument as they can easily capture data for large samples, save time, uphold confidentiality and eliminate the chances of interview bias.

The questionnaires covered various aspects including biographical information of the respondents, their job commitment, the retrenchment process, personal experiences pro and prior retrenchment and their retrenchment coping mechanisms. The questionnaires thus addressed the research objectives and research questions.

The questionnaires were randomly distributed to the participants with a cover letter attached. The cover letter gave a brief explanation of the study and addressed ethical considerations of the research relating to anonymity and confidentiality. There was a rigorous follow-ups done to ensure that all participants completed their questionnaires. Once completed the questionnaires were collected from the respondents by the researcher with the assistance of the Human Resources (HR) officers.

3.6 Instrument Validity

Kumar (2005) defines validity as "evidence which supports the notion that the instrument, process or technique utilised to measure a concept or theme actually measures what it is supposed to measure and not something else". Similarly, Cloete (2012) states that validity of an instrument refers to how well the instrument measures the parameters they are designed to measure. Saunders (2011) asserts that qualitative research is regarded valid as it plays a critical role in providing a deeper understanding and insight on the subject being investigated.

In this study, prior to the actual research, the instrument validity was pre-tested using a pilot study. The questionnaire was piloted using five participants from Telkom. The pilot study allowed the researcher to validate the questionnaire by examining if the responses provided answered both the research questions and objectives. Analysis of the results of the pilot study enabled the researcher to make the necessary adjustments to the instrument.

3.7 Instrument Reliability

According to Mahomed (2012), instrument reliability denotes to the consistency of a research instrument and the ease of replication of the study. Correspondingly, Bashir, Afzal & Azeem (2008) defines reliability as how consistent a research instrument measures the parameters it is supposed to determine. Research reliability can be affected by factors such as errors or carelessness in the data collection process (Westermann-Winter, 2007). In order to preserve reliability, researchers should therefore ensure that the research question and design are clear and non-contradictory. The reliability of the research instrument was assessed through a pilot study. Questionnaires were administered to 5 respondents. Based on the finding of the pilot study modifications were done to the questionnaire to improve its clarity thus increasing its reliability.

3.8 Data collection techniques/ methods

The two main sources of data used in this research were company documents and information that was gathered from the respondents through administration of questionnaires. The analysis of company documents like annual reports, formal reports and minutes for meetings provide relevant information about the activities of the organisation. In this study, company documents

sent to employees both electronically or physically pre, during and post retrenchment were used. Specifically, only documents pertaining to the retrenchment process were utilized.

The majority of the data was obtained from the responses given by the retrenchment survivors on questionnaires. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) questionnaires are advantageous in data collection because

- They are an easy and quick method for data collection
- They are a uniform and consistent data collection method
- They have a relatively low cost per questionnaire
- They allow respondents ample time to think and formulate precise responses
- They provide structured questions thus making data analysis relatively easy

The questionnaires comprised of probing, close and open ended questions in order to gather all the required information on the retrenchment phenomena. Table 3.1 shows examples of some of the various types of questions that were in the questionnaire.

Table 3.2: Types of question

Type of question	Justification	Example
Close ended	To gather particular or specific information	What mode of communication was utilised to inform you about the retrenchment?
Open ended	To get personal descriptions and interpretations of events or situations	When you were informed you would not be a victim of retrenchment, how did you feel? Explain your answer
Probing questions	To attain information on a certain area in order to answer the research questions and objectives	Did you receive any support from the organisation to help you cope with the effects of retrenchment?

3.9 Data Analysis/ techniques

Data analysis involves systemic organisation and development of coherent themes out of diverse information. It also entails data breakdown in order to gain clarity of the various aspects of the data and ascertain any relationships that may exist within the data (Adrian, 2009). In any type of research, the purpose of the data analysis must be clear and known prior to doing the analysis. Heaney (2010) suggest that three vital elements to be considered in the process of data analysis are

- Comprehension- this entails acquiring in-depth knowledge of the study topic, study settings as well as the culture of the target population
- Synthesizing – this entails bringing together various themes and concepts within the research
- Theorizing – this entails constantly developing and manipulating theoretical framework until the best theoretical framework is found.

Within the qualitative research context, Collis & Hussey (2009) state that the most important features of qualitative data analysis are

- Reduction of data- this involves identifying a systemic way to choose relevant portions of the data. One such mechanism that can be utilised is coding.
- Data restructuring- this involves categorization of data based on the utilization of either a pre-existing theoretical framework or a new one identified during the data collection stage.
- Detextualising the data – this involves the development of a diagrammatic summary of the data.

In order to gain a holistic understanding of the data collected, the questionnaire responses were read several times and important notes were taken down. This process is referred as immersion and plays a vital role in understanding data. This process enabled the researcher to identify the relevant portions of the data. The following step was data restructuring which involved the classification of the raw data into meaningful categories. Coding was used in the categorisation of the data. Coding is the categorisation of portions of data accompanied by a brief descriptive summary of the piece of data. Codes therefore generate the skeleton for data analysis.

3.10 Limitations of the study

Although the sample size in this study is regarded as adequate in a quantitative study, it may have been too small to generalize the whole population and all retrenchment survivor employees. The identified themes might therefore not be ineludibly representative of all survivor employees. In that light, there is a possibility that not all themes relating to this phenomenon are covered in the study. Non-probability sampling was used in the study which could be a limitation as this type of sampling often leaves room for bias and prejudice towards the subject matter. Another possible limitation in the study is language and literacy levels of the participants. The questionnaires were only available in English. Although English is the official language in South Africa, participants in this study had varying levels of English proficiency. Some of the participants had poor grammar and vocabulary skills thus impeding their ability to provide extensive answers. This often led to shallow answers lacking the relevant information which was under investigation in the study.

Another limitation of the study was is the fact that there was no focus on the differences in the participants' characteristics such as their emotional intelligence, persona, resilience and their self-esteem. These characteristic have a strong bearing in the manner in which the survivors interpret and react to retrenchment. The study was conducted on one organisation within one sector hence the findings of the study might not be necessarily generalizable to other organisations and sectors.

3.11 Elimination of research bias

Research bias has a negative impact on the credibility, validity and reliability of a study (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010). Although questionnaires as a research instrument are rich in heuristic potential, they also present the potential for bias. Research bias can originate from the question design (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010). Often researchers develop questionnaires with questions that vague, complex, ambigious or contain technical jargon that the respondents may find difficult to understand. To avoid this, simple and straightforward terminology was used in the questionnaire. Furthermore during the pilot study any statements deemed ambiguous or complex by the participants were substituted or further clarified.

In order to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomena under investigation from the respondents often researchers produce questionnaires that are too long. This has been found to cause response fatigue and confusion among respondents thereby leading to inaccurate answers

31

by the respondents (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010). To avoid this questionnaire used in this study was relatively short yet covering all the research questions and objectives.

During the administration of the questionnaires it is important that the researcher clearly communicate the objective of the research. In addition the participants must be assured of confidentiality and the absence of any victimization if the subject under investigation is sensitive. This will prevent the respondents from altering their responses in a way they deem desired by the researcher or in a way they feel will not implicate them negatively. To minimize this, the research was clearly explained to the respondents. They were also made aware that their responses would be confidential and their names would not be included in any of the materials.

3.12 Ethical considerations

Every research has ethical aspects that demand the researcher to uphold moral as well as professional obligations. The researcher has to follow proper ethics even in instances where participants are oblivious of the ethics (Neuman 2011). The researcher's personal morals therefore guard him/her against engaging in unethical behaviours. Mouton (2011) states that researcher integrity includes the following:

- Adhering to the highest attainable standards and practices during the research
- Stating the purpose of the study
- Disclosing any possible negative effect of the research in cases where the negative effects exist
- Stating limitations of the research
  Presenting the findings of the research completely and without any misrepresentation'

In this study the above mentioned requirements were met. The participants were given a clear explanation of the purpose of the study. The participants were then requested to sign the consent forms to confirm that they had understood what is required of them and were agreeing to take part in the research. The management at Telkom gave the permission for the study to be conducted. Truth, honesty and respect to the morals of the participants it has been ensured

32

throughout the research. The identity of participating employees was protected as no names were recorded and the data obtained was kept confidential.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research methodologies utilized for data collection. It further provided justification for the choice of the research strategy, research philosophy, data collection instruments and sampling strategy used in this study. Chapter four presents the findings of this study

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a compilation of the findings obtained from this study. It presents a thematic synopsis of survivor employees' responses that were gathered through the use of questionnaires. Emerging core themes were identified and explained. Within the core themes, related sub themes were noted and described in detail. In order to elucidate core themes and sub- themes whilst sufficiently addressing the construed experiences of survivor employees statements directly quoted from the respondents are italicized.

The first theme to be explored in this section relates to survivor employees' attitudinal and behavioural responses during the entire retrenchment process. Sub-themes that emerged from this core theme include emotional, physical and psychological effects of retrenchment on survivor employees, job related changes resulting from retrenchment and coping mechanisms. The second core theme addressed relates to survivor employees' perception of the execution of the entire retrenchment process. Sub-themes that emanated from this core theme include the retrenchment communication process, management support pre, during and post retrenchment as well as the perceived fairness of the process. The third theme relates to the current perception of the work environment at Telkom. Subthemes that arose from this core theme included team spirit, commitment and trust in management.

This chapter then provides an in-depth discussion of the findings of this study. The discussion critically analyses the findings of this study in reference to previous studies and available literature in the field of retrenchment.

4.2 Demographic Information

This research considered it vital to explore the demographic information of the participants in order to establish the relationship between the study findings and the demographics of the participants. The demographic information of the participants gathered included the following: age range, gender, highest academic qualification obtained, job position and years of work experience. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the demographic information gathered by the participants

Table 4.1: Demographic information of participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Highest Qualification	Job Position	Years of work experience	Years of work experience at Telkom
D1	40-49	male	Postgraduate degree	Supervisory	16+ years	16+ years
T2	30-39	female	Degree	Junior Management	6-10years	6-10 years
K3	40-49	male	Certificate	Non-managerial	16+ years	16+ years
Phi 4	30-39	male	Degree	Junior management	16+ years	16+ years
Phib5	30-39	female	Degree	Non-managerial	6-10 years	6-10 years
S6	30-39	male	Diploma	Non-managerial	6-10 years	6-10 years
Z7	30-39	female	Degree	Non-managerial	10-15 years	10-15 years
Mp8	40-49	male	Certificate	Non-managerial	16+ years	16+ years
Mt9	21-29	female	Degree	Junior management	6-10 years	6-10years
PSL 10	20 years & under	female	Diploma	Non-managerial	5years and less	5 years and less
T41	21-29	female	Diploma	Non-managerial	5years and less	5years and less
S91	50+ years	male	Diploma	Junior management	16+ years	16+ years

As per table 4.1, out of the 12 participants 6 were male and 6 were female. All the participants had post-secondary qualifications with one participant holding a postgraduate degree whilst five had degrees, four had diplomas and two were certificate holders. Seven of the participants held non-managerial positions, while four held junior management positions and one held a supervisory position.

4.3 Theme 1: Survivor employees' attitudinal and behavioural responses to the entire retrenchment process

This theme chronicles the various behaviours and attitudes exhibited by the survivors throughout the retrenchment process. It seeks to unveil the emotions and feelings experienced by the survivors. It further explores the effects of retrenchment on their health and mental well-being. Lastly it brings to light the coping mechanisms that were used by the survivors to subdue the effects of retrenchment.

4.3.1 Emotions and feelings

The findings of this study revealed that the survivor employees experienced a wide range emotions and feelings. The overall feelings and emotions described by the respondents were negative. These ranged from feelings of anger, fear, uncertainty, worry, shock, sadness and disappointment.

"You still suffer the effects of the entire process, particularly in a company like ours where this process of retrenchments has been going for decades now. The thought is always a constant threat, that next time it could very well be you."

"Very bad it not easy to see people leaving some not knowing how they will provide for their needs. It raises a question of if it happened to them? When is going to happen to me? Will I be ready?"

"I felt so shocked and confused I was concerned about my job that if I lose this job how will I survive with my family"

"Feel sad because less staff will lead to work overload. Also you consider where you stand in the company."

The emotions and feelings cited by the respondents in this study are not peculiar to this study but have been reported in other post- retrenchment studies (Gerber, 2010, Westermann-Winter 2007). In fact, these studies have identified common symptoms amongst retrenchment survivors that are now commonly known as survivor syndrome. Gerber (2010) defines survivor syndrome as the varying behavioural changes and emotional reactions that are exhibited by retrenchment survivors. Fundamentally, survivor syndrome is a phenomena that stems from pervasive feelings of personal violation. The respondents in this current study experienced

these feeling consequently affecting the way the view the organisation, top management and their commitment to their work.

Interestingly, most of the respondents cited that they were living in fear of being the next on the chopping board. A previous study by Berberich (2016) suggested that most survivors have these "fearful responses" as retrenchment leaves them in a state of vulnerability and despondency as it relates to their future in the organisation. A number of the survivors alluded to the fact that their feelings of fear and insecurity were aggravated by their financial situations. Some of the respondents were breadwinners and loss of their jobs would be detrimental not just to themselves but their families.

Yes, very concerned as a bread winner and I have commitments that need to be honoured

Psychologically losing a job it affects one. How will you maintain your daily needs, how will you buy food/grocery, school fees, and how will you pay for your instalments. Country as whole is drowning in recession, petrol prices increases everyday

The responses indicated by these survivors were similar to those reported in a study by Klein (2009), where some of the respondents alluded to being breadwinners and to having serious financial commitments.

Although most of respondents felt the negative emotions as previously discussed, one of the twelve respondents in this study indicated not to have been affected emotionally by the retrenchment process. The respondent's emotional reaction appears conceivable as according to Moore, Grunberg & Greenberg (2016), survivor employees' emotional responses are highly influenced by the level of threat they feel towards their jobs or their future careers. However, notably, regardless of the varying emotional reactions to the survivor status, all the survivors expressed feelings of relief.

I felt relieved from the tension I had about losing my job.

It was a relief to know that I will still be part of this organisation going forward

This is consistent with the findings of Gerber 2010 and Berberich (2016). In their studies, relief was found to be a dominant psychological state amongst retrenchment survivors. The

findings of this study further showed that some of the negative feelings experienced by the respondents were for the retrenchment victims. The survivors felt sad that their colleagues and friends in some instances lost their jobs:

BAD, as some of were very much disturbed and stressed since they no longer receive stable income, to sustain themselves and future plans deemed/fainted

It is always a sad feeling to lose your colleagues in the form of retrenchments because for most of them working for Telkom is all they know and for others to start a new life is never easy.

Sorry for them knowing what they'll go through in life generally

The feelings described by the survivors could be have been genuine or simply a case of survivor guilt. Survivor guilt is a common feeling among retrenchment survivors. Studies have a shown a positive correlation between survivor guilt and the relationship between the survivor and the dismissed individual (Berberich 2016). This suggests that retrenchment not only influences survivor employees feeling directly but also indirectly in cases where a close colleague or friend is dismissed (Shah, 2014).

4.3.2 Physical and psychological effects of retrenchment

Respondents from this study cited that they were affected by the retrenchment not just emotionally but also physically and psychologically. Most of the respondents' health and mental wellbeing were negatively affected by the experience.

Not knowing what the future holds for you in a work environment put you under stress which affect your health, mind and mood

Mental well-being, unable to concentrate on duties, burnout, disturbed sleep and depression

The stress that the survivors felt stemmed from firstly the uncertainty about their future in the organisation. Secondly, the survivors felt occupational stress due to increased work pressure. The retrenchment left a human resource gap thus increasing the work load of the survivors.

Yes, the people who left were not replaced and we are expected to perform their duties as has well causing more stress while the pay remained the same

There is an understanding and acknowledgement of the need to operate at optimal levels even with less resources, this is however beginning to take it is toll on staff

Similar observations were reported in a study by Levitt, Wilson & Gilligan (2008) where the participants experienced stress from increased workload as well uncertainty about their future within the organisation

Another effect of the retrenchment cited by the respondents is disturbed sleep resulting from the stress. This is in line with propositions made in previous studies that stress during retrenchment is not exclusively experienced at the workplace but rather spills over to other areas of life such as sleeping patterns (Amundson et al., 2014). In one case the respondent reported to have suffered a burnout. Burnout is defined as "an extreme form of strain experienced under certain conditions, particularly when the person is confronted by on-going pressures and demands which are (seemingly) irresolvable" Berberich (2016: 78) Burnout can be very detrimental to health, therefore during periods of organizational changes like retrenchment organisations should be attentive enough to identify symptoms of burnout timeously.

4.3.3 Coping mechanisms

According to Baqutayan (2015: 481) coping is "any effort, healthy or unhealthy, conscious or unconscious, to prevent, eliminate, or weaken stressors, or to tolerate their effects in the least hurtful manner". Within the context of this study, the survivors indeed employed various mechanisms to copy with their situation. It is vital to comprehend the coping mechanisms used by the survivor employees as these may provide an insight on how they generally handle occupational stress. In this current study the survivors had to cope in two distinct areas. Firstly, they had to cope psychologically with the effects of retrenchment and secondly find a way of coping with job changes that resulted from retrenchment. The survivor employees' coping mechanisms were diversified ranging from simply accepting the situation, seeking spiritual guidance, furthering education, self-motivation, social interactions and searching for new jobs.

I accepted it. I registered at the University to further my skills and knowledge in case there is retrenchments again, I can apply for jobs in other sectors.

Acceptance, turn challenges to opportunities, think about what you want to do, keep your networks updated, rebrand yourself, job searching.

Family, prayer, speaking to priest

One of the dominant coping mechanism that was identified amongst the respondents was accepting the situation:

Telling myself to accept what I cannot control or change. Taking one day at a time and, making the best of it

I had to accept that somethings I have no control off. The best thing was to equip myself with education hence I did the B-tech

 It is interesting to note that this coping mechanisms was predominantly exhibited by the female respondents. Out of the six female respondents only one did not use acceptance as a coping mechanism. From these observations, one could assume that gender may influence survivor employees' coping mechanisms. A study by Berberich (2016) found the acceptance coping mechanism to be exclusive to female participants in the study. Furthermore, another study by Nolen-Hoeksema and Aldao's (2011) reported that females have a higher probability of using emotion regulation strategies like acceptance in comparison to their male counterparts. The findings of these two studies are consistent with the findings of this study. However, in contrary a study by Armstrong-Stassen (2008) found male and female to be similar.

Another coping mechanism that was used by the survivors was seeking support from their families, friends and spiritual leaders:

The mechanism I used to cope is talking to the family/close friends to get out everything that is in your chest. You can talk to the pastor at church. You can also go to the gym to reduce stress.

These findings are in support of the sentiments cited by Berberich (2016) that a social support base is a critical coping mechanism during retrenchment. It allows the survivors to vent whilst providing them with warmth, trust and mental support. It is interesting to note that spirituality plays an important role in some of the survivor's lives as they mentioned talking to the priest and praying as a coping mechanism.

4.3.4 Coping with work related changes

Retrenchments have a way of causing changes within the work environment. In this study most survivors noted a change in their work environment.

My job at the time was hugely affected. I used to work as a file Technician and most of my duties involved ordering a new spare or sending a faulty one for repairs. Since all the stores duties were now outsourced, there were big challenges in spares management. Firstly the systems interface at the time were not migrated efficiently, there was a lot of teething problems. The then newly appointed SPs were not as clued up with Telkom processes as our internal staff was, so some spares would take forever to be delivered. That meant there was a lot of escalations from the customers as the services were not being restored as per the Company's SLAs (Service Level Agreement) with them.

Yes, reshuffling had to be done, new management came in with new style and ideas and in my opinion we went backwards in my Region in particular. So much so that the head of the Region had to leave as well.

Yes, some sections were allocated more/additional scope of work that was mainly done by those retrenched, hence more pressure on the survivors of this exercise

Yes, more duties had to be undertaken. Duties of retrenched employees had to be absorbed.

Most of the survivors reported that there was a decline in productivity as some of the services were now being outsourced and the new contractors did not fully understand the Telkom system. This caused frustration amongst the survivors. Further, the workload increased thus putting the survivors under immense pressure to deliver. The observations in this study are consistent with the findings from previous studies where retrenchment survivors had to take over duties that used to be performed by the victims thus increasing their workload (Berberich 2016; Malik, Hussain & Mahmood, 2011). A few of the survivors reported that their productivity was not affected by the job changes caused by retrenchment.

It did not affect my productivity it just meant doing things differently to achieve the same goals

41

These survivors saw the changes as a platform to be innovative rather than a burden. A study by Reinardy (2010) also reported survivors that found a certain level of thrill in the increased workload as they considered it a challenge instead of a pain.

The findings of this study further emphasized that some of the survivors felt a loss of community as they had to be part on new teams and be led by new supervisors.

Yes maybe your supervisor was retrenched so they will move you to report to the other supervisor. You are going to work with new people learning new things/ change the job title

In essence the survivors lost social networks and a sense of belonging. This corresponds to the findings reported by Schaeffer (2012) who asserted that survivor employees often feel a loss in relationships as well as a loss of sense of belonging. Furthermore the findings in this current study support the notion put forward by Berberich (2016) that survivors feel a sense of loss as good teams are not built overnight and require time for members to acquaint to each other and begin to trust each other.

4.4 Theme 2: Survivor employees' perception of the execution of the entire retrenchment process

This core theme illuminates survivor employees' perception of the way in which the retrenchment process was executed. The perceptions brought forward by the survivors were quite diverse. A number of sub-themes emerged from the core theme and these include perception of the retrenchment communication process, perceived fairness of the retrenchment process and management support pre, during and post retrenchment.

4.4.1 Retrenchment communication process

Ten out of the twelve respondents sampled in this study attested to have received communication from management informing them about the company's intention to retrench. However out of the twelve respondents, nine indicated that they were satisfied with the retrenchment communication process whilst three showed dissatisfaction. The satisfied respondents attributed their satisfaction to timely, effective and dignified communication of the retrenchment news. The majority of the satisfied respondents indicated that communication was done I year prior to the actual retrenchment thus providing them with sufficient time to prepare for the process. They also indicated that they were informed by the human resources

department via emails and in a dignified manner In contrary, the dissatisfied respondents highlighted that there was no communication prior to retrenchment whilst others regarded the communication late thus being deprived of enough time to prepare for the implications of the process. Furthermore, the dissatisfied respondents perceived the manner in which the retrenchment was handled as ineffective and undignified. One respondent claimed to have been made aware that the company would be retrenching via the media first:

"*Most employees heard from the media first while they were still in shock the news were confirmed by the company*".

Communication is a key aspect when an organisation is undergoing retrenchment from both an organisational and regulatory perspective. Previous studies have shown that constant, effective and detailed communication is paramount for an organisation undergoing retrenchment. Effective communication allows the company management to dismiss fears and uncertainties as well as preserve its credibility and trust amongst survivor employees. Amundson et al. (2004), refers to the need for perpetual provision of information as "over communication" which is vital in maintaining open communication channels.

According to Gerber (2010), in order to communicate effectively to everyone within an organisation a wide range of communication channels should be used. Some of the communications mediums that can be used include emails, memorandums, text messages and face to face meetings. However, Appelbaum, & Donia (2011) propose that sensitive messages containing highly disturbing news such as looming retrenchments, be communicated face to face. This allows management to immediately address and clarify any assumptions, fears and questions relating to the process. In this study respondents highlighted emails as the main mode of communication used. The two respondents that stated not to have received any communication possibly did not access their emails. In light of this, the use of multiple communication mediums would have assisted in ensuring that every employee received the communication. Similarly, Gerber (2010), also indicated that in order to communicate effectively to everyone within an organisation a wide range of communication channels should be used.

4.4.2 Perceived fairness of the retrenchment process

Survivor employees had a diversified perception of the fairness of the retrenchment process. Those that deemed it fair mostly knew and understood the kind of criteria that was used to select victims. Those that were unaware of the criteria regarded the process unfair. Another group of survivors simply deemed the retrenchment unfair from the mere fact that retrenchment affects people.

"Retrenchment/ Outsourcing is never a fair process to anyone, whether affect by it or not. It is hard to imagine that someone has lost their daily bread and the effects that it will have on their families. Sometimes the management has to make decisions that will place the company in a better position and increase the share price for its shareholders. Those decisions may not be fair on us, as the employees, but very effective for the company's performance. The fair part was that, most employees were handed over to the Service Providers, meaning they were still in employment."

This group of survivors' perception of fairness is related to distributive justice. Distributive justice deals with perceptions of the fairness of organisational outcomes in relation to either individual or group inputs. It is has a strong relation with the equity theory that defines the term "outcome" as the level or amount of harm or benefits that an individual receives (Tata, 2000).

Notably most of the survivors that deemed the process unfair due to not knowing the criteria had non-managerial positions. This is a common phenomenon in most retrenching organisations. Management normally has a full picture and an understanding of the criteria. Information however does not effectively disseminate to the rest of the employees leading to a perception of an unfair retrenchment process.

It is interesting to note that in this particular study, some of the participants who held managerial positions did not know the criteria used to select victims. This shows the inconsistencies in the company's communication process.

4.4.3 Management support pre, during and post retrenchment

This sub-theme explores the role of management in the retrenchment process, particularly focusing on the support rendered to the survivors pre, during and post retrenchment. Most of the participants in this study indicated that there was no or very minimal support provided to the retrenchment survivors by the organisation:

"Not at all. There was more pressure to get the work done so that our customers can be happy and stay with the company to secure my job."

"No, not at all. You are left to pick up and continue as if nothing has happened."

"I did but I feel that it wasn't enough."

The lack of support from management caused a lot of the survivor employees to have negative feelings towards management. Noer (2009) suggests that times of retrenchment require an increased sense of community and active coping mechanisms such as team building events. This has a way of healing and revitalizing the survivor employees. However, previous retrenchment studies have shown that most companies barely prepare for survivors for the occupational changes that will occur during retrenchments (Gerber 2010). Further they do little in assisting employees deal emotionally with the effects of retrenchment. These studies recommended the use of various stress management tools including counselling, particularly focusing on adaptive coping strategies. This is beneficial to both the employees and the organisation. In this study, it could be assumed that the lack of organisational support is what led the survivors to look for external support through social interactions.

Two respondents in this study however indicated that the company did provide them support.

"Assistance offered to victims and survivors eg employee system program, HR counselling: EAP (Employee Assistance Programme)."`

"There was an unfreeze course that the organisation provided for us to help us overcome the effects of change."

It is interesting to note that only these two respondents attested to having received support. This could imply that there were support systems provided by the organisation, however not all departments and regions made use of them. Alternatively, maybe the support was insufficient hence the employees disregarded it.

4.5 Theme 3: Survivor employees' perception of their current work environment.

This theme explores the current state of things at Telkom. It details survivor employees' current perception of their current work environment under the sub-themes trust, team spirit and commitment.

4.5.1 Trust

Trust is often defined as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party". Most of the respondents in the present study cited that they had low trust levels for the top management of the company. Notably some of the respondents stated that they trusted the organisation but had low levels of trust for the top management

"I trust the company but I don't trust the top management who are making decisions separated the organisation"

"Top leadership leaves a lot to be desired – eg, Openserve had so many positions at management level advertised in the last two years… and we reduced on operational staff – where most of the work takes place."

"My trust for management is very low as I am not sure if by tomorrow the management can say they do not need my services."

Clearly, the respondents felt that they could not fully trust the top management of the organisation. The lack of trust for management emanated from uncertain job security as well as the perceived neglect and lack of support from them. In other studies the lack of trust for top management came from not understanding the reasons behind the retrenchment and poor communication (Gerber, 2010). In this current study this was not the case as most of the respondents seemed to know the reasons for retrenchment and also attested to receiving first retrenchment communication a year prior.

During retrenchment, top management has the responsibility of ensuring the retrenchment aligns to the long-term organisational goals whilst also ensuring it is well managed (Westermann-Winter 2007). In fact, the two primary management goals during retrenchment are ensuring that the organisation continues to aggressively pursue its mission and that the survivor employees are provided with the necessary support. In this study it appears that trust

for top management diminished due to failure to provide the necessary support for survivor employees.

It is worthwhile to note that one of the respondents stated that they fully trust the company and its top management. The respondent held a junior managerial position. This could possibly mean that the respondent had a higher level of involvement in the entire process and interacted with top management. Being involved in retrenchment planning and administration gives a certain amount of control and consequently optimism that would not be expected under the circumstances. A study by Gerber (2010) also showed unexpected optimism amongst the respondents that were in management. Furthermore a study by Amundson et al. (2004) indicated that survivors felt reassured when they understood the entire process and could contribute to the implementation of the retrenchment process.

Another interesting response was from a participant who held a junior management position whilst also being a Telkom shareholder.

"As a Telkom shareholder, I trust the Telkom Group management fully. If you look at the company's performance over the years, it is clear that the management is doing something right. As an employee, there's not much trust in the management, as the company's long term strategy is not communicated efficiently leaving the workforce in uncertainty about their future in the company."

Clearly there is a huge gap in the way Telkom communicates to its shareholders as compared to its employees.

4.5.2 Team spirit and commitment

Most of the participants alluded to the absence of team spirit amongst employees at Telkom. Further they noted a decline in team spirit and commitment after retrenchment.

"Currently team spirit has gone down in the organisation; people tend to do what benefits them other than the whole section/ team"

"There is a big different because most employees no longer go an extra mile on participating in a team, they just do what is expected of them nothing more."

47

"Before the retrenchments talks, everyone was happy and willing to go an extra mile for the company."

Theories on commitment state that employee commitment can be classified into affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment (Meyer & Payfyonova, 2010). An affective commitment is often linked to a conducive work environment and good working relationship with fellow employees. In this study, a decline in affective commitment was noted after retrenchment.

4.5.3 Perceived financial outcome of the retrenchment

The participants in this study were aware in part or fully of the reasons behind the retrenchment.

"Cutting down costs."

"Introduction of new technologies that may not necessarily require that much staff compliment."

"The retrenchment was part of the company's turnaround strategy. The organization's leadership felt that some functions would be much cheaper if provided by service providers rather than the internal staff. Retrenchments to them, meant cost saving."

"Bottom line and dwindling revenues."

One of the key reasons that already been highlighted by the participants is that retrenchment was used as a cost cutting tool. Indeed it is common for organisations to retrench employees as a way of cutting costs and consequently increasing the profitability of the company (Ochieno, 2013). Some of the respondents cited the introduction of new technologies that drastically reduced the need for staff as another cause for retrenchment. Technology is continuously bringing improved levels of efficiency to the workplace (Ikechukwu & Chijindu, 2016). A large number of organisations are leveraging on the power of technology in order to remain competitive. Technological advancement has enabled automation of operations that were previously done manually thus making those positions redundant (Ochieno, 2013). In essence these new technologies allow for greater production but with less workforce thus causing companies to retrench. This appeared to be the case for Telkom

Although the respondents in this present study understood the rationale behind the retrenchment they had varying opinions regarding the effectiveness of the retrenchment as a means to improve company profitability.

"No… as the company keeps employing more staff at top levels."

"There is unfortunately no metrics that one could use to measure, Over the years the company is performance has been very good but that cannot be directly linked to the retrenchments/ outsourcing that the company embarked on."

"I don't think so, as much as the company is saving on personnel expenditure it losing customers due to the time it now takes to fulfil customer needs. Customers have lost trust on Telkom causing them to explore other alternatives."

"Yes they met their goal of saving revenue, however they did that at the expense of their employees and the productivity of the work. Work is suffering; targets are not met because skilled people have left."

From these respondents, it is clear that the retrenchment indeed helped in cutting the overall organisational costs. However one cannot make a conclusive argument as to whether the retrenchment helped improve the profitability of the company particularly in the long term.

4.6 Conclusion

Organisations generally invest a lot of financial and human resources in dealing with victims of retrenchment. However little is done to prepare and support retrenchment survivors. Although this is the case, it is important for organisations to understand that survivors become the backbone of their organisation hence the need to provide both personal and occupational support. This present study showed that survivors are affected by retrenchment, emotionally, mentally and physically. Although the survivors used various coping mechanisms it is clear that the organisation did very little in ensuring the survivors coped. This resulted in a reduction in productivity, loss of trust for top management and a decline in job commitment.

Although the list is not exhaustive below are some of the possible ways that the company could have used to negate some of the effects of retrenchment. The retrenchment could have been managed on different levels namely managing communication and perception, providing a platform for survivor employees to grieve and empowerment and new relationship building through

a. Managing communication and perception through the following

- Use multiple mediums of communication to ensure that information was disseminated to everyone

- Immediately addressing any rumours and misconceptions surrounding the process.

- Communicating the vision of the organisation clearly

- Providing comprehensive information on the retrenchment process

- Clearly communicating the criteria for retrenchment.

- Including employees in identifying loopholes or grey areas in the retrenchment process and implementing some of their viable recommendations

- Top management interacting with employees during the process so they would be able to raise their concerns and get clarity from them

- Explaining to employees where they fit and what their role is in the new organisation

b. Providing a platform for survivor employees to grieve by

- Ensuring the survivors have complete access to counselling, help and support from the organisation.

- Providing compulsory counselling to survivors as some employees may repress their feelings

- Setting up small discussion groups that meet frequently so that the survivors could vent out their emotions and challenges etc

- Training managers and supervisors to deal with the changes in behaviour and attitude exhibited by the survivors.
Providing audio and reading material to employees that encourage them to vent and grieve in a healthy manner

c. Empowerment and new relationship building through

    Helping the employees transition from the old way of doing things to the new

    Empowering the survivors with skills that are relevant in the new organisation

    Providing a career resource library

    Communicating the company's long term goals

The application of these strategies would have aided in negating some of the negative effects of retrenchment on the survivors and ultimately led to a conducive post retrenchment work environment. Chapter 5 provides the overall conclusion of this study

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This last chapter provides a summary and concludes on the findings of this current research study. The chapter will start-off with a brief discussion of the findings of the study with particular emphasis on how the study answered the research questions and objectives. The findings will be discussed in two parts namely findings from literature and findings from the primary research. In closing this chapter, recommendations for retrenching organizations are provided and areas for possible future work will be cited.

The study had four research objectives namely:

- To determine the emotional, psychological and physical effects of retrenchment on survivor employees
- To examine the influence of retrenchment on survivor employees' commitment, trust and job satisfaction at Telkom
- To determine the impact of retrenchment on Telkom's cost cutting exercise

- To formulate recommendations for Telkom management in terms of handling retrenchment survivors

These research objectives were met through both primary findings and the literature review

5.2 Findings from literature review

This research sought to unravel the effects of retrenchment on survivor employees and retrenching organisations. The findings of this study were consistent with those reported in literature as it relates to survivor syndrome, a phenomena observed among survivors. Gerber (2010), defines survivor syndrome as the varying behavioural changes and emotional reactions that are exhibited by retrenchment survivors stemming from pervasive feelings of personal violation. Gerber (2010) states that typical signs of survivor syndrome includes anxiety, fear, depression, mistrust and a sense of betrayal. Berberich (2016) asserted that retrenchment causes survivors to live in a fearful mode as the exercise leaves them in a state of vulnerability and despondency as it relates to their future in the organisation. According to Klein (2009), anxiety and fear amongst survivors emanates from thoughts of possible loss of income if ever they are retrenched as well. The fear is exacerbated amongst those that are breadwinners and have serious financial commitments. Levitt, Wilson & Gilligan (2008) state that stress experienced by survivors results from increased workload as well uncertainty about their future within the organisation. Amundson et al., (2014), highlighted that stress during retrenchment is not exclusively experienced at the workplace but rather spills over to other areas of life such as sleeping patterns and physical health.

Various authors were in agreement to the notion that retrenchment negatively affects job satisfaction and commitment (Gerber, 2010, Westermann-Winter 2007). Travagione & Cross (2016) found retrenchment to negatively affect survivor employees' affective commitment, job performance and satisfaction. A study by Ngirande et al. (2014) reported a decline in affective commitment, with the survivors mostly showing continuance commitment.

Communication of retrenchment news is a critical step in the overall management of retrenchment. Effective communication allows the company management to dismiss fears and uncertainties as well as preserve its credibility and trust amongst survivor employees. Amundson et al. (2014), proposes "over communications", a term used to describe continuous provision on information. Gerber (2010) suggests the use of multiple channels of

communication to ensure effective information dissemination. Appelbaum, & Donia (2011) propose face to face communication when delivering sensitive issues such as those pertaining to retrenchment as this renders management a platform to immediately address and clarify any assumptions, fears and questions relating to the process. In terms of retrenchment selection criteria, Westermann-Winter (2007) asserts that management normally has comprehensive knowledge on the selection criteria but fail to effectively disseminate to the rest of the employees leading to a perception of an unfair retrenchment process.

After initial communication of retrenchment, the responsibility of top leadership is to manage the retrenchment process through providing various forms of support to both the victims and survivors (Gerber, 2010, Westermann-Winter 2007). Noer (2009) suggests that times of retrenchment require an increased sense of community and active coping mechanisms such as team building events. This has a way of healing and revitalizing the survivor employees. Studies on organisations post retrenchment have found that increased workload is very common as in many instances survivors have to inherit duties previously performed by the victims in addition to their own work (Berberich 2016; Malik and Usman, 2011). However, it was observed that most companies barely prepare for survivors for the occupational changes that will occur during retrenchments (Gerber 2010). 5.3 Findings from primary research

5.3.1 Emotional, psychological and physical effects of retrenchment on survivor employees at Telkom

The first objective sought to unravel survivor employees' perceptions and reactions towards the retrenchment process. It is important to note that survivors' perceptions of the retrenchment process have a certain level of influence on their reactions. In this particular study, the respondents had varying perceptions of the fairness of the process. The process was generally regarded as fair by those that had knowledge of the victim selection criteria. On the other hand those that were unaware of the process regarded it as unfair. Remarkably most of the survivors that deemed the process unfair due to not knowing the criteria had non-managerial positions whilst most of those that deemed it fair had managerial positions.

Despite the varying perceptions of the fairness of the process, the emotions and feelings experienced by the survivors were mostly negative. Some emotional states described by the survivors include anger, fear, uncertainty, worry, shock, sadness and disappointment. The findings of this study provided further evidence to the existence of survivor syndrome.

In addition to the emotional effects of retrenchment it was interesting to note that the respondents were also affected physically and psychologically. Most respondents reported that their health and mental well-being was negatively affected. Survivors experienced stress due to feelings of uncertainty as well as pressure resulting from increased workload. Others also experienced burnout and disturbed sleep

5.3.2 Influence of retrenchment on survivor employees' commitment and job satisfaction at Telkom

The findings of this study indicated that there were notable changes in the work place dynamics owing to retrenchment. Key areas that were affected were job satisfaction, trust, job commitment and team spirit. Most of the respondents regarded the retrenchment process as an act of violating their trust and indicated that they low levels of trust towards the top management. The respondents cited three specific reasons for not trusting the top management namely uncertainty in job security, neglect and lack of support from them. Human resource scholars state that the responsibility of top management during retrenchment is a two-fold one. Firstly top management needs to ensure that retrenchment aligns to the long-term organisational goals and secondly that the process is effectively managed in order to achieve the intended organizational goals. In this current study it appears top management failed to effectively manage the process thus leaving the survivors with a sense of neglect which negatively affected trust. It is worthwhile to note very few respondents stated that they fully trust the company and its top management. The respondents held junior managerial positions thus possibly were extensively in the entire process and interacted with top management. Being involved in retrenchment planning and administration gives a certain amount of control and consequently optimism that would not be expected under the circumstances. Most of the participants alluded to the absence of team spirit and a decline in job commitment after retrenching.

Regardless of the general negativity brought about by the retrenchment, the survivors sought ways to cope and deal with the situation. The survivors had to cope on a personal basis as well as on an occupational level. The survivor employees' coping mechanisms were diversified ranging from simply accepting the situation, seeking spiritual guidance, furthering education, self-motivation, social interactions and searching for new jobs. Accepting the situation interestingly was a coping mechanism predominantly exhibited by the female respondents.

54

Based on this one could hypothesize gender may influence survivor employees' coping mechanisms.

From an occupational standpoint, survivors in this study had to cope with job changes that stemmed from the retrenchment. Many of the survivors reported an increase in their workload thus putting them under pressure to complete their tasks. Interestingly a few of the survivors reported that their productivity was not affected by the job changes caused by retrenchment as they adapted and still managed to complete their work.

5.3.4 Impact of retrenchment on Telkom's cost cutting exercise

This research question sought to ascertain if the retrenchment process enabled Telkom to achieve its short term and long term financial goals. Based on the demographic information provided by the participants, four held managerial positions, one a supervisory position and seven non-managerial positions. It appeared that all of the participants knew the reasons behind the retrenchment. The main reason indicated by the participants was cost cutting. This is true as Telkom management also cited this as their reason for retrenchment. Despite knowing the rationale behind the retrenchments, the participants in this study had varying opinions regarding the effectiveness of the retrenchment as a means to improve company profitability. Although participants who held non-managerial positions had an opinion on the effectiveness of retrenchment as a cost cutting means, the more reliable source of information regarding this would be the participants that held managerial positions. Even considering the responses from those in managerial positions only, there was no consensus in the effectiveness of retrenchment as a cost cutting measure. Some managers indicated it only helped in the short term however productivity and customer care was negatively affected and this would eventually affect the profitability of the organisation in the long-term. Others alluded to the company's good financial performance in recent years but however cited the good financial performance cannot be directly linked to the retrenchment. In essence there are no metrics that can be used to measure the role that retrenchment played in increasing profitability. Others blatantly stated that retrenchment had not enabled the company to fulfil its financial goals. From these response, one cannot make a conclusive argument as to whether the retrenchment helped improve the profitability of the company particularly in the long term.

5.3.5 Retrenchment management

This research question sought to explore the manner in which Telkom management handled the retrenchment process and provide recommendation for managing survivors effectively.

A big part of retrenchment management is communication. During retrenchment companies have an organisational and regulatory obligation to communicate to employees. It is commendable that in this study almost all the respondents stated that they received communication from management informing them about the company's intention to retrench and indicated the communication was timely and effective. Further communication of the retrenchment news was done in a dignified manner. The smaller percentage of respondents that were not satisfied with the communication process claimed that there was no communication prior to retrenchment whilst others regarded the communication late thus being deprived of enough time to prepare for the implications of the process.

In this current study communication was done via emails. Although most respondents received the emails some respondents claimed not to have received these emails. In this particular case, the use of multiple communication channels would have ensured that information was disseminated to each and every member of the organisation.

5.4. Recommendations for retrenching organisations

The findings of this study provided an in-depth understanding of the retrenchment phenomenon. Based on the research and literature findings, the following recommendations would be suggested for any organization facing or undergoing retrenchment.

1. Retrenching organisations should effectively communicate about the retrenchment process and also the criteria for selection of victims. In this current study some of the respondents stated were not aware of the selection criteria hence deeming the process unfair. It is therefore recommended that retrenching organizations should exercise over communication to ensure each and every member of the organisation is completely aware of what is going on.

2. It is recommended that employees be educated on policies relating to retrenchment. This will provide them with a better understating of the retrenchment process and what it entails.

3. It is important for retrenching organisations to ensure a conducive organisational climate. Leadership should find ways of ensuring continuous commitment and trust, handle HR issues with caution and keep lines of communication open. It is therefore recommended that retrenching organisations develop a way of periodically assessing employee morale and performance and take corrective action where need be.

4. Most organisations highly consider the financial aspects of retrenchment without understanding the human aspect of it, which often has an impact on the financial outcomes. It is therefore important for organisation to plan for the human aspects of change. It is recommended that this be done in two ways. Firstly by providing adequate support to victims and of course to the survivors. Providing support to both groups can give survivors a sense of peace, knowing their organization cares and this consequently positively affects trust and job commitment.

5. It is also recommended that organisations hire a company counsellor/s who are constantly available to provide counselling to the survivor employees for a sustained period.

6. Organizations should find a way of involving employees in the company vision by allowing them to suggest ideas and changes that could be beneficial for the organisation. This allows them to know they are an important asset of the company and will feel a certain sense of ownership.

7. The findings of this study showed that survivors experienced occupational stress emanating from increased workload and job changes. It is therefore recommended that retrenchment plans include detailed information on job changes and redefine job descriptions. In addition capacity building should be done to ensure the survivors have the necessary skills to carry out new tasks.

5.5 Areas for future work

During the literature search it was evident that there is minimal studies conducted in South Africa and globally that explore the impact of retrenchment on survivor employees.

57

Furthermore the available studies are limited in their scope in terms of industrial sector, geographical locations, occupations and race. Future work should therefore include participants from various sectors, geographic origins, occupations and race in order to gain a diversified and holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

In order to fully comprehend the themes that emerged from this study, it is recommended that that future studies utilize a qualitative triangulated research approach. Triangulation uses more than one data collection instrument which could vary from interviews, questionnaires and observations. This will enable gathering of different data types thus providing a larger reference base. It also captures diverse dimensions of the same phenomena. Furthermore triangulation often gives a researcher insight on both sides of the story thus equipping the researcher with the tools to make objective conclusions about the phenomenon under investigation.

This study was a qualitative study and did provide valuable information. However, future work could integrate qualitative and quantitative research methods thus providing more in-depth information about the views and opinions of the participants.

The data obtained in this study was collected after the retrenchment process. Although it gives information on the effect of retrenchment on survivor employees it does not provide the whole picture. Future studies could therefore give insight into the whole picture by interviewing or handing out questionnaires pre, during and post retrenchment. In essence there is need for longitudinal studies. This would definitely provide more exhaustive data thus enhancing research quality.

Some of the respondents in this current study alluded to using emotional intelligence, self-motivation and social interactions as a coping mechanism. Future studies could focus on role on individual characteristics in interpreting and reacting to retrenchment.

5.6 Conclusion

This study explored the dynamic effect and impact of retrenchment on survivor employees. The research presented primary and secondary findings obtained from the subjects of the study and from various scholarly authors respectively. The study answered the research questions and the objectives were met. A qualitative research approach was adopted in order to explicitly bring to light the interpretation ascribed to subjective experiences of the retrenchment

58

survivors. The selected data collection instruments were questionnaires which addressed the research objectives and research questions. A pilot study was carried prior to ensure validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. The data obtained from the questionnaires was restructured, coded and analysed.

The findings of the study were indeed valuable and will definitely contribute to knowledge. In consideration of the findings of this study it can be concluded that although Telkom made a notable effort in communicating retrenchment, although there were inconsistencies in the communication more so as it related to the criteria for selection of victims. Although the communication mechanism can be regarded as relatively, one area that Telkom failed in was providing its employees with the support that they needed during this period. It is evident that minimal support was provided to the survivors leaving them to find their own ways of coping with retrenchment. This led to a decline in job commitment and satisfaction. It is inconclusive as to whether retrenchment positively affected company profitability or not.

CHAPTER 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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61

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Appendix A

<u>Informed consent for participation in an academic research study</u>

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Lorencia Mthembu, a Masters student from the Department of Management, Information Technology and Governance at the University of Kwazulu Natal. The title of the study is "***The dynamic effect and implication of retrenchment on existing staff in Durban Telkom SA***". The study aims to explore the experiences of retrenchment survivors at Telkom Durban and thereby provide recommendations on handling the retrenchment process and survivor employees.

The results of the questionnaires will be used solely for research purposes and will not impact on your current job any way or form. All information obtained will be treated with the strictest of confidence. You will not be required to write any personal information on the questionnaires therefore you will remain anonymous.

Please sign below to indicate that

- You have read and fully understand the information provided above.
- You will answer the interview questions completely and as honestly as possible
- You voluntarily give your consent to be a participant in the study

_____   _____

Respondent's signature   Date

67

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

SECTION A

Demographics

1. Age

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

2. Gender

Male	Female

3. Job position

Senior management	Junior management	Supervisory	Non- managerial

4. Highest educational qualification attained

Secondary	Certificate	Diploma	Degree	Postgraduate Degree

5. Years of work experience

5 years & less	6-10 years	11-15 years	16+ years

6. Years of work experience at Telkom

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

SECTION B

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What are your general feelings towards Telkom?
2. Describe the current work environment at Telkom
3. Is there team spirit at the organisation?
4. If yes, is it any different from what it was before retrenchment?
5. Do you trust the company?
6. How would you describe the level of trust you have for your Telkom management

B. RETRENCHMENT PROCESS

1. State the reasons/objectives/goals cited by Telkom management for retrenching
2. Based on your view, did retrenching enable the company to meet these goals and objectives? Explain your view
3. Was there communication prior to initiation of the retrenchment process?
4. If yes, how long before was the communication done?
5. What mode of communication was utilised to inform you about the retrenchment?
6. Who was responsible for notifying employees about retrenchment?
7. In your view did they break the news in an effective and dignified manner? Explain
8. Are you aware of the criteria that was used for selecting employees to be retrenched?
9. In your opinion was the process fair? Motivate your answer
10. What type of assistance was offered to victims and survivors?

C. PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

1. What were your feelings when you were informed there would be retrenchment? Were you concerned about your job? Explain
2. When you were informed you would not be a victim of retrenchment, how did you feel? Explain your answer
3. How did you feel once the victims had been retrenched?
4. Which of the following areas did the retrenchment affect?

- Physical Health

- Mental well being

- Emotional health , Elaborate on your answer

5. Were there any changes in your job resulting from the retrenchment? Explain the changes

6. If there were any changes in your job after retrenchment, how did this affect your productivity?

D. MECHANISMS FOR COPING

1. What mechanisms did you use to cope psychologically with the effects of retrenchment?

2. What actions did you take to copy with changes in your job that resulted from the retrenchment?

3. Did you receive any support from the organisation to help you cope with the effects of retrenchment? Explain your answer

4. As you may be aware, part of the employment contract is the unwritten psychological contract, which relates to the traditional contract of life-long employment. Do you believe in this view? Explain your answer?

5. If you were to be offered employment by another company with the same remuneration package that you are currently receiving at Telkom, would you take it? Explain your answer

6. What alternative action would you think should have been taken to achieve organisational goals other than retrenchment?

7. Throughout the retrenchment process, what do you think should have been done differently? Explain your answer

Appendix 3

<u>Research consent documents</u>

Telkom

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The High Level Process

In short you need to find an Executive and Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the area you need information and obtain their support and approval.

R - Responsible; A – Accountable; C – Consult with; I - Inform

Steps	Requester	Promoter	Line Executive	HR Business Partner	SME
Need for Information exists. Requester contacts HR Business Partner for advise on the process	R	I		C	
Requester to complete approval form (TE-HR9020 – see below) and forward it to the relevant Line Executive for approval	R/A	I		C	
Line Executive approves/do not approve request and information to be provided	I	I	R/A	I	I
Line Executive informs the Requester of outcome	I	I	R/A	I	I
SME provides information through a discussion session	A	I	I	I	R
Requester submits final copy of research to Line Executive for validation before submission for assessment	R/A	I	I	I	I
Line Executive approves (N.B. if clarity on information is required send to External reporting for clarification)	I	I	R/A	I	I
Line Executive informs requester of approval and submits research document to Requester and cc requester's promoter for record keeping and archiving	I	R/A	C	I	I

Document No.: TE-HR9020
Version: 1.3
Repository: HR-000760

Group Human Resources
- For Group HR Use Only -
Proprietary And Confidential Company Information

Implementation Date: 2003-08-26
Process Owner: Group Culture
Transformation
Page 1 Of 3

71

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

NAME OF RESEARCHER: LORENCIA Mthembu

SERVICE ORGANISATION: Openserve

SALARY REF NUMBER: 421163

JOB TITLE & LEVEL: Operational Manager

PROMOTER:

E-MAIL: LorenciaM @ openserve.co.za
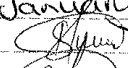
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 031 363 1135

STUDY INSTITUTION: UKZN

LECTURER/ STUDY LEADER/ KHADIJA KHAYSANY

Description of research topic	DYNAMIC EFFECT AND IMPLICATION OF RETRENCHMENT ON EXISTING STAFF IN DURBAN TELKOM
Information required	
Purpose of Information	TO ALLOW EMPLOYER AT BARGAINING UNIT TO ANSWER
How will the information be used?	THESE MASTERS COURSEWORK WILL ASSIST ORGANISATION TO DEAL WITH FUTURE PROCESS ON HOW TO HANDLE RETRENCHMENT CHALLENGE
Who will have access to this information?	SUPERVISOR AND EXAMINER AND CONFIDENTIAL CLAH put SE

72

Where will the research project / assignment be published?	May be published, but when student Pub CONFIDENTIAL CLAUSE UKZN PLACE IT THERE for 3 to 5 years.

FOR OFFICIAL USE – TO BE COMPLETED BY HR BUSINESS PARTNER IN CORPORATION WITH SME AND LINE EXECUTIVE

Process A

SO where research will be conducted	Durban (OP¹ and S⁶)
Name: SME (Subject Matter Expert)	Gerda Prinsloo
Name: HR Business Partner	Jeanette Havinge
Recommendation (HR) (Yes/No) Line Executive	For further studies.
Reason	To finalise her course-work, not thesis in Masters
Information that will be provided	Individual Questionairre (Confidential)
Date	January 2018.
Signature	[signature]
Approved / Decline By: (Line Executive)	[signature]
Date	19 / 01 / 2018

Process B

Checked final document and satisfied with the content YES / NO	Final Document Checked by Joseph Mofokeng, Sue Correia and Gerda Prinsloo
(N.b. if no, researcher needs to change or remove content and resubmit)	No need to resubmit as content will not be published (Confidential Closure)
Date	19 January 2018
Name and signature of SME or person who provided the information and checked the document	
Approved By: (Line Executive)	
Date	

Document No.: TE-HR9020
Version: 1.3
Repository: HR-000760

Group Human Resources
- For Group HR Use Only -
Proprietary And Confidential Company Information

Implementation Date: 2003-08-26
Process Owner: Group Culture Transformation
Page 3 Of 3

73

Date: 10/11/2017

To Whom It May Concern:

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AS PART OF THE RESEARCH DISSERTATION REQUIREMENT FOR M.COM COURSEWORK DEGREE

Name: Lorencia Mthembu
Student No: 216076911
Dissertation Topic: The dynamic effect and implication of retrenchment on existing staff in Durban Telkom.

It is a requirement for the above mentioned student to undertake a practical research project as part of the research dissertation requirement for M.COM Coursework degree.

Typically this project will be a "practical problem solving" exercise, and necessitate data gathering by questionnaires or interviews.

Your assistance in permitting access to your organisation for purposes of this research is most appreciated. Please be assured that all information gained from the research will be treated with the utmost circumspection. Further, should you wish the result from the dissertation "to be embargoed" for an agreed period of time, this can be arranged. The student will strictly adhere to confidentiality and anonymity.

If permission is granted the UKZN requires this to be in writing on a letterhead and signed by the relevant authority.

Thank you for your assistance in this regard.

Yours sincerely

K. KHARSAN

Supervisor Name & Signature

K. KHARSAN

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Protocol reference number   : HSS/0156/019M

Project title   : The dynamic effect and implication of Retrenchment on existing staff in

Durban Telkom

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:
BREACH OF ETHICAL PROCESSES AT UKZN

I, the undersigned,

Student Name (Student Nr)   :   Mrs Lorencia Mthembu (216076911)

School   :   Management, IT & Governance

Campus   :   Westville

as the Principal Investigator ("the Applicant") in the above stated project, do hereby acknowledge that:

1. The University of KwaZulu-Natal's (hereinafter "UKZN") Research Ethics Policy (V) does not make provision for Retrospective Ethics Approval;
2. All researchers (both students and staff) at UKZN are obliged to be familiar with this policy;
3. I have been informed that research cannot be done without obtaining full ethical clearance as per the policy and guidelines of the University;
4. **Research for the above project was undertaken by myself without final ethical clearance being obtained;**
5. The University reserves its right to, at any stage and time, withdraw the relevant degree obtained by myself if:

   5.1 It becomes known to UKZN that there was an additional ethical breach during any field work or whilst collection data for the above stated project, and / or

   5.2 I fail to apply for ethical clearance for any future research projects.
6. In addition to point 5 above, the appropriate disciplinary processes will follow should this occur again.

I further acknowledge that should there be any legal implications/actions emanating from the research in terms of any ethical violations, I will be personally liable and hereby indemnify UKZN against any legal action that may arise from my failure to adhere to the University Research Ethics Policy (V).

Westville

Signed at   on the   6 th day of March   2019

Signature of applicant: _____

Signed at   on the   day of   2019

Signature of Chair (HSSREC): _____   Date: 6 | 03 | 19

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

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