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**“PRECARIOUS NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT IN ZIMBABWE”: AN ASSESSMENT  
OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF DOWNSIZING ON SURVIVORS. CASE  
OF ZIMASCO KWEKWE DIVISION.**

**BY**

**MPOFU ELITE EFFORT  
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE BSc HONOURS DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY.**

**GWERU, ZIMBABWE**

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**SUPERVISOR: MR. L. MAUNGANIDZE**

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**MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**

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**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Midlands State University for acceptance of a dissertation entitled: **“Precarious nature of employment in Zimbabwe”: An assessment of the psychological dynamics of downsizing on survivors. Case of Zimasco Kwekwe Division.**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my parents Mr. and Mrs. E. Mpofu, to my siblings Evidence, Everjoy, Edson and Elton for the surrendering of their social needs, space and life for the sake of my studies.

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## ABSTRACT

*The research aimed at assessing the psychological dynamics of downsizing on survivor employees at Zimasco Kwekwe Division. The major reason behind is that downsizing disregards the human side and affects the psychological wellbeing of the same. It remains crucial to implore the psychological facets that affect employee productivity after downsizing operations and endeavor to change employee behaviors and attitudes for better attainment of organizational objectives. The study employed a qualitative research approach which adopts capturing the experiences of the participants in their natural setting. The study made use of the case study research design which draws information from multiple sources to complement each other. Data was gathered through the use of primary and secondary information sources. The study used semi-structured interviews and documentary sources to gather research data. The use of interviews abetted the study by providing raw data on the experiences of the participants and the use of documentary sources yielded truth about the organization's operational status and the consequences of such. The total population for the study was 1056 employees from which a sample of 53 participants was drawn based on the fullness and recurrence of research data. The study initially used random stratified sampling where the participants were partitioned into two stratas namely managerial and non-managerial. Data was analyzed through thematic approach which is mostly commended when dealing with emotional experiences of the research subjects. The research findings chronicled the perilous psychological impacts associated with downsizing in organization on survivor employees and coping strategies employed by the same in dealing with such challenges. The study concluded that organizations should consider the human side of the organization when instigating measures that embrace emotional wellness of employees.*

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## ACRONYMS

MSU..... Midlands State University

ZIMASCO..... Zimbabwe Mining and Smelting Company

## **Chapter One**

### **Orientation to the Study**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The observation of humans as a source of competitive advantage has been essential in any business entity. The Zimbabwean dollarization era (2008) has seen many companies within Zimbabwe hit by financial constraints prompting organizations to close down operations. The few that floated during this era of financially ominous situation were forced to review their expenditure and cut off on expenses to circumvent extermination. In order to keep business floating, companies like Zimasco (Pvt) Ltd employed innumerable measures which have seen labour regarded as surplus to new operations being sacked from employment. Their quest for survival led to the embracing of appalling measures, counting downsizing. This study therefore seeks to evaluate the psychological effects associated with downsizing as a survival strategy employed by organizations. The study engages Zimasco (Pvt) Ltd Kwekwe Division as a case study since it has been involved in the process of downsizing.

The chapter contains the background, the problem statement, significance, purpose, objectives, hypotheses/research questions, assumptions, delimitations and limitations to the study. The chapter closes with a chapter outline.

#### **1.2 Background of the Study**

The Euro Debt Crisis of 2008, affected many employment fields from national to individual level, globally (Tripathi, 2014). This caused problems for the ferroalloy industry in Zimbabwe as it faced challenges which threatened the collapse of its operations. The stainless steel producers which are the biggest consumers of the ferrochrome product at global level, were forced to review their spending trends and slashed their payrolls to avoid closure. This enforced the downfall of market prices in the alloy industries. China which emerged as the chief procurer of the ferrochrome products for consumption in its car industries stocked piles of ferroalloy products and chrome ore and left market prices hovering at US\$0.83/lb as at 2009 and further plummeted to US\$0.80 to US\$0.90/lb from US\$2/lb in 2008. Since the eruption of the subprime

crisis in 2008, most industries in the ferroalloy sector are operating at a loss since the cost of production remained stagnant and this has seen Zimasco operations failing to pay its electric, ore supply and labour dues. Zimasco and a few other companies in the chrome business continue to limp with the future looking bleak because of no positive change in operations.

According to the (Ad Hoc Team of the European System of Central Banks, 2015), companies adopted numerous measures aimed at making business thrive. The measures included short time work arrangements and partial employment schemes to mention a few. This resembled the situation of what transpired in Zimbabwe. Having been faced with operational challenges, Zimasco and other sister companies in the sector, were forced to re-align labour platforms to suit the prevailing international market reality. This has seen the interventions of other measures to avoid closure. The engagement of measures to avoid closure of operations included the negotiations with the organization's suppliers and commodity based tariffs (zesa and water rates).

Moreover, following the precarious nature associated with Zimbabwean employment, many employees have been terminated from their lifetime employing organizations. In a report by Mahove documented in the NewsDay of July 25 2015, the decision by the Supreme Court ruling on Don Nyamande and Kingstone Donga's case versus Zuva Petroleum (Pvt) Ltd, has seen many employees having their contracts terminated only on notice and no severance remuneration has been received by the victims of this decision. The decision upheld by the Supreme Court had its basis on section 12B of the Labour Act Chapter [28:01] of 2006 which according to Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku ... "does not abolish the employer's common law right to terminate employment on notice in terms of an employment contract..." (Laiton, 2015). After a fair trial to turnaround cooperate operations with petite triumph, the NewsDay of 25 July 2015 states that the Supreme Court smoothed pathways for shipwrecked employers to sack employees out of service on a notice basis with no other compensation, Zimasco included. The process of downsizing operations is an effective measure for organizational efficiency and productivity Leung and Chang (1999), but it mirrors several psychological upshots which affect survival employees. Considering the actualities that the victims of downsizing have lost partnership with the organization and above all little or no remuneration has been paid to them, triggered the

researcher's interest to explore psychological dynamics which emanate as a result of organizational downsizing at individual level.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The Ferro-Chrome industry in Zimbabwe has suffered severely due to the Euro Debt Crisis of 2008. It has been longing for a boost in productivity and increased performance to withstand competition in the field up until present day. The mandate to turnaround operations has been prohibited by the depressed product prices in the market due to paltry receipt of chrome products by American, European and Asian markets. Since China became the chief procure of chrome ore and chrome products, she determined the market prices and this has seen product prices dropping from US\$2/lb from 2008 to US\$0.83/lb in 2009. To date the market prices have further plummeted and keep winged between US\$0.83/lb and US\$0.70/lb. This price saga exhibited challenges for the 14 companies in the Ferro-Chrome business and after feeling the heat, some closed operations and the few that endured the tale continue with the future ostensibly hostile. Companies that effected multiple downsizing phases to cut on labour costs have shaded a number of employees. In February 2014, Zimasco terminated contracts for 103 employees during its first phase. The second phase was implemented May 2014 where it sacked 12 employees on voluntary basis. The third implementation was a compulsory discharge in which it lost 66 employees 4 months after the second phase. The trend continued into 2015 where the organization voluntarily sacked 3 employees.

Furthermore, following the Supreme Court judgment, Zimasco was in the process of downsizing further and the judgment presented provided the organization with a spine to justify the markdown in prohibitive costs associated with downsizing. In July 2015 it parted with 472 employees which brings the number of employees terminated in a space of 2 years to 656 in totality. Employees who remained with the organization in this treacherous environment are engaged on the basis of not having enough options to opt out of the employment since the Zimbabwean labour market seem flooded. Survivors have been confronted with a number of both socio-economic and psychological coerces since the implementation of the first phase of downsizing.

Internally, employees have found themselves in a do or die cause in which they are still facing special interventions aimed at reducing costs. In Zimasco these included rotational leaves, reduction in employment benefits, delays in salaries and payment of retrenchment packages for the victims of the downsizing exercise. These special measures temper with the psychological contract and both parties in the employment relationship are drifting further apart as each day surpasses. This is a clear indication that the industrial relations climate has become gloomy hence conflict is the order of the day. Disciplinary cases related to employee disengagement, labour turnover, sickness and more cases in culpable absenteeism have since been recorded and there is need to impasse the shortcomings to achieve productivity in the sector before it hard hits operations. The question therefore which remains unreturned is with all efforts to downsize operations yet not breaking even, do organizations assess the psychological impacts triggered by the implementation of multiple downsizing strategies on survivor employees? The essence of the research is to assess the psychological dynamics that come as a result of organizational downsizing on survivors.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The research seeks to assess the psychological impacts of organizational downsizing amongst survivor employees in the Zimbabwean context with the view to make suggestions for an appropriate intervention.

#### **1.5 Objectives**

To achieve the overall objective of this research, the following objectives have to be met:

- ✚ To evaluate psychological effects of downsizing in Ferro-Chrome business enterprises.
- ✚ To identify strategies used by survivor employees in a downsizing situation.
- ✚ To proffer suggestions for future occurrences of downsizing on how best to manage employees after a catastrophe.

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

- ✚ What are the psychological effects of downsizing on survivor employees?
- ✚ How do survivor employees cope in a downsizing situation?

- ✚ What are the ways of enhancing survivor engagement and attain organizational objectives after downsizing?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

An assessment into the psychological upshots of downsizing is a prerequisite relief to both the government and organizations in the Ferroalloy business, on how best to achieve competitive advantage after the implementation of harsh survival diplomacies. The implementation of measures to avoid downsizing depicted a number of psychological downturns in many an employee in the Chrome business. This has impacted on several individual factors which can aid to individual performance towards attaining organizational goals. Adding on, little or no attention has been paid on the psychological effects of downsizing on survivor employees. Present data has dwelled much on the economic effects of downsizing on survivor employees, leaving a research gap on the psychological apprehensions of downsizing. Hence forgoing such matters will result in closure of voluminous operations since these have affected the employment relationship and led employees not to produce desirably. This research therefore seeks to advice both legislative makers and implementers of the existence of such constraints which might add value to the organization as a whole and improve productivity by addressing psychological concerns of employees.

### **1.8 Assumptions**

- ✚ The study assumes that Zimasco implemented the downsizing exercise as a turnaround strategy.
- ✚ The study assumes that there are reasons behind limited attention to the emotional wellbeing of survivors by Zimasco.
- ✚ The study assumes that respondents are aware of the psychological constraints of downsizing.
- ✚ The study assumes that the respondents will riposte positively and honestly to the researcher for the purpose of the research.

## **1.9 Delimitations**

The Ferroalloy industry in Zimbabwe is comprised of 14 companies but the study will be limited to Zimasco Kwekwe Division operations only. This is because coverage all the 14 companies will lead the study astray as it would have broaden out. The study will also engage a period from January 2009 to July 2015 since this is the period when Zimasco faced somber operational contests and implemented varying measures both to avoid downsizing and the downsizing exercise as well.

## **1.10 Limitations**

The researcher might face challenges in accessing information which might be regarded as confidential, to include wages and salaries. However it is vital to note that the presence of such information in this research is of paramount importance since it denotes where the psychological effects on employees emanate from. Further, there may be limits to this research in that it is difficult to extract such emotionally packed information from respondents and some individuals might display ignorance on dishing out information citing different motives known to themselves. But however, the researcher will assure the respondents that data being collected is strictly for academic purposes to reduce participant bias. There may be limits on data analysis. Since the researcher was the one involved in data collection and analysis, the study may be subject to researcher bias, though the researcher tried to minimize such at all cost. The data collected may be limited due to the setting which the researcher covered, which is Zimasco Kwekwe Division only and not coverage of all other divisions, henceforth this might lead to generalization of data. The researcher might also face difficulties in dealing with Zimasco's way of operation therefore this might infringe on the results.

## **1.11 Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.11.1 Precarious Nature**

According to the (Oxford Dictionary, 2001), precarious refers to the situation which is not held in position and is likely to fall. Specified in terms of the research, precarious nature refers to harsh employment conditions associated with the Zimbabwean employment.

### **1.11.2 Assess**

The (Oxford Dictionary, 2001) defines assess as evaluating or estimating, the nature, value or quality of evidence. Specified in terms of the research, this assessment refers to an evaluation of the psychological downturns of organizational downsizing.

### **1.11.3 Psychological Dynamics**

According to Leung and Chang (1999), psychological dynamics refer to the emotional conditions in survivors, mentioning job insecurity, job performance, anger, depression, organizational commitment, work conflicts and psychological intentions to withdraw from employment.

### **1.11.4 Downsizing**

According to Cameron (1994), the process of downsizing denotes measures implemented by management to increase organizational efficiency, productivity and competitive edge. Furthermore, Ndlovu and Parumasur (2005), downsizing represents a strategy implemented by managers that affects the size of the firm's workforce, costs and the work processes. Leung and Chang (1999) define downsizing as a process that involves important conceptual and theoretical aspects for organizations. Cascio (2000) defines downsizing as a planned elimination of jobs aimed at reducing the workforce.

### **1.11.5 Survivors**

Ndlovu and Parumasur (2005) submitted a definition of survivors as employees who remain with the organization after a successful charting or profiling. Moore et al. (2000), survivors refer to those who witness the layoffs of coworkers but remain employed.

## **1.12 Chapter Summary**

The chapter deliberated on the background information which form the basis of the study. The research problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions and significance of the study were also presented to provide an overview of the direction of the study. The chapter further detailed on the assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study and also operational definitions as they have been used in the study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter reviews what others have documented about the psychological impacts of organizational downsizing as essential to the study. The focus of this henceforth is to review information valued as indispensable in relationship to the research. It also focuses on what others depict about the nature of employment in Zimbabwe and what is meant by psychological effects of organizational downsizing. The chapter also focuses on the reasons why downsizing is implemented in organizations and measures that can be placed to promote good employee wellbeing on survivors, post downsizing. The chapter will be guided by the study objectives and all pertinent issues will be addressed from the realms of the study, tying data presented by other authorities and the background of the research which will decipher what is covered in the study.

#### **2.2 The Concept of Downsizing**

Downsizing has been understood to be a strategy pertinent to develop organizations' performance, escalate productivity and strengthen competitiveness. According to Leung and Chang (1999), evidence however suggest that the efforts are hard to realize since it is a function of specific conditions pertaining to the business environment. Tripathi (2014) affirms that, downsizing is a contentious business run-through which gains its popularity from the executive and shareholders and also earns criticism from employees, trade unions and communal militants. All expenses incurred in the organizations should be accounted for and managers are found wanting in identifying the sources and businesses have reacted to challenges through workforce reduction through downsizing (Chipunza& Berry, 2010). This indicates that less workforce but more workload to the remaining labor.Ndlovu and Parumasur (2005)concur with the above edict, they opined that downsizing is now viewed as the solution for cooperate turnaround and for organizational transformation into a future state.In an article by Chadenga in the Newsday of March 7 2015, the rate of unemployment in Zimbabwe is hovering above 80%. This has been greatly due to organizations engaging in downsizing measures after failing to float the

operations, thus sacking multitudes into the streets. The same went on to report that most people who remain in employment are suffering from emotional distress due to lack of survival means.

Chipunza and Berry (2010), argue that employers are left in a catch twenty-two situation after engaging downsizing as a strategy. The fact being, they are supposed to safeguard the interest of the enterprise by slashing excess labour off their wage bill and recuperate operational challenges by fully engaging the human resource as key to achieving productivity (Chipunza& Berry, 2010). It is prerequisite for most organizations to acclimate to challenging environmental adjustments. Forecasting downsizing as a survival strategy for the enterprises poses psychological defects on the engaged employees post implementation. Achieving business viability is conceivable after considering the psychological wellbeing of employees who just survived such a traumatic undertaking (Chipunza& Berry, 2010). According to Ndlovu and Parumasur (2005), industries need to be flexible in this global economic crunch, hence downsizing undoubtedly has revived many business sectors and key to this fact is through effective personnel management and failure to exercise the prerogative to manage employees has the capacity to stir unrest.

Presenting the preminent employment relationship after downsizing can steer the organization into eternity, henceforth managing the psychological wellbeing of survivors is a necessity in order to achieve quality deliverance from employees (Ndlovu & Parumasur, 2005). Some literature reviews that employees should learn to adjust to conditions of recession as itemized by (Leung & Chang, 1999). The same argued that employees should deal with all pay freeze and cutting of other remunerations to mention bonuses, school fees allowances and all the hardships associated with scaling down. Failure to cope with the status quo carriages health repercussions on survivors. Kivimäki et al. (2007), opine that downscaling has for the past decade modelled stress due to high levels of workload and increased job insecurity amongst survivor employees. According to Kivimäki et al. (2007), those who remain in employment after downsizing have been reported to be vulnerable to stress-related physical ailments resulting from post-downsizing sickness and trauma to mention a few.

### **2.3 Factors that lead to Organizational Downsizing**

Downsizing has become a stark reality in most organizations globally despite prevalent efforts put across to revive the bleak economy. Cutting down operations has never been a pleasurable mission to undertake. Employees are affected one way or the other, though on different grounds when organizations sort to engage this stratagem. Factors that justify the realities of downsizing to be fruitful vary, with reducing labour costs as the major goal of downsizing. Cummins and Santomero (1999) proposed a number of factors that lead to downsizing in companies, to include competitive pressures, cost reduction, and changes in cooperate strategy. They advanced another goal of downsizing as aimed at reducing organizational layers to eradicate redundant exertion. Appelbaum et al. (1999) opined that another factor first predicted by Charles Handy (Professor in Managerial Psychology) in the 1970s is the technological revolution which would transform the lives of many people on a global scale. According to Tripathi (2014) downsizing is as a result of intense competition which scratches the company's revenues. For instance if the company is obtaining lower revenues, the suggestion is to cut costs through workforce reduction and closure of costly projects.

Executioners take interest in downsizing as a survival strategy or a sentient space in business operations with little knowledge that it does not increase organizational performance per se, Agwu et al. (2014), but an increase in the reduction of workforce. Structuring a downsizing program with reductions on labour costs topping the list however embarks on the financial salvation for the organization, leaving out the psychological dynamics associated with downsizing amongst survivor employees. Hence this undermines their commitment to the organization and builds deprivation in trusting management and seriously handicapping organizational performance (Cummins & Santomero, 1999). If terminated employees are denied self-respect and admiration during the process of scaling down, this has the capacity to emotionally paralyze survivors who are likely to draw inferences about their worthiness to the organization through making reference to how victims of downsizing were treated, (Cascio, 1993; Chadwick et al, 1998) in (Cummins & Santomero, 1999).

## **2.4 Organizational Performance Prior to Downsizing**

Firms that are not operating in dire stress patently market themselves and are stable in their operations. The stability and viability of an organization operating in good shape can be conferred in a number of evident features. Filatotchev and Toms (2006), denote that these include the organization's capacity to deliver profound services to creditors duly, audacious pronouncements of salaries to stakeholders and be able to meet their end of the bargain as vowed. The same went on to mention that such organizations have good credit rating, good business diversification and expansion through projects, maintain an undisputed clean safety record, stay influential and competitive in its business environment, maintains a good customer base to mention a few. According to (Mutanda, 2014; Rusvingo, 2014), organizations operating in good shape become the centre of attraction for most employment seekers and they are able to recruit the best manpower on the market due to attractive salaries and other reimbursements that come with employment and also their concern for employee wellbeing.

## **2.5 Organizational Performance Post Downsizing**

The period after downsizing is characterized by a number of flaws in terms of performance for most corporations. Filatotchev and Toms (2006) these include and are not limited to failure to declare dividends and to pay the same to stakeholders and to meet other employee welfare obligations. Downward inclination of revenues, heightened production costs, decrease in market values subscribe to being other signs of companies in dire stress to elevate their performance standards post downsizing Barker and Mone (1994), to include also unremitting cash-flow tight stance. Changes in the company's management structure, personnel mismanagement, employee disengagement, famine employee motivation and meagre cooperate resuscitation donate to poor performance in organizations (Dawson, 1994). Virtually employees are psychologically affected by a series of such occurrences and inadvertently afford the failure of the organization.

## **2.6 Psychological Dynamics associated with Organizational Downsizing**

This section discusses the following three psychological dynamics associated with organizational downsizing with forwarded perceptions from a psychological standpoint.

### **2.6.1 Psychological Aspects of Downsizing**

Psychology has forwarded attempts to understand the effects which are associated with downsizing organizational operations. Employers and employees have different perceptions on downsizing as a measure to address financial challenges in organizations. According to Gribble and Miller (2009), these perceptions are drawn from a humanistic point of view, which is believed to be the bedrock of social support and all losses of routine stumbled upon. Gribble and Miller (2009), mention that through the humanistic approach, psychology has provided an understanding of most industrial outplacement services, downsizing included and seeks to reflect on the reactions of the affected parties to the situation, in this research centering mostly on survivor employees (implementers who remain with the organization and other employees) focusing on the self, notions about how individuals value others and drawing valuations affirmatively.

### **2.6.2 Perceived Justice.**

In the course of a downsizing process in a company or a government organization, employees react differently to any change strategy employed depending on how the scheme has been instigated. The issue of perceived justice is informed by the theory of Organizational Justice by (Greenberg, 1987). The theory as confirmed by Williams et al. (2014) assesses perceptions of justice employed by organizations towards both the victims and survivors of downsizing. Leung and Chang (1999) notes, survivors' reaction towards the enactment of downsizing operations is assorted with diverse perceptions of how the program has been executed. If employees are allowed to air their assertions in the process of decision making, they tend to perceive matters differently. Leung and Chang (1999) pointed out, this is most certain if they observe that victims of the downsizing process are unethically served. Maybe to aid with an illustration, if former employees are escorted out of the premises of the organization with security guards or hired local state police, this poses a prospective to advance feelings of discomfort to the survivor employees (Cummins & Santomero, 1999).

Three types of organizational justice have been identified in literature. Such are the perceptions of the aftermath of the downsizing process about decisions linked to distributive justice Homans (1961) as cited in (Campbell & Finch, 2004). These perceptions arise from how the resources

have been allocated to victims of such events in organizations Williams et al. (2014) and the resulting consequences to follow. Mentioned also is procedural justice which focuses on the procedures active in the process which were used to arrive at verdicts to scale down operations (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 2001). These are survivors' perceptions with regards to the enactment of downsizing to whether or not justice has prevailed in the process (Williams et al., 2014). Williams et al. (2014) ratifies that positive regards towards procedural justice has the capacity to escalate levels of trust between management and survivor employees in the organization. The interpersonal relationship during the execution of the downsizing process has been said to influence interactional justice (Chipunza & Berry, 2010). The quality of the relationship that individuals receive from the management produces feeling of justice or the vice versa. According to Chipunza and Berry (2010) as cited in Williams et al. (2014) perceptions of fairness are derived from the use of empathetic communication between management and the affected parties (survivors and victims) and this fortifies the interpersonal relationship between management and its employees.

### **2.6.3 Job Security.**

Employees who remain with the organization after downsizing are faced with substantial complications. According to Khan (2005) as cited in Raza and Nawaz (2011), due to job insecurity and fear of the unknown, survivors are not engaged to their full potential and this exhibits low levels of performance. Displayed perceptions of being victims of future downsizings evokes high levels of stress amongst survivor employees which can lead to depression and reduced motivation Brockner et al. (1987) as alluded in (Leung & Chang, 1999). Mapira et al. (2014) deduce that downsizing has more negative than positive reimbursements to job satisfaction amongst survivor employees. They forwarded that negative perceptions and increased levels of absenteeism and job security threatens employee commitment to the organization. The increase in job insecurity is mentioned in Taylor (2001) as a worrying factor amongst employees as it threatens the stability of their future employment. Employees are demotivated if confidence is mislaid to the organization.

Taylor (2001) rants that survivors are concerned about the security of their employment and future promotional advancements and if they perceive that job security is no longer guaranteed,

they are most likely to be disengaged in their newly defined jobs and the environment. But if they perceive that the organization offers high levels of job security Salanova and Kirmanen (2010), there is an increase in motivation. Ndlovu and Parumasur (2005) construed that most survivor employees are struck with the question if management is to be trusted again after the transformation in guaranteeing the safety of their employment, because they are not sure whether to do their old defined job or something new has been scheduled for them (Shim, 2010). This depicts the declining of trust levels and the increase of job insecurity which in turn affects the industrial relations climate in the organization. Several studies have avowed that it has become apparent that this job insecure phase in which termination of employment is projected shares the most traumatic feelings of whole process of unemployment (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995).

Job insecurity threatens the traditional contract of job securing in the climate of change (Chipunza & Berry, 2010). Employees parade hard work and loyalty to the organization in return with high expectations for the organization to guarantee job security, but in most instances after transformation, survivors are forced to revise their mutual obligations (Chipunza & Berry, 2010). Taylor (2001) aids that the mutual agreement or the psychological contract defines offerings by the employee to the organization in exchange for something of value from the later such as job security. Taylor (2001) mentions that the give-and-take situation of reciprocal obligations is informed by the individuals' attitude which are based on loyalty and commitment to produce for the organization.

#### **2.6.4 Job Stressors.**

The period of economic recession is multifaceted with pervasiveness of downsizing to abet business operations from sinking and also the level of unemployment is generally high (Singh, 2010). He mentioned that management should understand the side effects of downsizing before engaging it and how it inversely affects the survivors. This is because the emotions that will surface after organizational downsizing can be negative and therefore detrimental to the health of the organization Appelbaum and Donia (2000) as stated in (Singh, 2010). Emotions referred herein are job stressors which include role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict (Leung & Chang, 1999). Organizations are mostly affected with role overload, as it affords stress to

employees (El Shikieri & Musa, 2012). Leung and Chang (1999) asserts that role overload lays as a bedrock for organizational conflict due to the degree of incompatibility.

Role overload as stated by Leung and Chang (1999), refers to the degree to which several tasks surpass the volumes of time and resources billed to achieve them. As forwarded by El Shikieri and Musa (2012), workplace interactions and other incessant job demands result in overwhelming challenges on employees' psychological wellbeing. Upshots in role overload in organizational downsizing Olukayode (2013), results in sophisticated prospects of psychosomatic attitudinal problems for the workforce and often results in emotional exhaustion, due to increased amounts of work (Mapira et al., 2014; Wahab, 2012; Wendt, 2008).

Consistent therefore with developments in organizations, literature confirms that the psychological effects also inexistence include role conflict and role ambiguity (Wendt, 2008). Ndlovu and Parumasur (2005) abets to the above, downsizing is twined to a number of stressors to mention role ambiguity. Role stability is henceforth not achievable during the course of downsizing and this increases role ambiguity, which according to El Shikieri and Musa (2012), discusses feelings of uncertainty on the part of employees about the ultimate necessities of their jobs and the behaviors entitled to them. Role ambiguity can be a result of deficiencies in the communication process, thus due to deficient information obtainable (El Shikieri & Musa, 2012). This reduces the extent to which personnel has capacity and control over their own jobs Rahim(1996), in (Leung & Chang, 1999).

Research has it that the psychological effects of role ambiguity and role conflict are comparable in organizations. When the demands of a task exceed the individual's potential an imbalance is struck and the result is role conflict (El Shikieri & Musa, 2012). According to Mahfuz(2011), role conflict occurs when there are conflicting demands at work on decision making and work control and task organization and usually accompanied by role ambiguity which is associated with low job involvement and low job satisfaction with tensions on achieving productivity and organizational efficiency Conley and Woosley(2000) in (El Shikieri & Musa, 2012).

## **2.7 Employee Coping Strategies in a Downsizing Context**

Since the occurrence of downsizing is becoming a trend in organizations nowadays, it is obligatory for retained employees to originate ideas of survival in this atmosphere. Employees have to make sense of such deplorable proceedings. Sense making process succors employees to redefine their position in the organization and alternatively it can be used to curb job insecurity amongst such an assembly (De Vries, 2006). Since individuals employ diverse surviving procedures in the same environment, they adapt varyingly to the prevailing consequences hence it is vital for management to understand their position to stimulate their work attitude and intensify organizational productivity to eternity. According to Chipunza and Berry (2009), organizations that flout business offshoots by not enhancing functional performance measures through engaging the retained manpower, become nonviable in a competitive business environment. So organizations should assist personnel to surge performance and make the business environment less psychologically perilous and more conducive to work.

According to De Vries (2006), the process of sense making is the preliminary stage where survivors have to assess their work environment and derive measures to adjust and adapt to the prevailing atmosphere. Weick (1995) opines that downsizing is a stressor that calls for delicate attention and sense making skills and attitude that involve uncertainty and ambiguity trigger sustained attention in the sense making process. Starbuck and Milliken (1988) cited in De Vries (2006), view downsizing as a violation of employees' perceptual framework and framework of stability amongst the same. Downsizing has produced a heightened range of negative effects on survivors from psychological, behavioral and physical ailments. Workplace attitude and job satisfaction aspects are some crucial human variables impacted by downsizing and have the potential to deter performance if employees do not make sense of and attended to these infirmities. Literature suggests that the process of sense making has categories which range from, individual, contextual and/or job related factors (De Vries, 2006). The author mentions that individual factors consists of commitment to the organization as a negatively correlated antecedent and other demographic aspects to mention age and home environment.

Factors like perceived justice and individuals' perceptions of the organizational support are regarded as contextual in nature. Job related artifacts include, job content and workload amongst

survivor employees. The results of the sense making process are a vital tool for the survival of both parties (the organization and the employee). The organization's future success lies in the performance of the retained employees. So for an organization to tail success, there is need to consider perceptions of the retained employees about the organization's status quo. Thus how well they cope with the downsizing process, how they adapt to the uncertainty and new organizational structure and culture (De Vries, 2006). Pulakos et al. (2000) gave a useful dimension which is applicable in the downsizing context on how retained employees should cope with the existent work situation. The same opined that employees should be able to be productive in spite of the atmosphere around them. They should deal with the uncertainty and unpredictable work situation (Pulakos et al., 2000). Key aspects that underlie beneath this feature include how survivors assess the situation and how they adjust to its parameters/demands and the extent to which they take reasonable action.

On an individual point of view, the individual's wellbeing is affected and due to the factors that influence the process of sense making, coping strategies are never uniform amongst the affected Armstrong and Stassen(2006) alluded to in De Vries(2006). Literature has reviewed three coping strategies that assist survivors in handling the situation. In most instances, employees have been found to emotionally withdraw from the proceedings in the work environment and through cognitive reevaluations become avoidant in nature. Alternatively they become proactive and entrust themselves with tenor (De Vries, 2006). Another strategy of consideration is symptom management which consists of strategies that are merely the symptoms of job stress. But downsizing is a major stressor that requires action instead of dealing with symptoms, so focusing on the escape and control oriented coping strategies is pertinent. Mapira et al. (2014) posits that it is mandatory for survivor employees to be more flexible and innovative to improve on efficiency.

## **2.8 Theoretical Framework**

The study is guided by Alicia Leung and Ludwig Chang Model of Downsizing and Social Exchange Perspective of Downsizing which will further be discussed in detail below.

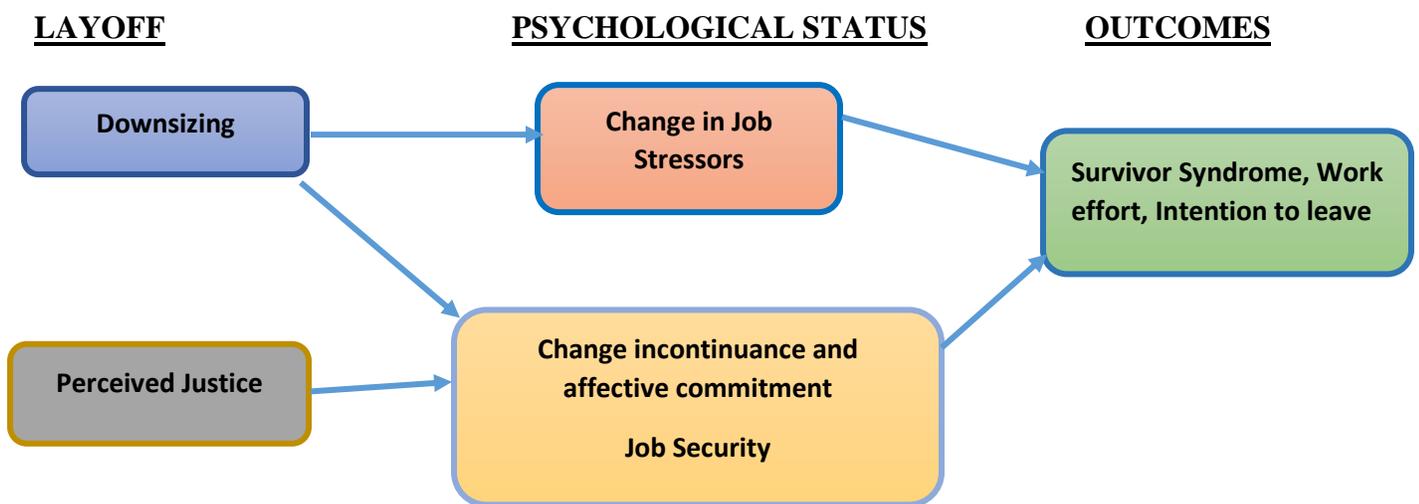
### **2.8.1 Alicia Leung and Ludwig Chang Model of Downsizing**

Results from erstwhile studies have documented the existence of a complex affiliation between downsizing and psychological effects amongst retained employees. The concept of downsizing parades itself as being suicidal rather than a panacea to corporate challenges. The precarious nature of employment in Zimbabwe has laid as a bedrock for multiple strategies by employers facing operational challenges to try to revive and strive in the game, but such approaches have subjected employees to job insecurity, dismal performance and organizational commitment shrinkage.

The Downsizing Model by Leung and Chang (1999), reflects an insight into the psychological effects of the downsizing process posed on individuals' well-being and commitment. The model stipulates that human attributes like trust, commitment, changes in job stressors, perceptions of job security and perceived justice Leung and Chang (1999), are adversely affected by downsizing amongst survivor employees. McKena(2000) coincide with Mapira et al. (2014) that employees basically perceive downsizing as a traumatic event with durable loss in value of coworkers and more so, develop perceptions of uncertainty and ambiguity. They usually view downsizing as a cradle for projected harm because of fear of job loss in future (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). Hence forth a decrease in the affective commitment to the organization is noticeable. Mapira et al. (2014) propounded that affective commitment changes the moment perceived intrinsic quality of job content changes, which indicates the relationship between the two variables. As Leung and Chang (1999) notes, commitment as an attribute is commonly linked with turnover. Die-in-the-wool employees have less intention to leave the organization unlike those who are less devoted to the organization.

The model explicates continuance commitment as a realization of the connection between the job holder and the job which involve feelings of psychological concern (Leung & Chang, 1999). With this to say, employee engagement is twined to the perceived benefits of being with the organization after downscaling operations and it is because of these benefits and fear of financial loss and flooding of the labour market outside the organization that continuance commitment is grounded Williams and Hazer(1985) in (Leung & Chang, 1999). Economic recessions impact the psychological contract; the moment employees decode that the organization is failing to meet its

end of the bargain Newell and Dopson(1996) in Leung and Chang(1999), it is highly probable that they might shift their commitment from affective to continuance commitment with consequences for their emotional wellbeing as well as psychologically withdrawing from the organization. When organizations fail to provide job security and assurance to its manpower, a breakdown in the psychological contract manifests and employees struggle to survive with the hope to remain in employment (Noer, 1993). The research has employed model of downsizing developed to show the psychological impact of the downsizing on survivor employees. An illustration of the Leung and Chang (1999) model is shown in Fig. 1 below.



*Fig. 2.1(Leung & Chang, 1999) model of Downsizing*

### 2.8.2 Social Exchange Perspective.

The research also employs the Social Exchange Perspective to reflect on the psychological impacts of organizational downsizing. The economic recessions like downsizing temper with the psychological contract that exists between the employer and the employee. This relationship is enhanced by the Social Exchange Theory Blau (1964) and the norm of Reciprocity Gouldner (1960), which stipulates the motives behind employee behaviors and attitudes at the workplace. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) set that the social exchange theory denotes interfaces that engender obligations that provide self-management and advances employee performance at work. Employees express utmost loyalty to the organization and display upright organizational citizenship behaviors when they perceive positive regard in the employment relationship Settoon et al. (1996), and it is through beneficial actions by the employer towards the employee that yield

high-quality non-contractual exchange in this relationship and the vice-versa. The theory explicates the benefits of the exchange to give value and reduce costs to the employers and the employees concurrently Zafirovski (2005), as employees crack to curtail the costs associated with the relationship.

The theory lends a quasi-economic analysis of the noneconomic social situations as they are conveyed (Emerson, 1976). During a downsizing, employees are most likely to deduce feelings which are incongruent to enhancing organizational citizenship behavior hence this indicates the breaking of the non-contractual agreements and a breach to the social exchange view (Emerson, 1976). Social exchange provides that the employment relationship is not strictly governed by contractual obligations only, but through an exchange of resources to include those which are social in nature. Variables to include trust, loyalty and mutual commitment to the organization as basic tenets of the exchange Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), are adversely affected by downsizing corporates.

## **2.9 Knowledge Gap.**

Preceding literature in the research field has unearthed downsizing dwelling much on the economic effects of the subject on survivor employees and on measures to avoid downsizing. The study seeks to weigh the psychological downturns which emanate as a result of the downsizing exercise. Little information has been provided on the emotional well-being of survivor employees, hence there is need to explore the gap and aid information to both private and public sectors to ensure productivity through holistically engaging the human capital. Many studies of downsizing are Eurocentric which leaves a gap to be explored in the Zimbabwean context, hence this research centers to bridge the knowledge gap on downsizing in the Ferrochrome Industry in the Zimbabwean context.

## **2.10 Chapter Summary**

The section overhead has reviewed literature paying attention to downsizing, corporate ailments, psychological variables associated with organizational downsizing and resolutions to the same. The research has deliberated on what other academics have documented about the research in progress. The chapter has also focused on how survivors make sense of the prevailing situations

during downsizing and how they cope. The section further conferred the conceptual frameworks that guide the study and the literature gap to be bridged. The chapter concludes with a summary and the succeeding chapter focuses on Research Methodology.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The methodology of the research covers pertinent issues of concern like the research approach, research design, target population, research sample and sampling techniques. Other paramount aspects focused on include research instruments and data collection techniques which will be used by the researcher, these referring to methods which analyze how data is going to be gathered and analyzed. The methodology also covers the setting where the research is taking place which is Zimasco Kwekwe Division and describes the sample population, which refer to individuals who are engulfed by the study and in the study these are Zimasco employees. The area also covers the ethical considerations of the study screening how issues of consent are going to be addressed.

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

The research employed a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach is valid in this research because it measures specific concepts which are psychological variables associated with the downsizing process. According to Aspers(2009), the emphasis of this approach is based on the stated experiences of the subjects being examined and values they attach to themselves, people around them and the environment that surrounds them. Researchers using this approach at times make use of subjects' direct quotations as they are said to be revealing. According to Kothari (2004), a qualitative research approach focuses on subjective assessment of research subjects' attitudes, thoughts and behavior. The qualitative methodology has been viewed by other researchers as inculcating various technics because it is both interpretive and naturalistic Denzin and Lincoln (1994), hence it is viable in capturing reality as observed and experienced by participants. Creswell (2007) alludes to the above notion and mentions that the qualitative approach inquires knowledge through constructivists' viewpoints henceforth deriving multiple meanings of individuals' experiences.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) assert that the qualitative approach lays focus on natural occurrences and in a natural environment drawing interests in perspectives and meanings and an

understanding of the customary systems in practice as is the interest of this research. The qualitative approach gained momentum in the field of psychology after heightened dissatisfaction with the quantitative approach in the mid-1980s, Aspers(2009), this is due to the notion that some variables are statistically accurate and some are not. The quantitative approach therefore has yielded results which are factual but humanly insignificant and since the research focuses on the experiences of the subjects affected by downsizing, a qualitative approach would be most appropriate paradigm. The qualitative approach is advantageous in that it provides a descriptive report on how individuals draw perceptions, develop attitudes and beliefs and how they draw meanings and interpretations projected by the surrounding occurrences and how they eventually consolidate all these to make sense of the situations as they project connections between attitudes and behaviors, thus the paradigm is imperative when defining feelings and attitudes. According to Aba-Afari (2011) a qualitative methodology examines events as they occur which makes it less manipulative and inconspicuous with information being explored with open discussions rather than testing theoretical hypotheses.

The researcher chose the approach because it draws inferences from the real life setting of the constraints being examined, which are the employees at Zimasco Kwekwe Division, hence making it more applicable in this research. The approach is fitting in this research because it also reveals the experiences of Zimasco Pvt Ltd as an organization through its employees' experiences. The approach has paid attention on the respondents' interpretations of subjective meanings, documentations (thus, texts and descriptors) and languages that reveal the respondents' experiences during and post implementation of downsizing at Zimasco Kwekwe Division. The qualitative research approach herein employed the use of interviews and other data gathering technicalities within the Zimasco working environment in order to generate a natural understanding of research subjects' perceptions and attitudes in a downsized corporate.

### **3.3 Research Design**

A research design is a comprehensive sequence adopted by the researcher that indicates how information about an investigation is going to be addressed and it usually guides the researcher during the study. According to Kothari (2004), a research design is an abstract within which the research is conducted and constitutes an outline of data collection, measurement and

analysis technics. According to Saunders and Thornhill (2000), it is a slant which the study pursues in collecting and analyzing research information. Since the study employs a descriptive qualitative research plan that abets by visually reflecting the situation and experiences by respondents at ground level, the study employs a case study design. The study employs the methodological triangulation technic which according to Denzin(1978) comprises the use of several methods to gather information for the research, which include the use of interviews, questionnaires and documents. This is so to broaden the data and consume results which remain less predisposed.

### **3.3.1 Case Study Design**

A case study has been defined by Yin(1994) as a practical inquiry aimed at investigating a contemporary phenomenon in its physical environment. The case study as a research strategy draws information from “...multiple sources of evidence...” (Yin, 1994:13). In other words this method is a combination of different methods and approaches which aid the process to data collection and analysis (Yin, 1994). Mitchell (1983) in Rhee (2004:72) defined a case study as a “detailed examination of an event which exhibits the operation of some identified general theoretical principles...” There are several types of case studies, which according to (Yin, 1994) may include exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Yin (1994) explained that if a study mainly centers on “what” questions, then it calls for exploratory study. He further expanded that if a research uses how or why questions it is explanatory in nature and a descriptive focuses on an accurate description of the question in context.

The study henceforth employs an exploratory case study in that downsizing has been noticed as a measure to turnaround organizations and business entities but it also levels astonishing psychological effects on the employees which by the end of the day prohibit may not lead to anticipated results due to unaspiring human shortfalls caused by the strategy used, which has led to this research being conducted.

The essence of this study is to assess the psychological effects which have resulted from downsizing by Zimasco (Pvt) Ltd at its Kwekwe Division. It therefore levels assumptions that the outcomes to be presented would abet other researchers and organizations in understanding the behaviors and attitudes displayed by employees which come as a result of turnaround

strategies they use. Since the research deals with subjective variables which are idiosyncratic in nature, it is prone to bias Yin(2003) henceforth subjecting its findings to validation by other researchers to improve its validity.

### 3.4 Target Population

According to Saunders and Thornhill (2000), participants who present significant knowledge to the study can be called a study population. The target population of this research was drawn from the labour complement at Zimasco Kwekwe Division after the implementation of downsizing operations. The labour complement was composed of the implementers of the retrenchment process (downsizing) and the survivors of the same which are the main targets of the study in progress. The Zimasco Kwekwe Division is the Smelter Division which had a compliment of 1056 employees (both managerial and non-managerial) who remained in employment after downsizing as at 30 June 2015. The population of the study is illustrated in a table below.

**Table 3.1: Table showing the target population of the study**

Division	Managerial employees	Non-Managerial employees	Total Complement
Zimasco Kwekwe	111	945	1056

### 3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

According to Kothari (2004), a sample refers to a selected number of respondents for the study. The (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2001) defines a sample as a portion of population, serving as a basis for estimates of the attributes of the whole population. Copper and Schindler (2003) refer to sampling as technique which gives some elements of the target population as representatives of the whole population. The sample for the study will be drawn from the universal target population of the study which is Zimasco Kwekwe Division.

#### 3.5.1 Sample Size

The (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2001) defines a sample as a portion of a population, serving as a basis for estimates of the attributes of the whole population. According to Kothari (2004) a

sample size basically refer to a number of items that are selected from the universal set. He opines that the sample size should be optimum, thus it is neither too large nor too small. To determine the sample size, Kothari (2004) asserts that there is need to consider the size of the population as this limits the sample size. Given the condition that the researcher used interviews to collect data, it would have been demanding and unmanageable to draw a large population sample. So the researcher interviewed 53 participants as the sample size of the population of 1056 survivor employees. 6 participants were drawn from the managerial stratum which had a population of 111 employees and 47 were drawn from the non-managerial stratum which had a population of 945 employees. The sample on both strata highly depended on the saturation of information, thus this was achieved after interviewing 53 employees in total when no new information was collected.

**Table 3.2: Showing Sample Size used by the Researcher. .**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Managerial Stratum</b>	<b>Non-Managerial Stratum</b>	<b>Total Complement</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
<b>Zimasco</b>	111	945	1056	53
<b>Kwekwe</b>				

### 3.5.2 Sampling Technique

The study has employed a stratified random sampling technique. According to Kothari (2004) stratified sampling is applied with an aim to obtain a representative sample. It also assists in achieving an identical set. The population under stratified random sampling technique is divided into sub-populations which according to Kothari (2004), are called ‘strata’ which are thought to evoke certain changes on the data to be gathered. Getting information separately from each stratum through simple random selection abets the study by giving precise estimates for each stratum since the bands are more consistent than the total population. The research subjects were grouped into managerial employees and non-managerial employees in order to obtained findings which constantly represent the total population of the survivor employees at Zimasco (Pvt) Ltd. The cognizance behind drawing these stratum was primarily due to the eagerness of making an equal representation since the two groups have had different experiences, hence these inferences

cannot be possibly overlooked into validating the findings. The table below indicates the sample strata by employee category.

**Table 3.3: Sample Size by employee category.**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Managerial Population</b>	<b>Managerial Sample Size</b>	<b>Non-Managerial Population</b>	<b>Non-Managerial Sample Size</b>
<b>Zimasco</b>	111	6	945	47
<b>Kwekwe</b>				

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

According to Pierce (2009), a research instrument refer to a review or study aimed at rationalizing research variables, information of interest or research characteristics. Research instruments are the tools which are used to gather information deemed appropriate to the succession of the study. Kothari (2004), asserts that the researcher should bear in mind that there are two forms of data which can be obtained, these are primary and secondary data. The research used both types of data sources.

#### **3.6.1 Primary Data**

Primary data primarily refers to data gathered originally from the character, hence being new and collected for the first time (Kothari, 2004). This type of data is collected from respondents in their natural setting which reckons the originality of the information. There are several methods of collecting primary data which have been documented Kothari (2004) but the research has been restricted to interview methods and questionnaires.

##### **3.6.1.1 Interviews**

Interviews are conversations specifically designed to obtain relevant information. The study used semi-structured interviews to obtain information as experienced by the respondents. Interviews require an interviewer to possess good interpersonal skills for the respondents to build trust and confidants, this reduces response bias from the participants. In an interview, participants are

allowed to air their views on issues that concern their lives (Punch, 1998). According to Kothari (2004), semi-structured interviews require a flexible approach to questioning and are time efficient. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used in this research and abetted the researcher in creating rapport between the participants and the researcher and this contributed to the creation of reciprocity and openness amongst the same Punch(1998), which created a relationship where information rather than data was now shared between the researcher and the respondents. The interviews targeted employees who survived downsizing as they have been affected this terrible turn of events.

### **3.6.2 Secondary Data**

Secondary data refers to the information that already exists which maybe in the form of journals, publications and some form of documents or internal records (Collins & Hussey, 2014). The researcher used data from Zimasco Departmental Liaison meeting minutes and works council meetings minutes wrapping up the period January 2009 to June 2015 after the implementation of a multiple downsizing exercises.

#### **3.6.1.2 Documents**

According to Mogalakwe (2006), documentary sources refer to sources of information containing information believed important in a research. The study used primary documents, which contain information produced by people who encountered the researched phenomena. Documentary sources in this research were used to complement information gathered from interviews. The research used data from Works Council Meetings Minutes and Liaison Meetings for the period January 2009 to June 2015 and this provided the researcher with information unfolding how Zimasco has been performing before the implementation of downsizing.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

Burns (1997) defines data collection as a systematic mode used by researchers to gather information which is significant to the research questions. The researcher was first given the ethical approval form by the Department of Psychology at Midlands State University prior to conducting the research. The researcher then sought certification to carry out study investigations and was granted the consent by the Human Resources Manager, Zimasco Kwekwe Division.

After explaining the purpose of the research, participants agreed to participate eagerly with knowledge that their views remain anonymous to their superiors. The researcher individually interviewed the participants and those who opted to scribble down were given the research instrument with the researcher in the presence and then collected for evaluation.

### **3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis**

Data presentation or interpretation is the process of categorizing and sorting collected information from respondents and attaching meaning to the same (Stake, 2010). Kothari (2004: 122) defines data analysis as the “...*computation of certain measures along with searching for patterns of relationship that exists among data-groups.*” The researcher categorised both primary and secondary data in a thematic manner so to fuse the research findings. The research uses a thematic approach to analyze data. The method is used to analyze raw data drawn from the interviews conducted. The thematic approach analyzes data through segmenting and categorizing data in themes which makes it easier to draw results. Punch (1998) asserts that this method of analyzing qualitative data is most commended when dealing with emotional experiences encountered by the respondents. This is most applicable in the case of Zimasco’s situation through data submitted by respondents.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

De Mott (2001) posits that Ethics refer to the rules of behavior with resilience in beliefs about how things should be. The advent of the above notion explains ethics as ranging from a set of moral principles or values to the principles, norms, and standards of conduct governing an individual or group as purported by (Trevino & Nelson, 2007). The researcher must be aware of their ethical grounds so as not infringe the participants or organizations’ operations, in other words doing no harm the innocent beings and respondents.

#### **3.9.1 Confidentiality**

A participant’s right to both privacy and confidentiality must be protected. Respect for participants’ rights and dignity, privacy and confidentiality should be well-maintained. It is through this belief that ethical reasoning stems from, thus the information from the participants will not be disclosed to anyone without the participant’s consent and in the event that there is

need to let the information known for specific binding explanations, the researcher will seek the permission from the participants to reveal the information.

### **3.9.2 Informed Consent**

The research participants were given detailed information about the research and were given forms to fill in as proof that they were not forced into participating. The clarifications thereto were to ensure the establishment of rapport was realized to facilitate respondents' relaxation.

### **3.9.3 Right to Withdrawal**

Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from participating in the research and that their information will be destroyed in their presence

### **3.9.4 Debriefing**

Participants were kept in date with all information pertaining the study

### **3.9.5 Protection from Harm**

The research is going to be conducted in a work environment and there is need to protect the employees from organizational politics by ensuring that participants remain anonymous and the information they disclosed remain confidential.

## **3.10 Chapter Summary**

The chapter covered the research methodology which was used in the study, covering mainly the research approach and design. The research employs a qualitative research approach and a case study as a research design. The research used interviews and questionnaires to collect data and used Zimasco Kwekwe Division as the study population. The chapter also covered the sample and sampling technique which is the stratified random sampling technique. The chapter also covered research ethical considerations to ensure that the research revolves within the legal fraternity of the organization.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents, synthesizes and poses discussions of the research findings on the psychological dynamics associated with downsizing operations amongst survivor employees at Zimasco Kwekwe Division. The chapter comprises of data gathered from both documented sources, to mention Zimasco's Departmental Liaison meetings minutes and Works' Council meetings minutes covering the period 2015 through to 2009. The findings presented herein cover the biographical information about the research participants, their perceptions of Zimasco's performance trends before and after the implementation of downsizing during the period 2009 to 2015. The chapter then presents data obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher. The findings are presented in themes and sub-themes as they emerged from the research. The chapter follows ethical principles as presented in chapter three on data collection and all the research participants were aware of their right to withdraw from participating. None of the participants withdrew from participating.

#### **4.2 Findings from Documentary Sources**

In the following section, the research primarily presents data gathered from documented sources to mention Zimasco departmental liaison meetings minutes and work's council meetings minutes to present on the status of the organization before and after downsizing in terms of performance.

##### **4.2.1 Organizational Performance**

Data collected from Departmental Liaison meetings minutes held before the implementation of downsizing pointed out that Zimasco performed well before the implementation of downsizing. All briefings held indicate that the implementation of special measures to avoid downsizing have reduced the wage bill of the organization from \$15, 956,745.51 in 2009 to \$7,138,599.73 in 2010 and part of 2011 with the justification that 50% of the total complement was on unpaid rotational leaves thus slashing down costs on salaries and maximizing on production (Zimasco Wage Bill Reports, 2009-2015). In the years 2012 and 2013, employees were positioned back on their

normal salary grades thus on full pay as operations were believed to be stabilizing since the organization's annual cost of operations hung at \$ 6, 424,743.00 which designates a major swing from the period beforehand. In the Work's council meetings minutes held post the implementation of downsizing, wage bill of the company amplified in the years 2014 and 2015. The costs of operating to include production costs, general expenses, transportation costs, labour costs, maintenance costs, raw materials costs, power costs and any other costs associated with operations and the wage bill also increased even when the complement had been reduced in 2014 and forward.

The years 2014 and 2015 recorded the highest wage costs which was at \$ 18,337,182.72. An accumulation in costs in this period is not warranted seeing that the complement had been reduced through downsizing and there was no salary increment for the same period and 60% of the survivor employees had been placed on 50% salary for seven calendar months. However, since a major strategy to boost performance had been engaged, the trends must confirm a major shrinkage in terms of bills and since other employees were on half salary for the period. It then specifies that employees were now working overtime to reimburse the mislaid revenue. It would be supreme to have a descending tendency on the bill when changes have been finalized effectively but the aftermath does not match projected returns. This therefore leveled different perceptions amongst survivor employees, questioning the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by their Executive. Many then viewed the policies as only instigated to terminate employees willy-nilly and inconsiderate of human worthiness.

#### **4.3 Characteristics of the Participants**

The information presented below covers the background information of the fifty-three (53) employees who represented the total complement of Zimasco in the interviews carried out by the researcher. The information presents gender profiles, age and education level, level of employment grade and length of service with the organization. The information presented herein affords a coverage of all groups and this is due to the notion that differences between individuals influence their attitudes, behaviours and their cognition levels at the workplace hence there is need to proffer representation so as to blend and authenticate the research findings.

### **4.3.1 Gender Profiles of the Participants**

Information on gender profile at Zimasco Kwekwe Division indicates that there are fewer females than males as their representation was 10 (18, 86%) of total participants against 43 (81, 13%) of their male counterparts. This is an indication that most of the ideas and perceptions hovering in the organization are drawn from a patriarchal mainstream. The smaller representation of women is mainly attributed to the nature of the organization which is largely labor-intensive and by nature most women may not opt to work within such an environment and the fewer that were interviewed held office positions suggesting also that women cannot do much of manual work as likened to men. This also reflect on the mainstream setup of the society and their perceptions of women as weaker than males to hold positions that require intensive strength.

### **4.3.2 Age Profile of the Participants**

All working age groups were covered in the research and the participants were between the age of 26 and 55. This levels a clear representation of information from different age groups' understanding of such occurrences as the one in context and this abets the study in that it points out their levels of trust, openness and reciprocity as this affects their stability within the organization. Again a coverage of all age groups aids the study with broadened ideas which are largely driven by sharing similar generation insights ending up influencing their level of thinking. So synthesizing the outcomes from all grounds made results of this research more dependable.

### **4.3.3 Level of Education of the Participants**

9 (16.98%) of the participants interviewed held a degree and all were in the managerial strata. This is an indication that Zimasco employs degreed manpower for its managerial positions. About 17 (32.07%) participants had their education up to diploma level and they hold supervisory and technical position in the organization. Furthermore, about 27 (50.94%) of them had their education up to secondary level and no participant had a qualification below this level, signifying that ideas aired herein were even, given their level of qualification in a Zimbabwean

setting. This also validates the information given, considering the fact that all participants are learned up to a certain level which aids their level of reasoning.

#### 4.3.4 Length of Service and Employment Level of Participants

The interviews covered both managerial and non-managerial participants in terms of level of employment and length of service. The average period of the participants in the positions they held was above 10 years for both managerial and non-managerial participants. The length of service coupled together with the level of employment gives an in-depth understanding of the participants' knowledge of the variables that affect them in their positions and their level of decision making in the organization.

#### 4.4 Theme 1: Psychological Effects of Downsizing

Survivor employees reported psychological impacts as resulting from the downsizing they experienced in their organization. Information acquired herein revealed that there are several forms of psychological impacts that survivor employees suffer from after a downsizing. The following section presents and analyzes findings from the research pertaining the psychological effects associated with downsizing on survivor employees which emerged after conducting interviews. These include perceived justice, job security issues and job stressors. Identified sub-themes and their definitions obtained from the interviews conducted on the psychological dynamics of downsizing on survivor employees at Zimasco Kwekwe Division are illustrated in the table below.

**Table 4.4.1 Identified sub-themes and their definitions as obtained from the interviews conducted.**

Sub-Themes	Definition
<b>Perceived Justice</b>	Observations of fairness or unfairness of the process of downsizing in terms of resource allocation and treatment of victims of downsizing as affecting the survivor employees on how the organization view their worthiness.

<b>Job Security</b>	Fear of the unknown and displayed perceptions of being future victims of downsizing as threatening stability of future employment.
<b>Job Stressors</b>	Prospects of psychological problems afforded by downsizing amongst survivor employees as resulting from amount of work being dealt with.

The researcher will discuss each of these sub-themes above in the order in which they are presented in the table above. Data from the conducted semi-structured interviews will provide prerequisite information about the psychological dynamics of survivor employees post an implementation of downsizing. All data was then analyzed in terms of the above themes and sub-themes that emerged thereof from the interviews and also based on the literature that exists about these psychological variables of downsizing.

#### **4.4.1 Perceived Justice**

Survivor employees reported that they observed from the process of downsizing, different forms of perceived justice. The category involves forms of perceived justice which present and analyze data obtained from interviews on how the survivor employees observed the whole process of downsizing in terms of parity from drawing board to implementation and how their former core workers were treated during this whole process

##### **4.4.1.1 Distributive Justice**

52 (98.11%) participants who were interviewed reported that the victims of downsizing were not justly treated. They reported that the victims did not receive their packages as was stated during briefings and in the minutes discussed, and are yet to be paid after close to 9 months without their packages. They also mentioned that the same have been back at the workplace numerous times manifesting their frustrations and threatening to root chaos at the plant. The participants also indicated that this has since affected their behavior and attitudes at the workplace as they now fear that they will go through this traumatic process and have since urged the management to pay up dues and clear them off the rail of job security and rectify their way of doing things. They conversed that the process of downsizing should be firmly funded before engaged to avoid hiccups. For example participant 9 said:

*Zimasco has not paid all the terminal benefits and packages to the employees it dismissed despite them signing agreements within stipulated timeframes. What worries us most is that these people came here at the plant with violence to the extent that the police came to dismiss them and it affected our performance, it is depressing.*

Participant 43 mentioned:

*The victims were not paid their packages and what if we are walking the same path? Zimasco should consider the welfare of its employees because we all know that the economy is not healthy and you cannot live without getting paid outside there. They need to adequately fund their projects before engaging in such.*

#### **4.4.1.2 Procedural Justice**

About 28 (52.83%) participants reported that Zimasco did not engage the process of downsizing as it should have. They reported that they have not been totally prepared through-out the whole process. For instance, out of 28 participants, 13 indicated one of the reason as that they did not get full information on the whole process because they were on unpaid rotational leaves and when back at work, no one would address them what transpired during their absents. The participants indicated that there was no justification in the whole process as the reasons for instigating the same were not clearly followed and such a measure was not necessary as the top management needed to focus on market strategy formulation.

The strategy mostly aimed at low level employees leaving the top heavy and indicated that the strategy should be linked to transforming the organization and not just discard personnel. They were not fully briefed. They mentioned that the whole process lacked communication and transparency and this has since reduced their level of commitment and trust in their management.

For example participant 15 said:

*Zimasco should revisit the way it engages its strategies. I for one think that there is need to have a thin top first than focusing on low levels as it does not translate to realistic turnaround.*

Participant 51 stated:

*In all other issues that concern us as employees, we used to be briefed fully whether you are on shift or not, whether you are on leave or not but this time some of us who were on their rotational leaves did not get full information on this idea and it is most of the low level employees who were dismissed leaving the organization top heavy.*

#### **4.4.1.3 Interactional Justice**

About 50 (94.33%) participants reported that the atmosphere within Zimasco workplace was tense. They described the environment as not harmonious and not conducive for operations. They conveyed that relations are sour and they keep on getting strained by the day due to the industrial relations that keep on turning bad and also due to low morale amongst employees as matters seem not to be stabilizing. For example participant 21 stated:

*The quality of workplace relationships is worsening by the day due to industrial relations that keep on turning bad.*

Participant 36 said:

*Morale is low and relationships are strained.*

It is clear from the above data that the instigation of the process of downsizing at Zimasco was not justly as it brought about varied perceptions amongst survivor employees, questioning if justice triumphed in the entire process. The information from the interviews indicates that employees' work behaviors and attitudes were wrecked as they perceived that decisions being conceded throughout the process of downscaling, exceptionally distress them in the future. Their reaction from the above information is a clear indication that these employees were on the receiving end of all decisions that affected them as they were piloted by the executive and would only know of it during implementation. This also indicates that employees should be engaged in the decisions that involve their wellness within the organization. As many participants indicated, the strategies implemented should address the issues at hand not just being linked to numbers as it does not transform to the desired outcome. In order to maximize on production, management

should ensure that they create an environment that is employee advantageous so not to quash the quality of performance by employees.

#### **4.4.2 Job Security**

Survivor employees reported that they perceived from the process of downsizing as comprised of different forms of job security issues. The category involves observed job security artifacts were obtained from interviews.

##### **4.4.2.1 Lack of Trust in the Management**

53 (100%) participants reported that it is farfetched to entrust Zimasco management to guarantee their jobs after what transpired in their presents. They observed this as unrealistic and they felt insecure about their employment. The survivors' responses herein indicate that they had lost trust in management with the continuity of their employment. For example participant 6 said:

*I cannot trust management with my employment after all this situation, I am abused due to lack of opportunities elsewhere as the burden is now too high. But I feel management should have to engage its employees and probably counsel them to take away their fears.*

##### **4.4.2.2 Fear of the Unknown**

All participants reported that they are not certain of what is going to materialize in the near future. They reported that they feel cemented to a process which they perceived as abusive due to lack of opportunities elsewhere. For example participant 47 stated:

*There is no longer job security and that worries us because we are not in light of what will transpire in the near future and there is no longer employee growth. We are only engaged on the basis on having no other alternative because of the rate of no employment opportunities elsewhere. At least employees should receive better communication from the executive management and clear road-map of the progress achieved so far and up-coming initiatives just to keep employees on the loop.*

Trust in management in guaranteeing future employment is highly associated with hopefulness and considerate responses amongst survivor employees and reducing appalling reactions. This seemed lacking among Zimasco employees as presented in the data gathered and has since reduced their levels of affective commitment to the organization. Most of the participants indicated that they have since discounted information about their lives with the organization, they receive from the executives with a credence that it has manipulated. Most participants indicated that the rate of employment security has been worsened with perceived unemployment spells outside Zimasco and the flooding of the job market.

#### **4.4.3 Job Stressors**

This category incorporates data relating to the amount of work there is and the experiences of survivor employees. The workplace has presented an increase in the workload and has shifted work standards amongst Zimasco employees and the work pace has even become relentless. The category presents and analyzes data obtained from interviews on how the survivor employees suffered from the situation and conditions afterwards.

##### **4.4.3.1 Role Overload**

47 (88.67%) participants reported that they have experienced an increase in roles and in most instances the roles have been combined and some of the tasks they are carrying out are not stipulated in their role descriptions. They also reported that the work they are doing thereof has demanded much of their personal time and there is no longer work-life balance. The participants reported both qualitative overload which usually occur when an individual lacks the knowledge to do that task and quantitative overload which occur when the volumes of work mount and demands to be completed within a given timeframe. They reported that this has level high levels of stress amongst themselves and to worsen the scenario, they have not experienced an increase in salary nor their grades promoted. For example participant 45 said:

*I no longer enjoy this work and for your own information, I am always stressed due to continued need to be at the worksite to cover other areas with no people attending to.*

Participant 20 said:

*The increase in roles in my job has become so stressful and has caused a lot of uncertainties.*

#### **4.4.3.2 Role Ambiguity and Conflict**

15 (28.30%) participants reported that most of the conflict that transpire in their workstations has been as a result of conflicting tasks and lack of clarity on their job descriptions. Some have been moved to other sections and those occupying the area feel their roles are being overtaken and role ambiguity in this case because those redeployed to other section did not get enough clarity on their roles and what they are supposed to accomplish. For example participant 18 said:

*You know it is depressing to work in an environment where you clearly see that all of the tasks you are performing are an extra load which is not stipulated in your role description and some of us have not received any training on some aspects. I think there is need for Zimasco to revisit the structure and do task analysis that is realistic which shares burden and clarifies on roles so as to reduce on costs.*

Participant 53 stated that:

*The tasks we are performing are becoming an extra burden which we are told to cover and we did not perform such previously even our job descriptions have it all. We are moved sections constantly and it is no longer clear to which part of the organization do we belong. Zimasco needs to review its salary allowances in line with the increased scope of work, and it has to focus as well on improving communication to clarify on tasks.*

It is clear from the data presented above that psychological effects like depression, workplace stress and burnout are attributed to the roles these individuals perform at their workplace. Lack of clarity in their tasks and conflicting roles have heightened stress levels amongst them. Some information on tasks which the participants have presented herein require certain specific skills which one would need to possess to complete it and if one does not have the knowhow, the individual is most likely to suffer from emotional detachment and can seriously cripple the performance of the organization as an entity. The data presented above also advocates for an

improved strategy which the organization need to partake to improve on task clarity. Zimasco need to perform a task analysis that yield formative results which curb the anxieties which are as a result of role conflict and ambiguity. It is from this section that employees have reported the need to equate the job performed and the reward to be forwarded. The employment relationship is abetted by both parties meeting their end of the bargain. Though the employer tries to maximize profits by increasing workload, the employee also seeks an increment and it should be honored.

#### **4.5 Theme 2: Coping Strategies used in a Downsizing.**

Working in an environment that strongly presents feelings of discomfort endorsed behavioral attitudes amongst survivor employees. The strategy they reported herein provided them assurance and they felt safe for the sake of keeping their employment. The coping strategy used was emotional withdrawal.

##### **4.5.1 Emotional Withdrawal**

49 (92.45%) participants reported that it is very difficult to adjust to a downsizing. The survivor employees reported that it requires much effort for them to cope with such traumatic incidences. The survivor employees reported emotional withdrawal as their coping mechanism in a downsizing, citing reasons that it is as a result of the employer's ignorance of their emotional wellbeing and this has influenced the way they think, thus ending up avoiding issues that push conflict into exhibition. For example participant 22 said:

*I am glad that I still have my job and whatever is going to transpire, i have learnt to keep quiet and get myself occupied with their work. You know it is of no use to keep on shouting to people who do not listen to you, you end up acting like a fool.*

Participant 32 said:

*They (management) did what they did and we just watch and listen to what they tell us next.*

From the findings discussed above, employees have inversely reacted to the change. They feel disengaged from their organization and they attribute this problem to the

management as they feel they were not fully engaged in the process of decision making. Alternatively they have let their management temper with their emotional wellbeing. They have indicated that even if they air their assertions, they would not be worthy as they are considered as low-levels in the rank of decision making.

#### **4.6 Theme 3: Ways of Enhancing Employee Engagement after Downsizing**

In a future that looked so bleak and full of negative consequences of downsizing, there are several strategies that are vital in transforming employee engagement and eradicate all the uncertainties about the future. Upon being interviewed, the strategies that most participants felt should be engaged placed concerns on their social wellbeing and employee engagement in decision making. Thematic issues related to the restoration of their social wellbeing included employee involvement in decision making, occupational therapy, clear road-mapping of organizational future and training.

##### **4.6.1 Employee Engagement in Decision Making**

50 (94.33%) participants reported that the organization should consider their decisions when dealing the concerns that recollect their welfare. The survivor employees reported that their employment level limits them from participating in decision making henceforth decisions are centralized by the executive. Participants reported that there is need for non-manipulative representation when considering such decisions and improved communication of organizational transformations. For example participant 28 reported that:

*Zimasco needs to improve on their treatment of low level employees' decisions. The problem being we are not learned as they are and they think we are inconsiderate. They need to consider our ideas because we are also part of this organization.*

##### **4.6.2 Occupational Therapy**

10 (18.86%) participants reported that the organization should provide occupational therapeutic events as it would enlighten their lives. They reported that they would need the organization to demonstrate commitment to their welfare, despite the undesirable nature of the situation. This

would transform their work effort and gain a sense of self-involvement to sail the organization through hardship. For example participant 9 reported that:

*They should help us engage on full force through counseling sessions on how to cope with all the mayhems that result from downsizing. I would like to believe that occupational therapy will assist employees gain their lost confidence and even perform up to standard if they are considered human beings.*

#### **4.6.3 Clear Road-Mapping of Organizational Future**

20 (37.73%) participants stated that the organization should show transparency on how they operate as it has effects on the performance of both employees and the organization. They advocated for improved communication on the performance of the organization. For example participant 34 stated that:

*The executive board does not communicate well and my performance is highly depended on the feedback I receive on the progressions of the organization. After downsizing they should have called for meetings and road-map us so that we gain our strength again, which they did not do.*

#### **4.6.4 Payment of Terminal Benefits to the Victims**

All participants reported that the organization should show concern to the welfare of its former employees by paying up all their dues. They reported that those who were had their employment terminated were not paid as was indicated. They reported that payment of terminal benefits would help them engage as they would have been enlightened that if anything transpires in future they will surely get compensated. For example participant 41 stated that:

*I will enjoy my work if the organization shows concern on its terminated employees as they still owe them. I can fully participate because I will be aware that the organization can also pay us in future if they engage in another downsizing. If they pay those it dismissed, them it is reason enough to assist the remaining workforce to perform well.*

Engaging employees in decision making has the capacity to yield better performance from employees that boosts productivity. Employees become productive if they perceive that the organization they serve values their assertions. In the reports given by participants above, the organization did not engage them fully so they stated that for it to thrive, there is need to consider views from both angles. Employee health and safety is one crucial factor that needs to be taken seriously in organizations. Performance levels exhibited by employees in the workplace highly depend on how the organization treats them. When an employee faces a problem, there is need to abet the same through therapy sessions. Counseling affords employees with a sense of hope and in this instance reduces the occurrence of uncertainties amongst the same. The assertions above reported that there is need to engage employees and provide serenity which at least affords them with emotional stability.

The findings from the above declarations, the participants elaborated that the whole process of downsizing at Zimasco lacked transparency. They feel that all decisions that affect the entire organization are circumscribed to the executive management and the lower-level employees are not in light of what transpires. So they stated that there is need to improve on communication so that every employee is kept on the loop to avoid surprises. Improving employee welfare is key in achieving productivity and as well improving organizational identity. If employees receive payment on time, they tend to return the favour to the employer. If traumatic actions like downsizing are engaged, there is need to pay the victims of such actions all their remuneration to avoid different perceptions that can bring future uncertainties amongst the remaining population. If they perceive that the organization has neglected the victims, they are most likely to suffer from future uncertainties brought thereabout.

#### **4.7 Chapter Summary**

The chapter presented data gathered from documentary sources and interviews as had been mentioned in chapter 3. The chapter presented data from Work's council meetings minutes and Departmental Liaison Meetings minutes and also the Monthly Wage Bill Reports to highlight on the organizational performance so as to implore the root cause of the psychological dynamics of downsizing operations. The chapter then presented data from interviews covering the characteristics of the research participants, thus to include gender, age, level of employment and

service as well as their level of education as influencing their line of thinking. The chapter also presented themes that emerged from the research interview which include three major themes to mention psychological effects of downsizing, coping strategies used in a downsizing and varied ways used to engage employees after downsizing. In the next chapter, the researcher presents discussions, conclusions and recommendations to the challenges encountered by Zimasco employees after a downsizing.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the research data which was gathered through semi-structured interviews was analyzed and interpreted by the researcher. This chapter henceforth, details on the discussions of the research findings as itemized by the research participants. The chapter then summarizes the study in its entirety and outlines the conclusions for the chapter and the research as an entity. Finally the chapter proffers recommendations on issues that emerged from the study because it may not have exhausted all issues that explain the psychological variables of downsizing on survivor employees.

#### **5.2 Discussions of Results**

The research findings are congruent with the literature herein on the effects of downsizing on survivor employees. This section affords findings on the psychological effects of downsizing on survivor employees, how the same cope in that dejected milieu and several way that can be engaged to enhance employee engagement after such distressful episode. In general, the findings supported the research objectives on the perceived effects of lay-offs on survivor employees.

##### **5.2.1 Psychological Effects of Downsizing**

The study apparently focuses on an extensive evaluation of the psychological aspects rented by the process of downsizing on a survivor employee standpoint. The discussion herein indicate that downsizing was perceived as an unfair process which was poorly instigated, biased and a painful process. The findings in the above chapter demonstrate that the process of downsizing emotionally wrenched the survivor employees and posed high levels subjective perceptions on its transparency. Below is a discussion of the findings on psychological dynamics of the process.

###### **5.2.1.1 Perceived Justice**

The research participants indicated in the above chapter that the process of downsizing was not well engaged and proved to be unjust. The issue of perceived justice in this research helps to

implore the perceptions of survivor employees pertaining the lay-offs of their co-workers as instigated by their organizations. Brockner (1990) has it that survivor employees are more likely to show signs of withdrawal from employment if they perceive that management did not impartially handle the issue of lay-offs. This had the capacity to shift their commitment to the organization from affective to continuance commitment. The research subjects indicated that there was no adequate communication and that the strategies implemented were linked to numbers rather than organizational transformation and also that the entitlements were not duly paid as had been vowed by the executive. This is in line with previously engaged literature which indicated the importance of distributive justice as a variable that affects survivor employees (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 2001).

The participants indicated above that all information and decisions about their employment and projections on the organizational wayward was restricted to the top management. Employees were exposed to high levels of alienation from their employment to the extent that they were left with a sense of being meaningless because they were not engaged in most of the decisions that affected their wellbeing and this has the capacity to affect the employee work life balance (Williams et al., 2014). Participants also strongly perceived the process of downsizing at Zimasco as highly subjective and not procedural because the whole process was not participatory on the employee's viewpoint. Affected also was the employees' interactional justice as they indicated that the relationships in the plant are no longer harmonious and they keep worsening by the day due to low morale at the workplace (Chipunza & Berry, 2010).

### **5.2.1.2 Job Security**

Participants reported that they retained their employment with the organization but they still live with the emotional uncertainties triggered by the entire situation of downsizing operations. According to Lebo, Harrington and Tillman (1995), job security issues can directly affect employees' behavioral intentions to withdraw from employment. Thus this indicates that the whole process diminishes employees' affective commitment to the organization. An increase in job insecurity and uncertainties has the likelihood of intensifying physical and emotional demands from the employee (Kivimäki et al., 2000). Thus the participants reported that their work attitudes have been solemnly affected and they perceived the occupation within their

organization as insecure and prone to future uncertainties leaving them with high level intentions to leave. They also reported the erosion of trust in management to guarantee their employment. According to Robinson (1996) cited in Singh (2010), trust has the capacity to maintain or breach the psychological contract in an employment relationship and is highly important in maintaining social relationships at the workplace. Subsequently, these employees are continuously nursing trust issues, feelings of anxiety and job insecurity issues resulting from presented fear of the unknown or rather fear of being future victims of downsizing coupled with the perceived unemployment spells outside the Zimasco and the flooding of the Zimbabwean job market.

### **5.2.1.3 Job Stressors**

The participants in the above chapter have reported downsizing has leveled high levels of emotional distress even in the amount of work they are performing. An increase in workload suggests a decrease in the employee's morale and is has the ability to cripple affective commitment to their work (Brockner et al., 1993). Economic recessions like downsizing poses increased workloads amongst retained employees because some of the tasks were occupied by the victims (Mishra, Spreitzer& Mishra, 1998), thus the participants herein have reported high levels of stress due to the work they perform. Participants also reported that role demands have increased their stress levels, for example if the organization's expectations of the employee about a task is indistinct (role ambiguity).

Some information on tasks which the participants have presented herein require certain specific skills which one would need to possess to complete it and if one does not have the knowhow, the individual is most likely to suffer from emotional detachment. This could hinder their performance levels simply because some roles need enhanced training to be performed and if employees do not receive training on such tasks, the outcome is negative (El Shikieri& Musa, 2012). Participants who have been redeployed indicated that some of the roles they perform clash with their core-workers and they attributed this to inconsistence information they receive about task clarity. According to Conley and Woosley (2000), role conflict and ambiguity are usually related to motivation and involvement in decision making which can impede productivity.

## **5.2.2 Coping Strategies used by Employees after a Downsizing**

Employees usually practice diverse strategies to cope when presented with difficulties that require emotional responsiveness, to mention in a downsizing context. Majority of the participants reported emotional withdrawal.

### **5.2.2.1 Emotional Withdrawal**

In terms of coping strategies, most participants reported escape-oriented strategy (Di Vries, 2006). Employees usually make sense of the whole process to redefine their positions within an organization after a downsizing. But in the reports by participants herein, majority reported emotional withdrawal as their coping strategy (Pulakos et al., 2000). They reported that the employer had become ignorant of their emotional wellbeing hence the only thing necessary for them was to make sense of the whole situation and take an avoidant stance which had seen them focusing on their work and keeping a deaf ear on the word from the executive as they alleged it as manipulative in nature.

## **5.2.3 Measures to Enhance Employee Engagement after a Downsizing**

Employee engagement has been placed as a primary function to the proper implementation of change in organizations (Dicke et al., 2007). The same mention that it enhances organizational commitment amongst survivor employees. The bulletin below indicates suggested measures that emerged from the research findings that can aid progressive employee engagement after downsizing.

### **5.2.3.1 Need for Improved Communication**

The participants reported that organizations should engage its employees in the strategies that involve their employment. This is a clear indication that the decisions about the process of downsizing were just passed from the executive to the employees without their concern to air their views. The indication as well herein shows that the information channels were breached which justifies their lack of adequate information about the transformation at all stages before and after implementation. This has the capacity to impair trust levels between management and its workforce. Providing employees with feedback after a downsizing on the future of the

organization can help survivor employees to gain strength and improve on their performance levels than being left out of the loop. According to Thornhill and Saunders (1998), the provision of enhanced communication has the capacity to reduce levels of uncertainties amongst survivor employees.

#### **5.2.3.2 Need for Improved Distributive Justice**

The equity rule which is linked to distributive justice should be dominant in strategies like downsizing. Rewards and resources should be allocated in utmost good faith as they are strongly related with employee engagement (Dicke et al., 2007). The participants reported that the process of downsizing should have met its objectives thus to transform the organization rather than being linked to numbers. According to these employees, there is no justification for shedding employees and after all fail to break even. The process of downsizing should display the existence of parity and consistency so as to curb survivors' psychological separation from the organization. The organization should show remorse and empathy to the victims of a downsizing for the survivor employees to contain the situation. Most participants reported that their psychological disengagement from the organization and other uncertainties are a result of their perceptions of the existence of justice in resource allocation to those who were terminated. If survivor employees perceive such kind of treatment as befalling them if they become future victims of downsizing, this does not yield desired outcomes for the entire organization. So to engage survivor employees on full potential, there is need to pay all terminal benefits to the terminated population so as to solicit the prevalence of survivor uncertainties concerning payment of terminal packages. This would fast-track emotional stability and ensure employee safety at the workplace.

#### **5.2.3.3 Need for Occupational Therapy**

According to Bickford (2005), workplace stress is based on the notion that stress results from nonconforming goals between the person and the environment coupled with the subjective perceptions of the occupational environment. Downsizing as a major stressor require employees' critical reasoning in trying to analyze and understand their relationship with the workplace environment and their occupation. This transactional approach to sense making calls for organizational effort to assist retained employees to sail through.

Majority of the participants reported that there is need for occupational therapy and some clinical reasoning that can help them interpret their interaction with their occupation and help in redefining their positions at the worksite. This is in line with the model founded by Law et al. (1996) that describes the clinical reasoning that aids to a better understanding of the interaction between the three elements namely, the person, the environment and the occupation. A nurtured interaction of the three components has the capacity to yield improved occupational performance. In this relationship, the person is a dynamic being who assumes dynamic roles which are bonded to his environment and it entails several attributes, job knowhow and experience to define the behavior of the person. This is abetted by looking at motivational aspects, the reflection of situations that petition high emotional responses not limited to occupational stress and distraction. Also the environment poses a set of projected behaviors from the person in a continuous manner.

According to Law et al. (1996), to achieve optimal performance from survivor employees there is need to reconsider offering occupational therapy to such employees and reduce occupational performance dysfunction. Occupational therapy can proficient moderating poor person-environment interaction concerns and help employees during the transition.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

From the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

This study as well as others whose main objective is to evaluate the psychological dynamics associated with corporate downsizing, challenge the conventions that employees who survive a downsizing are well engaged and relieved throughout the whole process. Patently, the study replicates that organizational transformation is a complex subject which needs to be approached vigilantly and should not be taken lightly. The process of downsizing should be considered and thought of judiciously by the management before implementation and the objectives that stimulate it should be clearly understood at all stakeholders levels throughout the organization. It would have been a march on task for managers to practice their prerogative to manage survivor employees if they had considered the survivors' basic needs not limited to psychological and social needs and proffer emotional support and enhance parity and transparency in policy implementation and communication.

Conclusively, the study has deliberated on speculative information that harmonize downsizing and the coping strategies used in a downsizing. The study has revealed that when presented with a catch-22 situation like downsizing, employees' understanding and sense making strategies vary but mostly they engage in escape-oriented coping, to mention emotional withdrawal. They become avoidant in nature. The study has revealed that employees usually refrain from participating in organizational politics depending on how the process was instigated. As a final remark, leaders should never underestimate downsizing. It may seem rationale to them but it will always convey indifferences amongst survivor employees and it will surely change the organization and it calls for combined effort from both parties in the employment relationship to make that change a reality.

The efforts of achieving a successful downsizing cannot be achieved by leaving aside the emotional wellbeing of the survivor employee. Enhancing employee engagement after downsizing require organizations to restore good management practices thus to align downsizing objectives to organizational objectives, provide training and counseling to survivor employees, transparency in communication and remuneration for the victims and employee involvement. To attain a positive relationship between downsizing and productivity in organizations, there is need to extremely absorb the human element on full potential.

The study identified and assessed the psychological dynamics of downsizing on survivors with the view to make appropriate intervention for corporate turnaround. The study used Zimasco (Pvt) Limited as a case study. The study revealed that downsizing has serious emotional implications on survivor employees. Survivor employees undergo high level of stress and this was duly because they received little or no support from the management. They perceived the whole process of downsizing as defective because it lacked parity due to the fact that victims were not duly compensated and this posed uncertainties on survivors about their future with the organization and it also lacked clear road mapping for the same, rather it worsened the situation by increasing workloads and job responsibilities with fewer training support after redeployment. The study therefore concludes that organisations need to consider the psychological wellness of employees after downsizing so as to engage them on full potential. The study leaves an information gap for future researches on the psychological impacts of downsizing on survivors.

## 5.4 Recommendations

- ✚ When the organisation is faced with operational challenges, there is need to seek funding from stakeholders to inject capital that would have been used to build furnace 2 which could have absorbed excess labour.
- ✚ Employees should be continuously briefed of the organization's direction and challenges being faced to sidestep crafting of animosity.
- ✚ The organization need to provide clear organisational vision and strategy that will communicated to all stakeholders through compulsory briefs should it expect survivor employees' participation.
- ✚ Employers should avoid tempering with the psychological contract, rather organizations should conduct employee awareness through discussions that aim at achieving lost confidence in the employer. This has the capacity to harness employee disengagement and reduce uncertainties to do with job insecurity.
- ✚ Organizations should provide occupational therapy, train and develop employees on best ways to achieve productivity through employee engagement. This demands engaging them and try to understand their concerns and link training to achieve their needs.
- ✚ There is need to reduce obsolete assets such as sale of houses at the mines or rent them other organisations so to generate cash to pay the victims of downsizing or rather get cheaper loans to assist Zimbabwean operations from sister companies outside.

## 5.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter paid attention to the discussions of the research findings on the psychological impacts of downsizing and how employees cope up when presented with such detrimental circumstances. The chapter also provided conclusions for each research question and also deliberated on recommendations for both government and private institutions and for future studies on the effects of downsizing on human capital and subscribe a prescription that can assist to engage employees are such occurrences.

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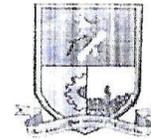
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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: MSU Research Letter

# Midlands State University



Established 2000

P BAG 9055  
GWERU

Telephone: (263) 54 260404 ext 261  
Fax: (263) 54 260233/260311

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**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

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Date.....16/03/2016.....

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE WITH DISSERTATION INFORMATION  
FOR ELITE EFFORT MPOFU (R124375G), BACHELOR OF PSYCHOLOGY HONOURS  
DEGREE

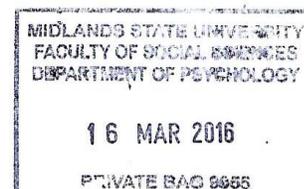
This letter serves to introduce to you the above named student who is studying for a Psychology Honours Degree and is in his/her 4<sup>th</sup> year. All Midlands State University students are required to do research in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of study. We therefore kindly request your organisation to assist the above-named student with any information that they require to do their dissertation.

Topic: "Precarious nature of employment in Zimbabwe." An assessment of the psychological dynamics of downsizing on survivor employees. Case of Zimasco Kwekwe Division.

For more information regarding the above, feel free to contact the Department.

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
F. Ngwenya  
Chairperson



**Appendix 2: Permission from Zimasco Kwekwe Division (Pvt) Ltd**



**KWEKWE DIVISION**  
Birmingham Road, KweKwe, Zimbabwe  
P.O. Box 489, Kwekwe, Zimbabwe  
TELEPHONE : 263-55-24041/8  
FAX : 263-55-24049

**To: Whom It May Concern**

**From: Human Resources Officer**

**Date: 18 April 2016**

**RE: CONFIRMATION OF STUDY UNDER- TAKING Elite Mpofu (I.D. No. 03-164932-S-03)**

This letter serves to confirm that Elite Mpofu conducted his study at Zimasco Kwekwe division.

For any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours Faithfully,

A. Zaidi

Human Resources Officer



### Appendix 3: Research Interview Guide

#### Interview Questionnaire for Survivor Employees.

My name is Elite Effort Mpfu, a fourth year student at the Midlands State University studying towards a B.Sc. Honours Degree in Psychology. I am currently carrying out a research on the **“Precarious nature of employment in Zimbabwe.” An assessment of the psychological dynamics of downsizing on survivor employees, Case of Zimasco Kwekwe Division (Pvt) Ltd.**Your honest opinion is kindly requested to answer the following questions. Please be assured that all your responses are strictly confidential and are used for academic purposes hence feel free to express yourself.

#### Instructions

*Please kindly answer all questions and tick appropriately in the boxes provided.*

#### Section A: Demographic Information

**Q1.** What is your **Gender** group?

Male  Female

**Q2.** Indicate your **Age** range!

18-25  26-35  36-45  46-55  56+

**Q3.** Tick the box that closely describe your **level of education**?

None  Primary  Secondary  Diploma  Degree  Other

**Q4.** How many years have you been in **service** at Zimasco?

1-10yrs  11-20yrs  21-30yrs  31-40yrs  41+yrs

**Q5.** What is your **employment level** at Zimasco?

Non-Managerial  Managerial

**Section B: Downsizing at Zimasco**

Q6. From the period you have been serving at Zimasco, did you know of the organization's intention to downsize?

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.....  
.....

Q7. What do you think are the reasons that might have led your organization to downsize?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q8. Noting from the period you have been employed at Zimasco, how has it been performing before the implementation of downsizing?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q9. How has it been performing post implementation of downsizing?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q10. If there are any performance changes, what could have been the cause?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q11. Was your position affected? Yes/No. If not, was it justified? Explain your answer.

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q12. How were the affected/victims treated post downsizing?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q13. What is your general view of employee relationships at work post downsizing compared to period before?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q14. Is there any need for Zimasco to change the way they handled downsizing? Justify your view.

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q15. What is your perception of your employment in Zimasco?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q16. Is there anything to be done to take away uncertainties on job security?

Q17. Are there any prospects of future employment at Zimasco?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q18a. What implications did downsizing have on role descriptions?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q18b. What effects do such changes have on you?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q19. What do you suggest to address implications cited above?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q20. In your own opinion, what measures have you been using to cope with the situation?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Appendix 4: Supervisor-Student Audit Sheet

### APPENDIX 4: Supervisor-Student Audit Sheet

Date	Topic	Supervisor Comments	Supervisors Signature	Student Signature
13.10.2015	Proposal	Rework	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
18.11.2015	Proposal	Proceed	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
01.01.2016	Chapter 1	Rework	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
02.01.2016	Chapter 1	Proceed	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
09.02.2016	Chapter 2	Rework	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
13.02.2016	Chapter 2	Proceed	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
13.02.2016	Chapter 3	Rework	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
16.03.2016	Chapter 3	Proceed	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
13.02.2016	Instrument	Rework	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
16.03.2016	Instrument	Proceed	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
06.04.2016	Chapter 4	Rework	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
12.4.2016	Chapter 4	Proceed	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
06.04.2016	Chapter 5	Rework	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
12.04.2016	Chapter 5	Proceed	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
13.04.2016	First Draft	Rework	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
16.04.2016	First Draft	Proceed	<i>L Mangandje</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>

## Appendix 5: Turnitin Originality Report

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## **Appendix 6: A Guide for Weighting a Dissertation**