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How downsizing affects the job satisfaction and life satisfaction of layoff survivors

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Organizations go for downsizing to increase their efficiency and reduce costs but it may result in dissatisfaction among employees. The current study examines the effects of downsizing on layoff survivors' job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The sample for the current study is drawn from the two main organizations operating in Pakistan. A sample of 450 respondents took part in the study resulting in 75% response rate. The results show that downsizing negatively affects the job satisfaction and life satisfaction of survivors. The difference of experiences regarding job and life satisfaction between the two organizations is also assessed. The results are compared and discussed in the light of available literature. This study will enable researchers, academicians and policy makers to understand the influence of downsizing on job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Key words: Downsizing, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, layoff survivors, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Organization is a structured entity which is established to achieve specific goals by blending the resources. Business organizations are very sensitive regarding costs and benefits to get optimal returns. The right size of human resources is indispensable for the successful survival of every organization. Globalization makes the business world more competitive and complex. To compete with the competitors the organizations need to improve efficiency, increase productivity and quality, which includes the reduction of costs as well. Many organizations have used various management tools such as reengineering, mergers, acquisitions, reduction of duties and outsourcing to cope with the tough competition. To compete with the competitors the organizations need to adjust its structural hierarchy (restructuring) and redesign administrative (reorganization) generally known as downsizing (Sahdev and Vinnicombe, 1998). The employees who remain with the organization after downsizing are known as "survivors", and are responsible for new business performance and

and ultimately the success of implementation of restructuring (Baker, 2006).

This study examines the relationship of downsizing with job satisfaction and life satisfaction of layoff survivors. Moreover the study examines the impact of work life balance on life satisfaction. Every organization attempts to expand or reduce its manpower according to its specific requirements and prevailing business conditions. Downsizing is an organization's deliberate use of policies that results in permanent reduction in personnel to improve organization's efficiency and effectiveness (Budros, 1999; Chu and Ip, 2002). Similarly, another researcher elaborated the concept of downsizing as one of the strategies implemented by the organization effecting size of the workforce, the cost and the work processes (Cameron, 1994; Chu and Ip, 2002). However, downsizing could create severe economic problems for employees who survive the layoffs (Guiniven, 2001). Leftover employees after downsizing are known as layoff survivors (Virick et al., 2007) who confront difficult situations including the work overload that causes fatigue that ultimately leads to dissatisfaction. Similarly in Pakistan after the restructuring of Habib Bank Limited (HBL), a bank providing financial services to the nation, and Pakistan

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Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), a company providing landline telephone services to the nation, the remaining employees had to absorb the duties of their laid-off co-workers and thus experienced overload that led to job and life dissatisfaction.

Generally, organizations opt for downsizing when they face difficult economic conditions (Gandolfi, 2008). HBL and PTCL opted for restructuring as a strategy for asset management which resulted in reduction of approximately 11,350 and 29,000 employees respectively (Ghausi, 2004; Bashar, 2001; Kiani, 2007). Different researchers found variant effects of downsizing on layoff survivors, job insecurity and decreased trust in management, decreased loyalty, breakdown of communication and more intentions to leave are the dominant factors among them (Boom, 2007; Marks, 2006; Kulkarni, 2008). The current study adds to the base of knowledge by exploring the said relationship in a sample of layoff survivors from two organizations operating in Pakistan, a culturally different setting. The current study is new in its nature as it aims to explore the differences of life and job satisfaction experiences among layoff survivors of HBL and PTCL. It could help the organizations to develop friendly policies to facilitate their employees so that they feel satisfied and secured at their workplaces. It may create commitment towards their organizations and ultimately contribute in enhancing organizational performance and productivity. Previous research studies have mentioned that disloyalty, disaffection, increased absenteeism, and even acts of sabotage are common factors in layoff survivors (Guiniven, 2001).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Downsizing

Downsizing is a strategy that has been used more regularly in recent years to respond to different competitive environments. It is a form of reorganization or restructuring companies through which carry out improvement in work systems, redesign organization and establishing adequate human resources to maintain business competitiveness. Improving organizational effectiveness after a downsizing process is strongly related to the reaction and behavior that survivors would adopt (Kozlowski et al. 1993; Sahdev and Vinnicombe, 1998). Researchers have noted that one of the main objectives and strategy to achieve an optimal organizational size is rightsizing and rethinking about the organization. So downsizing is a strategy that affects the workforce size, operational costs and work processes (Appelbaum et al., 2003; Fisher and White, 2000; Hopkins and Hopkins 1999). It is concluded that the process of downsizing often does not lead the companies to improve their results (Cascio, 2002).

The process of downsizing may consciously or unconsciously affects the work processes of an organization. In

some cases, if the workforce is reduced several consequences could affect the work. This could result into much work, inefficiency, conflict and low morale. However, these may cause other positive results such as improved productivity or effectiveness. Although the downsizing could be an effective tool to transform organizations, however it could threaten the stability of human resources in enterprises. It is reported that cost reduction, increased productivity, response to competitive threats, and consolidation after mergers and acquisitions may lead organizations to downsize (Schraeder et al., 2006).

Downsizing and job satisfaction

The symptoms shown by survivors after downsizing includes decline in loyalty, loss impairment caused by job insecurity, unfairness, anxiety, depression, decreased motivation, dissatisfaction with the planning and communication, anger toward the process of downsizing, loss of credibility in the firm's management team and increased stress level (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Noer, 1993; Thornhill and Saunders, 1998). However, it is reported that the survivors might perform well after downsizing because they feel privileged to keep their jobs but it proved the other way round (Baker, 2006). Travagione and Cross (2006) highlighted negative effects effecting survivors of downsizing. Authors revealed that survivors experience a decrease in affective commitment, performance and job satisfaction and an increase in bad health issues.

Appelbaum and Donia (2000) noted that breach of the implicit agreement between the organization and its employees often lead employees to experience negative emotions such as guilt, loss of organizational commitment and uncertainty about the future (Appelbaum et al., 1999; Sahdev and Vinnicombe, 1998). Those who remain in the organization receive some level of job insecurity. This uncertainty appears to be associated with lower levels of organizational commitment and productivity, and low managerial trust. These employees feel discouraged, fearful and have low morale (Ugboro, 2003). The increased level of stress, a factor contributing towards life dissatisfaction, is another common factor among layoff survivors and the implementers. Downsizing equally contributes to the stress for managers which lead to a hyper effective reaction (Kulkarni, 2008).

Gignac and Appelbaum (1997) believes that the "survivors" are subject to a number of adjustments, such as new job descriptions, new procedures, increased workload and a concern about the future of their employment. These changes cause a higher rate of absenteeism, increased accidents, and medical problems, conflicts between workers and managers and difficulty in adapting to new working conditions. Similarly, it is argued that the remnants of massive layoffs are sensitive to the effect of downsizing on the safety of their own jobs. In such circumstances, it seems immoral to take

some pleasure from work (Baker, 2006).

Downsizing and life satisfaction

The people who work with the organization after downsizing has to face heavy workloads, which needs more time to accomplish all the tasks. It may create some problems regarding life satisfaction due to shortage of time for the personal and social life. On the other hand, it is found that no overall decrease in well-being due to downsizing despite an increase in work demands (Parker et al., 1997). Similarly, it is documented that life satisfaction is the outcome of job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2001; Rode, 2004). Kopelman et al. (1983) reported that work-family conflict mediates the relationships between work conflict and life satisfaction. Findings show that is higher work conflict leads to higher work-family conflict, which is related to decreased life satisfaction. Work life balance and work life conflict are two faces of the same picture. Work life conflict is the inter-role conflict in which demands of work and family responsibilities are unmatched (Virick et al., 2007), where as balance refers to overcoming this conflict by equally engaging in and equally satisfied with ones work role and family role (Greenhaus et al., 2003) because high conflict is related to lower balance. Several studies have highlighted the role of work-family conflict in lowering job satisfaction (Nadeem and Abbas, 2009; Parasuraman and Simmers, 2001) and life satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1992). However, it is found that work-life balance partially mediates the role overload-life satisfaction relationship (Virick et al., 2007).

Kulkarni (2008) noted that downsizing have negative effects on the social lives of the employees (life dissatisfaction). In different parts of the world the type of job that a person is doing is connected with the social status of the person or family. Loosing that job results in loss of that social status. Loosing a job also leads to broken marriages, breakdowns and suicides. The feelings of loosing a job can be compared to the death of a friend or family member. Ahn (2007) examined the importance of intangible job characteristics in workers' job and life satisfaction among 6,000 Spanish workers. The study found a number of intangible job characteristics that effected job i.e. life satisfaction of workers, flexibility, independence, social usefulness, pleasant work environment, pride, stress and the perception of receiving an adequate wages. Organizational changes such as downsizing, restructuring and amalgamation could increase work loads, work stress and job insecurity. It could result into family conflict that may lead to dissatisfaction from work and life (Nadeem and Abbas, 2009). Similarly, it is reported that employees with good work life balance could manage their work and life responsibilities with lower burnout level. They also experience greater job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions as well as

actual turnover (Malik et al., 2010). In the light of existing literature following hypotheses are investigated. In the light of available literature the following hypothesis can be developed.

H₁: Downsizing negatively affects job satisfaction of layoff survivors.

H₂: Downsizing negatively affects life satisfaction of layoff survivors.

METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire in English was distributed among 600 layoff survivors working in two giant organizations i.e. HBL and PTCL operating in Pakistan. The researcher collected 470 responses for the study. After exclusion of incomplete questionnaires, 450 completed questionnaires were processed resulting in 75.0% response rate and collected through convenience sampling method. The measures used for the current study to determine the effects of downsizing on job satisfaction and life satisfaction were adopted from the previous studies (Table 1). The job and life satisfaction of layoff survivors play the role of dependent variables whereas downsizing plays the role of independent variable. The reliability was reconfirmed through Cronbach's alpha scores. The scales were rated by five point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree" where as job satisfaction was assessed on a scale ranging from 1 = "very dissatisfied" to 5 = "very satisfied". The details of the measures used with Cronbach's alpha scores are listed in Table 1.

The questionnaires were distributed personally by visiting the two organizations namely HBL and PTCL across the country. The distribution and collection of the questionnaire took more than two months. The responses were analyzed using SPSS. Pearson's product moment correlation, regression and independent sample t-test were applied for the data analysis. Independent sample t-test was used to find out differences among layoff survivors with respect to job and life satisfaction of the two organizations. Pearson's correlation and regression analysis were used to determine the relationship among the independent and the dependent variables (Sekaran, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PTCL the largest telecommunication company providing landline services throughout the country. It lay off 30,000 employees by offering them voluntary separation scheme (VSS) in the year 2006 (Kiani, 2007). Similarly, HBL provides financial and customer services. It lay off 11,500 employees by offering them Golden Hand Shake (GHS) in the year 2001 (Ghausi, 2004; Bashar, 2001). The layoff of employees gives rise to layoff survivors, who remain with the organization after the layoff (Virick, et al., 2007). The results of the study present the demographic profile of the respondents, relationship among selected variables and the differences among layoff survivors of the two organizations.

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the Layoff survivors from HBL and PTCL. It indicates that HBL took more interest in the survey as compared to the layoff survivors of PTCL. Maximum of the respondents are

Table 1. Source, No. of items and Cronbach's alpha of the measures used in the study.

Variable	Source	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Downsizing	Sronce and McKinley (2006)	05	0.87
Job satisfaction	O'Driscoll and Randall (1999)		0.90
Life satisfaction	Diener et al. (1985)		

Table 2. Demographic profile of the respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Organization	HBL	255	56.7
	PTCL	195	43.3
Gender	Male	286	63.5
	Female	164	36.5
Education	Under graduate	75	16.7
	Graduate	227	50.4
	Post graduate	148	32.9
Job status	Top management	55	12.2
	Middle management	288	64.0
	First level management	107	23.8

Table 3. Summary of Pearson's correlation between selected variables.

Variables	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Downsizing and Job satisfaction	-0.775**	0.000
Downsizing and Life satisfaction	-0.723**	0.000
Life satisfaction and Job satisfaction	0.762**	0.000

male (63.5%) having graduation degrees (50.4%) and are working at middle level management (64.0%). Moreover the researchers also asked the layoff survivors about their age. The age ranges between 20 to 59 years with an average age of 28 years. The table reveals that layoff survivors having average tenure of 11 years. The correlation between selected variables is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 indicates the results of the Pearson's correlation for selected variables. It shows that downsizing is negatively correlated with job satisfaction (-0.775) and life satisfaction (-0.723) of the layoff survivors. Job satisfaction and life satisfaction of layoff survivors are positive related (0.762). The results indicate that downsizing is a predictor of diminishing job and life satisfaction of layoff survivors working in HBL and PTCL. Further more the relationship of the dependent and independent variables are examined through applying linear regression analysis. Table 4 reflects the results of direct effect of downsizing on job satisfaction of layoff survivors. Table 4 reveals that the regression coefficient of downsizing for job satisfaction (-0.743, $p=0.002$) have

strong negative significant relationship. It supported the hypothesis that downsizing negatively affects the job satisfaction among lay off survivors. The results are in line with the previous studies as layoff survivors feel discouraged, fearful and have low morale due to downsizing (Ugboro, 2003). Similarly, Table 5 indicates the results of direct effect of downsizing on life satisfaction of layoff survivors. Table 5 explains the effect of downsizing on life satisfaction (-0.633, $p=0.050$) as moderate negative relationship. The findings supported the hypothesis that there is negative relationship between downsizing and life satisfaction among lay off survivor's. Similarly, coefficients of regression analysis proved that downsizing negatively affects the life satisfaction. Findings are consistent with the previous studies (Parasuraman et al., 1992; Virick et al., 2007; Nadeem and Abbas, 2009).

The findings reveal that downsizing have a negative effect on the job and life satisfaction of layoff survivors. The high value of R^2 (0.790, 0.692) respectively, shows variance of dependent variable being explained by

Table 4. Summary of the downsizing and job satisfaction- Linear regression model (Coefficients, standard error in parenthesis, t-values in brackets and p-values in italics).

Constant	IBSQL	R ²	F-Statistics
46.442	-0.743	0.79	250.365
(0.433)	(0.831)		
[31.857]	[-15.333]		
<i>0.000</i>	<i>0.002</i>		0.000

Predictor (constant), downsizing. Dependent variable: job satisfaction.

Table 5. Summary of the downsizing and life satisfaction- Linear regression model (Coefficients, standard error in parenthesis, t-values in brackets and p-values in italics).

Constant	IBSQL	R ²	F-Statistics
26.432	-0.633	0.692	260.211
(0.411)	(0.630)		
[21.652]	[-12.221]		
0.000	0.050		0.000

Predictor (constant), downsizing. Dependent variable: Life satisfaction.

independent variables. Interestingly values of R² are very high in the Pakistani environment due to the greater influence of independent variable on the dependent variables. The value of F - statistic (250.365, 260.211) shows the overall significance of the relationships. The high and statistically significant values of F - statistic confirm the fitness of the model. It shows the strong relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. Downsizing accounts for 79.0% variation in the job satisfaction of layoff survivors. On the other hand, downsizing could result into 69.2% variation in the life satisfaction of layoff survivors. It is reported that downsizing is unable to improve organizations due to negative consequences (Cameron 1994). Similarly, it may create negative outcomes both for individuals and organizations (Cascio, 1993; Kozlowski et al., 1993). The results of the independent sample t- test show the differences among layoff survivors with respect to job satisfaction and life satisfaction in Table 6. Table 6 reflects that there are no significant differences with respect to job satisfaction and life satisfaction among layoff survivors of both the organizations. It reflects that the both organizations do not make any difference in the experiences of layoff survivors. It is concluded that the layoff survivors have the same type of experiences, no matter which organization they belong to. The current study reveals that maximum layoff survivors, who reported to the questionnaire, are male. Male segment of the society in Pakistan are thought to be the bread winners and women are responsible for domestic activities. The findings of current study reveal that

downsizing is negatively related to job satisfaction and life satisfaction of layoff survivors. Moreover no significant differences are found with respect to job satisfaction and life satisfaction of layoff survivors (Guiniven, 2001; Virick et al., 2007).

Travagione and Cross (2006) revealed that downsizing has negative effects on the affective commitment, performance and job satisfaction and negative health consequences of the layoff survivors. The results of the current study are in accordance with these finding stating that downsizing has a negative relationship with job satisfaction of layoff survivors. This gives a clear notion that the survivors feel frustrated and dissatisfied after layoffs. They have to accommodate with the ever increasing demands of the work at their work places which need more time at work which means doing overtime and shortage of time spent with family or non - work matters. It leads to job and life dissatisfaction which has to be sought out by the organizations. Downsizing is a cause of stress (Kulkarni, 2008) that also leads to decreasing trends in the life and job satisfaction of the employees working in the organizations after layoffs. The employees are to be taken care off and the provision of the opportunities to balance their work and non - work responsibilities leads to better satisfaction opportunities. Low job and life satisfaction leads to low morale that ultimately leads to reduced productivity at the individual level as well as the organizational level. The decrease productivity is an indicator of poor performance at the work place that leads to customer dissatisfaction from the product or services the organization is providing. The loss

Table 6. Independent sample t - test.

Variable	Organization	Mean	SD	t - value	p value
Job satisfaction	HBL	2.094	0.785	-0.663	0.508*
	PTCL	2.147	0.895		
Life satisfaction	HBL	1.949	0.926	-0.441	0.659*
	PTCL	1.989	0.995		

of customers leads to lower a sale that is one of the clear indicators of business failure. The organizations should look into such a crucial issue and should take care of the employees to maintain a satisfactory level of job and life satisfaction among them to keep them motivated for better individual and organizational outputs.

Conclusion

The organizations should develop and implement the policies that are focused on the employees to enhance the commitment among them. It may lead to positive intentions of the layoff survivors to retain themselves with the same organization and ultimately help in enhanced organizational and individual productivity. The organizations go for downsizing to increase their efficiency and reduce costs but it may result in the dissatisfaction among employees. The current study examines the effects of downsizing on layoff survivors' job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The sample for the current study is drawn from the two main organizations operating in Pakistan. A sample of 450 respondents took part in the study resulting in 75% response rate. The results show that the downsizing negatively affects the job satisfaction of the survivors. The results supported the hypothesis. Similarly, a negative influence of downsizing on life satisfaction is also reported and proved the hypothesis. The difference of experiences regarding job and life satisfaction between the two organizations is also assessed. The results are compared and discussed in the light of available literature. This study enables the researchers, academicians and policy makers to understand the influence of downsizing on job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

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