Survivors of Redundancy: a justice perspective

by Fiona Campbell

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Abstract

Organisations in and around Britain continue to restructure and downsize their workforce. Redundancies and reorganisation of staff remains a major aspect of internal organisational change. However, the effects of redundancy on those who remain, the survivors, are still little understood (Armstrongstassen, 1993a). This paper attempts to rectify this situation by reviewing theories principally developed in North America within a British context. In particular, the research identifies how organisational justice theories (e.g., Bies et al, 1988; Greenberg, 1990; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992) are a means to understand the potential effects on survivors of redundancy.

The literature review is supported by empirical research which has been conducted in two major British organisations who have experienced significant downsizing and restructuring. The research aim was to explore the range of reactions; emotional attitudinal and behavioural which were experienced by the survivors of a redundancy programme. Data was collected using a variety of methods, including focus groups, in-depth semi-structured interviews and a company wide survey in both case study organisations. The results enabled the development of a conceptual framework which extends previous understanding of the effects of redundancy on survivors. The conceptual framework draws together the current findings with previous research in this field formulating an overview of the factors which influence survivor reactions. Understanding survivor reactions helps to further the knowledge of the potentially damaging effects of redundancy on the future of an organisation.

The results indicate that organisational justice theories indeed promote the understanding of the effects of redundancy. In previous studies the emphasis has been laid on distributive and procedural justice (e.g., Daly & Geyer, 1994; Brockner & Greenberg, 1990), however, the current study highlights the importance of interactional justice. The results suggest that survivors reactions are particularly dependent on the interpersonal treatment they receive from both the management team and their immediate line manager or supervisor. Further analysis shows that the communication and amount of interaction a survivor receives from their line manager influences their level of organisational commitment, job insecurity, job satisfaction and turnover intention. Survivors who perceived they had a 'good' relationship with their line manager were less likely to react negatively to the redundancy programme. The research also indicates that survivors were influenced by their work environment and their work colleagues. The analysis found that when survivors perceived their work colleagues to react negatively to the redundancies, they were more likely to react negatively themselves.

In practical terms, when implementing redundancies, management should be aware of the potentially damaging effects not only on those who leave, but also on the survivors. The research indicates that the 'line manager' holds a very important role in maintaining the morale and motivation of the remaining staff. The ability to maintain good communication and support to employees can help in the future success of the organisation. The framework developed in this study builds on previous research and introduces new variables found to be important in the field.

The author

Fiona Campbell
This paper is based on the findings from my PhD. I am currently working as a researcher in the Management Research Centre of Wolverhampton Business School. Current projects involve investigations into managerial effectiveness and behavioural competency models and their application in the public sector and measurement of employee attitudes in organisations experiencing change. However, my main research interest remains within the effects of downsizing and redundancy, and the management of change in UK organisations.

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Survivors of Redundancy: a justice perspective

Introduction

This paper outlines the recent findings of research into the survivors' reactions to organisational downsizing and redundancy. The research has developed from a partnership between Grosvenor Career Services (formerly part of British Coal Enterprise) and Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education.

Previous empirical research and studies in this area are reviewed, and gaps and limitations are established in order to develop the current area of study. Previous research in this area has used mainly an experimental or purely quantitative approach to develop an understanding of the issues surrounding survivors of redundancy. The current research has used a qualitative approach within a case study framework in order to ascertain a more in-depth understanding of survivor issues.

This paper will discuss the first stage of the research project which involved the development of a conceptual framework through the collection and analysis of qualitative data. This study differs considerably from previous work in this area by using an in-depth semi-structured interview technique as opposed to quantitative survey methods. First, the paper will outline the background of the study in terms of the extent of downsizing and redundancy in Britain. Secondly, it will outline previous studies in this area, which were principally developed in North America. Third, these theories will form the basis for a framework of issues surrounding survivors of redundancy. The subsequent data analysis will be discussed in light of the framework and its development, leading to a refinement of the framework. Finally, the paper will highlight issues for future research in the area of survivors of major downsizing and redundancy.

Redundancy in Britain

In order to contextualise the current research, it is important to establish the extent of downsizing and redundancies in Britain. As many of the background theories are developed in North America, they all recognise that since the late 1980s, nearly all of the American Fortune 1000 firms have engaged in downsizing (Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997). Like America, the number of organisations and jobs affected by redundancy in Britain is staggering. As suggested above, the majority of empirical work in this field is derived from the United States or Canada (i.e., Armstrongstassen, 1993b; Brockner, 1988; 1990; 1992; Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1991; Tomasko, 1992). A question arises as to the compatibility and generalisability of these studies to organisations within Britain. Specifically as there are different legislative procedures in the United States than in the UK regarding the implementation and provisions for redundancy. Therefore, this section attempts to familiarise the reader with the current economic and employment situation in the UK over recent years in order to contextualise the study.

Since the beginning of the study in 1995, unemployment in the Britain has been dropping slowly. In fact, the statistics produced by the Labour Force Survey suggest that the rate of claimant unemployment is at its lowest level since 1980. It is important to note that the reduction in unemployment is broadly based, with decreases in all age groups and in the proportion of long term unemployed. The results suggest that most estimates, including those of OECD Secretariat, of unemployment are now below or close to the structural rate and signs of labour market tightness are increasingly evident. These include a high vacancy to unemployment rate, reported skill unemployment rate, reported skill shortages and recruitment difficulties and upward pressure on wages (OECD, 1998). However, the current study suggests that although unemployment is falling, the amount of redundancies is still significant in the British labour market.

As suggested by Lewis (1993) redundancy is a response to market change. The economic recession at the start of the 1990s had a significant adverse effect on employment levels throughout the economy (IRS, 1995). Table 2 illustrates the amount of redundancies by regions throughout the UK. The results show the overall amount of redundancies having dropped, yet there are certain regions who have seen increasing redundancies in the last year, the West and East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside and London. Therefore for certain regions, redundancy has become more prevalent and a greater threat to job security. It is important for the current study to understand the perceived threat of job loss which may be affecting the region in which the respondents are located.

Table 1. Redundancies by Government Office Region, Spring 1995 - 1998

Redundancies (thousands)	Great Britain	Northern	Yorkshire and Humberside	East Midlands	East Anglia	South East	Eastern	London	South West	West Midlands	North West	Wales	Scotland
Spring 1995	220	11	19	19	11	61	36	25	17	23	26	15	18
Spring 1996	207	11	16	13	*	61	39	22	17	22	26	11	21
Spring 1997	206	*	16	15	20	18	18	20	13	15	24	11	18
Spring 1998	204	*	18	21	18	28	18	22	16	20	19	*	26

*Less than 10,000 in a cell: estimate not shown
Source: compiled from Labour Market Trends, August, 1996 - 8, Office for National Statistics.

Not only has redundancy affected every region in the UK but has affected practically every industry in Britain, from newly privatised public services and heavy manufacturing to financial services to high technology communication industries (see breakdown in Table 3). The figures shown are for the first quarter of every year in each instance. As you can see from the results, the manufacturing industry remains the worst effected and continues to experience the majority of redundancies. With the amount of redundancies increasing by 9% in Spring 1998 compared to Spring 1997. However, in comparison the banking, finance and insurance sector reports a 25% increase in the amount of redundancies. Although, this appears to be a significant increase, the actual amount of redundancies is less than half of those occurring in the manufacturing sector.

Table 2. Redundancies by industry, Spring 1995 - 1998

Redundancies (thousands)	Agriculture & Fishing	Energy and water	Manufacturing	Construction	Distribution, hotels & restuarants	Transport	Banking, Finance & insurance	Public admin, education & health	Other services
Spring 1995	*	*	55	20	55	17	31	22	14
Spring 1996	*	*	64	24	42	14	27	14	10
Spring 1997+	*	*	64	23	45	16	24	20	*
Spring 1998	*	*	70	14	44	16	30	13	13

* Less than 10,000 in cell: estimate not shown.
+In Spring 1997 a small number of respondents were excluded.
Source: compiled from Labour Market Trends, August 1996-8, Office for National Statistics.

On the other hand, redundancies are on the decrease in the construction industry (39%) and the public administration, education and health sector (35%) respectively. These results are significant in the current study as it enables the research to be put into the context of the environmental influences in each of the industries.

This section has already suggested that improved economic growth has led to a fall in unemployment rates and a drop in the overall number of people being made redundant. Yet, developments in management indicate that redundancy as a downsizing method is here to stay (Cameron, 1994b). Kets de Vries & Blazas (1997) suggest that a major contributing factor is the increasing popularity of global benchmarking. In that, one's overheads costs are being compared not only to domestic but also international competitors making a convincing argument to take large numbers of employees off the payroll. A second contributing factor is the ever constant changes in technology and communications technology. Finally, but by no means least, redundancy is sometimes the price paid for strategic errors made by top management, for example the erroneous interpretation of market trends (Kets de Vries & Blazas, 1997).

At the beginning of the current project in 1995, eight out of ten UK companies had made employees redundant and just over 50% expected to make redundancies in the future (IRS, 1995). However, it should be taken into consideration that the survey was sent only to 500 IRS Employment Review subscribers and received only 50 replies (response rate of 10%). But, the results are still an indication as to the extent of redundancies over the last few years. A further breakdown of the statistics provided by the Labour Force Survey enables the investigation of gender differences in the amount of redundancies occurring in Britain. Table 4 gives an overall account of the amount of men and women made redundant over the last decade in the Spring quarter of each year. It can be seen that on average in the last five years over 60% of redundancies have involved men. In the current study, over 60% of those interviewed were male.

Table 3. Redundancies in Britain, Spring 1989 to Spring 1998

(,000)	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**
Men	94	118	268	217	169	141	137	143	142	133
Women	48	63	121	105	93	63	82	64	67	75
All	142	181	388	322	262	205	220	207	208	208

Source: Compiled from Labour Market Trends, August, 1990, 1992, 1995 - 1998, Office for National Statistics.

The results shown in Table 4 illustrate that redundancies were at their highest during the height of the economic recession between 1991 and 1992. Since that time, the amount of redundancies has not risen to a similar level and has remained fairly constant over the past four or five years. However it can also be seen that since 1996 the amount of women being made redundant has been on the increase. This may be further explained by the following set of results which investigate the occupational split of the redundancies. Table 5 highlights the rate of redundancy broken down over recent years by occupation.

Table 4. Redundancy rates[1] by occupation (,000's) Spring

	1994	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
Professional	10	12	15	*
Managers and administrators	31	33	27	22
Associate professional and technical	11	16	10	12
Clerical and secretarial	28	38	33	32
Personal and protective services	14	15	16	14
Sales	18	23	20	15
Craft and related	42	35	30	43
Plant and machine operatives	34	28	30	36
Other occupations	17	19	23	19

[1] At Spring each year. Redundancies in previous three months. Figures for 1998 not available.

*Less than 10,000 in cell: estimate not shown. This table assumes that people do not change occupation when starting employment after having been made redundant.
Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

The results shown in Table 5 suggest that the increases in redundancy have occurred in two main occupations, craft related and plant and machine operatives. These results are in line with the finding that redundancies remain at a high level in manufacturing in Britain. Interestingly clerical and secretarial remain at a fairly high level, this may reflect the increase in redundancies in the finance sector (as shown in Table 3).   These results suggest that redundancy is a phenomena which is still frequently being used in Britain today across all industries and at all occupational levels, and effects both men and women. This supports Cameron's (1994b) assumption that redundancy is here to stay and suggests that the current study will be of value to numerous industrial sectors across Britain.

From a slightly different perspective of the supporting legislature Turnbull and Wass (1997) also support the views of Cameron (1994a). Since the introduction of the Redundancy Payments Act in 1965 around 10 million workers have received statutory severance pay (Turnbull & Wass, 1997). Turnbull & Wass (1997) hold the view that many organisations are now understaffed and to them redundancy has become an obsession, like anorexia. Further information provided by the Labour Force Survey can help to illustrate the level of insecurity which individuals in employment experience. One way of investigating the level of job insecurity is by identifying how many of those individuals in employment are seeking a job outside of their current employer due to fear of job loss through redundancy. Table 6 suggests that although 47.5% of all employees are seeking employment elsewhere to find better working conditions, 13.8% of all employees are seeking work elsewhere due to fear of job loss.

Table 5. People having a job and seeking another by broad age groups and reasons[2] 1996

	15 - 24 years		25 + years		Total	
	,000's	(%)	,000's	(%)	,000's	(%)
Risk of loss of present job	51	(11)	217	(14.7)	268	(13.8)
Present job transitional	62	(13.2)	90	(6.1)	152	(7.8)
Seeking better conditions	220	(47.1)	702	(47.7)	922	(47.5)
Other reasons/not stated	134	(28.6)	464	(31.5)	597	(30.8)
Total	467	(100)	1473	(100)	1940	(100)

Source: Eurostat: Labour Force Survey (1996:257).

Redundancy is a real fear among people although redundancy rates have fallen in recent years. People are more concerned about trade unions acting to protect jobs than to get pay rises (see Table 7).   These results further illustrates the increase in employees fear over their job security. Redundancy continues to pay a significant part in industrial stoppages in the UK, in 1998 13% of industrial stoppages were due to redundancy. These stoppages involved 22,700 workers and resulted in 29,000 working days lost including the 12 months prior to June 1998 (Labour Market Trends, Sept. 1998).

The continued involvement of unions in redundancy process suggests that the legislation or rather the implementation in British organisations is still causing problems. This also suggests that research is needed to investigate the implementation process of redundancies so that it is perceived to be fair by those affected. This may in turn reduce the amount of working days lost through industrial disputes and stoppages. The following section pinpoints how the current research is derived and how it intends to further understanding of the redundancy and downsizing phenomena.

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[2] Includes both men and women within Britain in 1996.

Table 6. Employees[3] view of what trade unions should try to do (1989 and 1996)

Expected Role of Trade Union	1989 (%)	1996 (%)
Protect existing jobs	28	33
Improve pay	28	21
Improve working conditions	21	22
Have more say over management's long term plans	6	7
Reduce pay differences at the workplace	6	4
Have more say over how work is done day to day	3	2
Work for equal opportunities for women	3	2

Source: British Social Attitudes Survey, Social and Community Planning Research. Social Trends 28 (1998), p86. Office for National Statistics.

Background literature

Research on redundancy has until recently concentrated on issues related to those people being made redundant. These issues include the use of redundancy selection criteria and procedures (Hendry, 1991; Lewis, 1993; Fowler, 1993), outplacement (Eggert, 1991; Pickard, 1993; Crofts, 1992; Doherty et al 1993), helping people to face up to redundancy (Crofts, 1991) and individual coping strategies (Arroba, 1979; Arroba & Payne, 1980; Leana & Feldman, 1994). In the UK, little attention has been given to those people who remain in the organisation following a redundancy programme, the survivors. Research concerning survivors has only developed within the last ten years and this has been concentrated within North America and Canada. This research has utilised a number of general management theories and literature related to equity theory, motivational theories, commitment, job insecurity, organisational stress and organisational justice. For example, equity theory (Adams, 1965) has been used to explore 'survivors' guilt' which results from individuals' perceptions of inequity related to the selection of co-workers to be made redundant (Brockner et al, 1985; Brockner, 1986). Greenhalgh and Rosenblatts' theory of job insecurity (1984) has been used to explain survivors' behavioural reactions to redundancies in the form of job performance and productivity (Brockner et al, 1992).

For the purpose of the current study, previous research can be divided into two main areas, the organisational perspective and the individual perspective.

From an organisational perspective, it is suggested by Brockner & Greenberg (1990) that organisational justice theories (e.g., Bies et al, 1988; Greenberg, 1990; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992) provide a useful grounding on which to examine and explore survivor reactions and the factors which moderate these. Using this theory, Brockner & Greenberg (1990) suggest two broad categories which moderate the impact of redundancies on survivors. The first category is related to the perceived degree

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[3] Employees with a recognised Trade Union or Staff Association at the workplace were given a list of things Trade Unions do and were asked: 'What, if any, is the most important thing they should try to do at your workplace?'

of unfairness in the management of the redundancy process, based on the three aspects of justice literature procedural , distributive and interactional. The second category is related to the relative strength of survivors prior attachment to the victims (those made redundant) and the organisation.

The issue of perceived fairness of the redundancy process is particularly relevant to the body of organisational justice literature.   This literature suggests that there are three main forms of organisational justice; distributive, procedural and interactional (Brockner & Greenberg, 1990). Distributive justice (Homans, 1961) or 'outcome fairness' is the extent to which the procedures used in making an allocation decision are legitimate and appropriate (Daly & Geyer, 1994). For example, the fairness of the selection criteria used in a redundancy situation to decide which employees are to remain and who are to leave. Procedural justice (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) is the extent to which the procedures used in making the allocation decision are seen as fair (e.g., the way in which management conveyed the news of the redundancy).   The third type of justice is related to the interpersonal treatment an individual has received, interactional justice (Bies, 1987). For example, whether the organisation or management explained to the individual the reasons underlying the decisions that were made. This view is supported by Astrachan (1995) who suggests that anxiety is stimulated by the mere announcement that people in the organisation are leaving. The current study explores the link between organisational justice theories and the outcomes of redundancy. The literature suggests that there is a potential link between the way in which redundancies are managed and justice theory. The theory allows the current study to understand how and why individuals perceive the redundancy process and its implications to their own work situation.

From a individual perspective, previous research has isolated certain individual characteristics which may influence survivor reactions. Characteristics such as a survivors level of self esteem (Brockner et al, 1985), work effort (Brockner et al, 1992) and their work ethic (Brockner et al, 1988). Much of the work from the individual perspective has been based on stress and coping literature (Armstrongstassen, 1993; 1995; Brockner, 1988). Brockner (1988) has used equity theory together with organisational stress literature (Jick, 1985. Greenhalgh, 1983) to construct a model that focused on the factors which moderate individuals' reactions to the layoffs of co-workers. This model attempts to isolate variables which have an effect on survivors reactions and takes an overview of survivors reactions.   Other research has looked at the an individuals relationships within an organisation. Brockner (1990) suggests that if a survivor is particularly close to the leavers, they are more likely to react unfavourably towards the organisation. This research however, does not consider a survivor's relationship with his/her remaining colleagues.

There are clearly numerous factors from both an organisational and individual perspective which have the potential to affect survivor reactions. However, very little of the previous research has been conducted within organisations or within the UK. Those which have been conducted within the U.K have tended to study survivor responses from a managerial perspective. Several studies (Thornhill, Saunders & Stead, 1997; Sahdev & Vinnicombe, 1998) have interviewed managers to find out how they perceive that survivors have reacted to redundancy. Although, these studies have their value, they do not consider survivors themselves, in terms of those who experienced the redundancies directly.

As suggested, the majority of the above research has been conducted through experimental settings and within the context of organisations in America. The work completed by Brockner and others for example, consists of three main laboratory studies using undergraduate students and a field study (using questionnaires) of a chain of small retail stores across America. Researchers (Brockner & Greenberg, 1990; Brockner et al, 1990) have acknowledged that further field work, within organisations, is necessary to provide a more thorough understanding of survivors' reactions and the effects it can have on an organisation. To date, a 'structural approach' has been adopted, where research has focused on factors related to individual differences which affect survivors' reactions as opposed to considering survivor reactions in the context of a downsizing organisation.   As redundancy

is a series of processes, an analysis which attempts to consider phenomena in a naturally occurring sequence of events seems a more logical approach (Brockner, 1988). In the context of redundancy this will mean considering survivors' reactions and the issues which arise throughout the redundancy process, from the notification to after care. (Allen et al, 1995; Thornhill, Saunders & Stead, 1997). This approach allows for survivors' reactions to be considered in context of their organisations and measures the effects of the redundancy processes on individuals. It is clear that further research is needed, specifically within organisations in the UK, to try to draw together previous studies and understand the survivors attitudes, emotions and behaviours. In order to fully understand how all the theories link together, the current research attempted to understand the redundancy process from an organisational perspective and from an individual perspective. This meant drawing together the work of previous studies to establish a holistic view of the redundancy process and its affect on the individual.

For the purpose of the current study, we created a conceptual framework which illustrates how the existing theories are suggested to link together (see Figure 1). The framework was designed as a basis on which to understand the complex interactions between the organisation and the individual within a redundancy situation.

Figure 1. Original Framework for Understanding Survivors Reactions to Redundancy
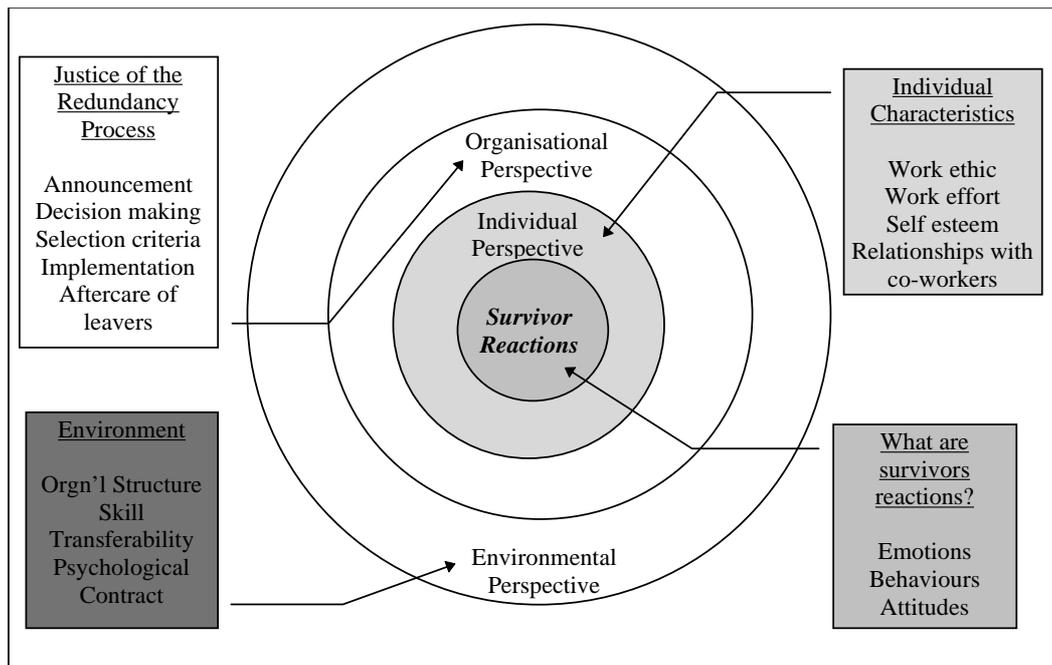
The framework is divided into three main areas, the organisational perspective, the individual perspective and the survivor reactions. The organisational perspective represents the employees perception of the justice of the organisational redundancy process. This involves the decision making, the announcement of the redundancies, the implementation of the process and the aftercare of those who leave. The individual perspective relates to the individual employee characteristics which have been suggested in the literature to influence their reactions to the redundancy process. These characteristics include, the individuals' level of self esteem, their work ethic, work effort and their relationships with their fellow workers. The central aspect of the framework is the actual survivor reactions and these are considered in the current study in terms of the survivor's emotions, attitudes and behaviours within the workplace.

Research strategy and methodology

The purpose of this research was exploratory as it aimed to explore individuals' reactions to the redundancy process within downsizing organisations. It attempted to seek new insights and assess the literature in organisations in Britain. Aside from the critical literature review, a number of initial exploratory in-depth interviews were conducted with Human Resource professionals. Each HR professional was selected for their extensive experience of the downsizing process, its implementation and effects. The aim of these interviews was to further understand the literature and to establish the research questions. Therefore, drawing from the literature review, the conceptual framework and the in-depth interviews two research questions were developed:

1. What are the survivors' emotional, attitudinal and behavioural responses to redundancies?
2. What are the factors which affect the strength of these reactions?

Hence, this research aimed to understand the emotions, attitudes and behaviours of individuals after a redundancy process and what influenced those reactions. As suggested earlier, previous research had used either experimental or quantitative, methods to understand survivors' reactions. However, in a business investigation it is often not possible to change one variable and observe what happens (Robson, 1993). Therefore, in order to answer the current research questions, the research needed to study multiple variables within an organisational context, making the previously used experimental approach inappropriate. A case study approach which takes a deeper look at the reasons behind individuals responses was considered more appropriate. This approach enabled a more in depth and realistic exploration of survivor issues and survivor reactions within an organisational context.

Within the case study approach, a number of focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted. First, four focus groups (of approximately eight employees) were conducted with a cross section of surviving employees, both managerial and non managerial. Second, twenty four (twelve from each case study organisation) in-depth semi-structured interviews with a cross section of survivors were conducted. The two case study organisations had over 1,000 employees and had experienced significant (at least 10%) downsizing within the last year. The organisations were in the financial services sector (Case Study 1) and the energy sector (Case Study 2).

All individual and group interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and subsequently analysed using content analysis. The analysis of the interviews took a deductive approach, whereby the existing theory and literature helped to analyse the qualitative data which had been collected (Saunders et al, 1997).

Emergent themes and discussion

The analysis of the qualitative data highlighted a number of emergent themes. Some of the more interesting themes are now discussed in relation to the original research questions.

Survivors' emotional, attitudinal and behavioural responses

The current research indicates that individuals have a wide range of emotional, attitudinal and behavioural reactions to the redundancy process. All of those interviewed reported feelings of stress, uncertainty, shock, confusion, insecurity and frustration. Those who had been refused voluntary redundancy showed disbelief, and felt upset and hurt. Those who simply survived the process reported similar feelings to those who had left, such as stress, shock, vagueness, impatience, sickness, confusion, lucky, worried, guilty, uncertain, insecure, indifferent, anger, frustration and disbelief. It appears that the emotions differ significantly in relation to their personal experiences and closeness to the redundancy process itself. For example, one respondent felt particularly strong about being handed her redundancy notice and then remaining within the organisation.

> "I had my redundancy notice handed to me ... and I truly say it had the most profound effect on me than anything that has ever happened to me in my whole life ... even more so than my parents dying. Now that sounds terribly dramatic but it was as traumatic for me as that ... I still think it was the shock ... I just felt as if the carpet was whipped out from under my feet" (FG4 p. 4).

This statement illustrates the not only the potentially damaging effects of redundancy, but the extent of the trauma it can cause to an individual. The emotions noted here are similar to those reported in previous research and synonymous with those of the grieving process (Kubler-Ross, 1984; Bridges, 1988; Noer, 1993). The most significant changes in attitudes found in the current study were related to the survivors' attitudes towards management. The respondents all noted feeling mistrust and less respect towards management throughout the redundancy process. This supports previous work which suggests that survivors attitudes towards work and the organisation can change due to redundancy (Brockner, 1986; Bartolome, 1989). However, previous research has not indicated how a significant change of attitudes, such as found in the current study, subsequently affects the survivors behaviour or the organisation and its performance.

The current study found that survivors' behaviour was affected in numerous ways throughout the redundancy process. The main finding was that survivors turned their attention to searching for alternate employment outside of the organisation. The feelings of insecurity and uncertainty bought on by redundancy caused many individuals to wish to leave the organisation when otherwise they may not have done so. This reaction to redundancy has the potential to affect the future of the organisation, as they are losing control of who is leaving the organisation. The findings suggest that not only does redundancy can affect the emotions an attitudes of survivors but they may turn these reactions into behaviours which are potentially damaging to the success of the organisation.

Previous research (Brockner et al, 1985,1986; Gutknecht & Keys, 1993) does suggest that redundancies may affect work behaviours such as productivity and performance. However, the current research found that survivors felt that their productivity and performance remained unchanged. Individuals felt that any deviance from the norm, would make them more vulnerable to future redundancies. For many individuals their work load had increased significantly although quality was not affected, their work had become stringently prioritised.

The survivors' emotions, attitudes and behaviours are wide and varied, in order to understand them, the research had to ask what factors were influencing these reactions. The next section of the paper discusses the findings which might help to answer this question.

The factors which affect the strength of survivors reactions

As suggested by the framework, influencing factors were made up of two main perspectives, the organisational and individual perspective. Therefore the results are discussed from these two different perspectives.

The organisational perspective

The results from the organisational perspective showed some interesting themes. With respect to the notification of redundancies. The announcement day in both case studies was found to cause many emotions and attitudes, including shock, relief, disbelief and anger towards management. Previous research (Brockner & Greenberg, 1990; Brockner, 1990) suggest that survivors given advance notification react less negatively to the redundancy. However, in the current research survivors are more concerned with the level of detail and amount of information they receive on the day of the redundancy notification. This reflects the reality of redundancies within an organisational context as employees usually suspect the advent of redundancies before the formal notification comes from management.

The decision making and selection criteria used in the redundancy process was also found to influence survivor reactions. Brockner and Greenberg (1990) suggest that the 'decisional basis' (or selection criteria) for redundancies has to be perceived to be fair, otherwise survivors are likely to be uncertain about the legitimacy of the redundancies. The current results support this view and found that the associated decision making process concerning the selection criteria needs to be perceived to be fair. In the current study survivors felt the process would be fair if their individual line manager was involved in the decision. The results also suggest that a decision is perceived to be more acceptable and fair if the decision process has been consultative. The results indicated that the survivor had not been consulted during the redundancy decision process. In case study 1, employees had not had the support of their union and in case study 2, although the union had been involved in the decision making, management made it clear that they were in control of the situation. This supports Davy, Kinicki and Scheck (1991), who tested a model of survivor responses and noted that the extent to which employees interacted in the redundancy decision making affected their perception of fairness of the overall redundancy process.

In line with interactional justice literature (Bies, 1987), the way in which people were treated throughout the implementation of the redundancies was found to affect survivor reactions. The current study found that those who felt they had been treated fairly and felt they had received sufficient communications reacted more positively than those who did not.

Survivors' research has shown that survivors are less likely to exhibit negative attitudes and behaviours if there has been clear and adequate explanations for the redundancy situation (Brockner et al, 1994; Brockner, 1992). The current findings support this view and develop the research further, in that communication needs to be accurate and from a higher managerial level within the organisation in order to produce less negative reactions.

With respect to caretaking of those who leave, Brockner (1990) proposed that if survivors perceived the leavers to have been treated unfairly, then their reaction to redundancies is more likely to be negative. In the support of Brockner's (1990) study and in line with interactional justice theory (Bies, 1987), the results from the current study found this to be true in both case study organisations. individuals who felt leavers had been treated badly had pronounced negative reactions towards management and the organisation. The fair treatment of leavers was characterised by the provision of outplacement facilities, counselling, and by management treating leavers with dignity and respect. However, the current study found that not only were the survivors reactions influenced by the treatment of the leaver but by the reaction of that leaver. For example, if the leaver was greatly distressed, the survivor was more likely to mirror those emotions, than to view the redundancies positively. In particular, survivors in case study 2 noted awareness of the amount of claims of unfair dismissal filed against management. When questioned management were proud to announce that they had won all of the tribunals. However, in relation to this issue, survivors persistently perceived injustice and frequently expressed resentment towards management. This illustrates how leavers responses towards the organisation had the potential to influence survivors perceptions of the redundancy and the organisation.

The individual perspective

As suggested by the original framework, the individual perspective was made up of the survivors work ethic, their work effort, their level of self esteem and their relationships with their co-workers. Previous research (Brockner et al., 1988) found those with a strong work ethic would react less negatively to redundancy. Brockner et al (1988) suggest that those with a strong work ethic are more able to remain focused on their jobs even in a redundancy situation. In the current research it was found that those who felt strongly about their work were also those who felt strongest about the redundancies. These survivors also perceived they had a lot to lose, especially financially. The current results indicate that it might not only the level of attachment to ones work or job but their economic need to work. The results suggest that those who financially needed to remain within

employment reacted negatively to the uncertainty of redundancy than those who were not the major income earners.

With respect to work effort, all of the respondents perceived they worked hard at their job irrespective of the redundancy situation. Brockner et al (1992) suggest that those who perceived they worked hard were more likely to feel greater injustice if redundancies occurred. However, the current study found that all the respondents viewed redundancies as unjust irrelevant of their perceived work effort. Also, there is an issue of the validity of individuals' self perception of their own work effort. The current results suggest that survivors were reluctant to suggest they had not been putting in the effort, in fear of repercussions in future rounds of redundancies. On the other hand, redundancies were considered by survivors as an unjust yet inevitable aspect of working life today. This suggests an alternative view, in that survivors work effort did little to affect their perception of justice and their reactions towards the redundancy process.

Previous research (Brockner et al, 1985) suggests that survivors with a high level of self esteem respond less negatively in a redundancy situation. The current findings appeared to support this research in that, those who viewed themselves positively, found the redundancies less threatening. In relation to the current study, survivors self esteem appeared to be supported by their self perception of their ability to find an alternative job. The survivors who viewed themselves positively in this situation were found to be those who perceived they could easily find a job elsewhere. In this respect perhaps a more appropriate characteristic than self esteem would be skill transferability or job mobility. Further research, would do well to investigate the moderating effect of survivors self perception of job mobility on their reactions to redundancy. In relation to this finding, career orientated survivors who felt that the redundancies had negatively affected their career opportunities reacted more negatively. The survivors behaviour in this instance was seen as an increase in their intention to leave the organisation and job searching behaviour.

Finally, with respect to co-worker relationships, previous research (Brockner et al, 1987) suggests that survivors who were 'close' to those who left are more likely to view the redundancies negatively. The current research supports these findings but also found that survivors were highly influenced by the reactions of those surrounding them who remained within the organisation. For example, if a survivors remaining colleagues reacted negatively towards management, the survivor was more likely to do the same.

In summary, the findings suggest that the relationships between the influencing factors and survivors reactions are much more complex than first presumed. The survivors reactions also clearly have the potential to affect the organisations future performance. The findings of this current study have both supported and extended previous research in this field. However, the findings induced a need to refine the original framework derived from the literature. The following section of the paper draws attention to how the framework was developed.

The development of the survivor framework

The original framework focused on two main perspectives which influenced survivors reactions, the organisation and the individual (see Figure 1). The results and analysis however suggest that there may be more factors which have the potential to influence survivors' emotions, attitudes and work behaviours. The new framework illustrates four main areas which influence the survivor reactions (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework for Understanding Survivors Reactions to Redundancy
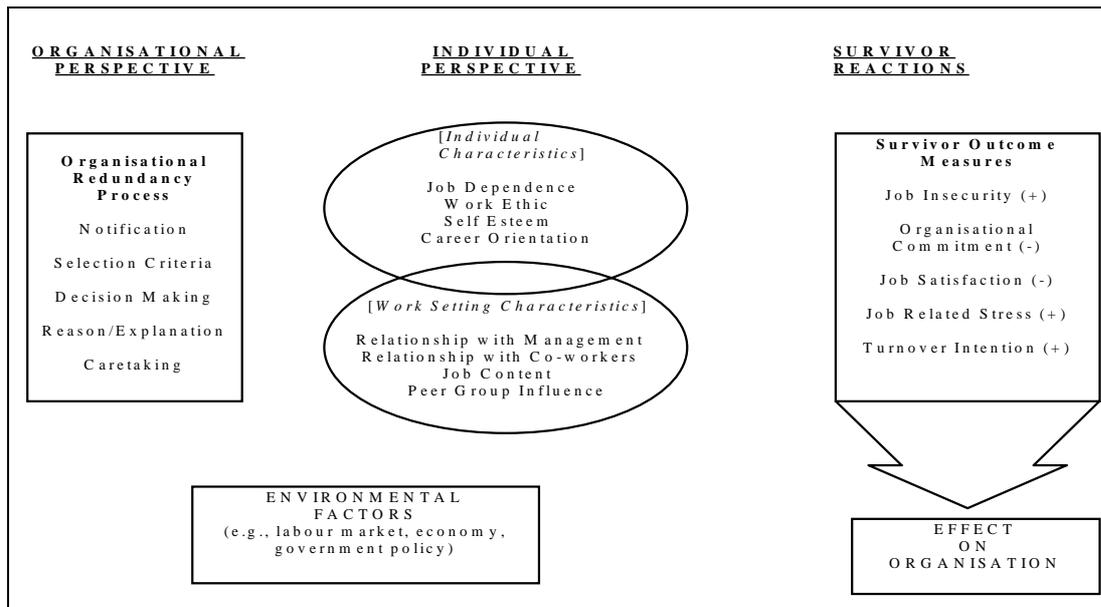
The original model devised for this research considered two main aspects, the individual and the organisation. As mentioned above the results from the current research suggests that this relationship is more complex. The organisational perspective of the redundancy process remains basically the same, takes into consideration the communication processes of explanation and reasoning. However, the interviews showed that the individual perspective was more complex than previously suggested and could be further divided into two subsequent areas. First, the individual employee characteristics and second, the individual's work environment and conditions (to be referred to as 'work setting characteristics'). The new framework also considers a forth aspect relevant to survivors, the environment. The results from the interviews indicated that factors external to the organisation such as the current economic climate, market conditions and current job market, had the potential to affect the way survivors responded to redundancy.

The survivor reactions in the new framework are considered in terms of organisational outcome measures including organisational commitment, job insecurity, job satisfaction, job related stress and turnover intention. This is in order to understand the effect of individuals survivor responses on the organisation itself.

In the light of the current findings and in order to explain the new framework, we will first look at redundancy from the organisational perspective and consider what management might need to consider when implementing a redundancy process. Second, we will outline how a survivor may view the process and what characteristics can influence this view.

Conclusions from the organisational perspective

From an organisational perspective management needs to consider five main areas within the redundancy process. Each area has the potential to influence the reaction of their survivors.

First, the results have shown that survivors reactions are influenced by the perceived fairness of the decisions and the decision making process. This perception of fairness can be enhanced by the process being consultative, either through direct consultation with staff or indirectly through staff associations or unions. The selection criteria or filter criteria, the method for deciding who leaves and who stays has to be seen to be fair to the employees. The interviews indicated that survivors reactions were less negative if they felt that they all had a equal chance of remaining. The interviews highlighted that the perception of fairness was enhanced if their own line manager was involved in the decision making relating to the selection decisions.

Second, the announcement day, when individuals are told whether they are leaving or remaining, was found to have a huge impact on survivors. This day can be considered a large communications exercise, and the way in which individuals react is based on the way in which this exercise is handled. The current study suggests that the information needs to be disseminated quickly, accurately, and with sensitivity. Individuals thirst for information on this day is almost unquenchable and the interviews indicated that survivors wanted managers to be accessible and prepared for 'any questions which might arise.

Third, following the announcement day, the communication needs to be continued. The current findings suggest that the amount of information available to survivors can influence their reactions. As with the announcement day, the information needs to be accurate, clear, and detailed. In the current study survivors expressed the desire for more explanations as to why certain decisions were made. The redundancy situation affects survivors level of trust towards management and survivors were more accepting of information coming from a higher managerial level. However, most importantly, the results suggest communications need to be open, honest and offer opportunities for staff to respond.

Finally, the 'caretaking' or 'aftercare' of employees is equally as important as the rest of the redundancy process. Management should not implement redundancies and then expect everything to 'go back to normal'. The current study has found that organisations often offer outplacement and counselling facilities to those people who leave an organisation but rarely offer assistance to those who remain. The current findings suggest that survivors can suffer emotionally as much as those who leave. They may suffer from increased stress ' worry and uncertainty, each which have the potential to affect their performance. Therefore, survivors can benefit from having similar support as the leavers in order to counteract any negative reactions and to help them cope in the new 'slimmed down' organisation.

The current research has clearly shown that each aspect of the redundancy process needs to be well planned from both the perspective of those leaving and those remaining.

Conclusions from the individual perspective

The current findings have shown that the individual perspective is more complex than first thought. The interviews indicated that not only are there individual characteristics, but work setting characteristics which can influence survivor reactions.

The original framework's 'individual characteristics' included the survivors level of self esteem, work ethic and work effort. The current study highlighted two further characteristics which can influence survivor's reactions. First, those individuals with a high level of job dependence (economic need to work) were more likely to react negatively to redundancy. Second, those survivors whose career expectations (through promotion/ advancement) were high and who felt that the redundancy program negatively affected their career opportunities were more likely to react negatively. Therefore, both job dependency and career orientation are considered to be potentially influential factors in understanding survivor responses.

The work setting characteristics refer to those characteristics which are specific to the survivors work environment. First, survivors relationship with their immediate and senior managers was found to influence their reaction in a redundancy situation. The findings suggest that those people who had a 'good' relationship (good flow of communication and support) with their immediate manager were less likely to react negatively to the redundancy process. A good relationship with their line manager also appears to enhance survivors' perception of justice of the redundancy process. As suggested earlier, survivors' relationships with their fellow workers also has the potential to affect survivor reactions. Peer group influence refers to the findings which established that survivors were influenced by their fellow workers reactions. The findings suggested that survivors who perceive their co-workers to react negatively are more likely to react negatively themselves. This confirms to some extent that

survivors perception of justice is influenced by those around them. Finally, job content refers to aspects of the individuals job which are important to them and which may change due to the redundancies. The current findings suggested that the extent to which a survivors job had changed through redundancies affected the survivors reactions. There are clearly more characteristics from an individual perspective which need to be considered in order to understand how and why a survivor reacts.

Implications and future research

The original framework was designed to draw together the work of previous researchers in this field. The primary aim was to establish the relevance of theories and studies which had principally been developed in North America for American companies. The secondary aim of the study was to discover the range of reactions of a survivor to a redundancy process. The results found that there were a wide range of emotional, attitudinal and behavioural reactions including ones not previously documented in the American studies. The third aim of the framework was to establish which factors influenced the reactions of survivors. The results supported previous findings and also introduced new insights into the understanding of survivor reactions.

The current study has shown that communication plays an important role in the fairness judgements made by survivors throughout the redundancy process. The study has also shown that the interpersonal treatment of both the leavers and the survivors affects their reactions. The reactions of a survivor in a redundancy situation were found to be influenced not only by their own characteristics but by the importance of their job, their career orientation and their co-workers. Survivors perception of justice was also influenced by their relationship with management and their perception of line management's involvement in the redundancy process. Each of these findings formed the basis for the development of the conceptual framework and form the grounding for further research in this field.

Future research needs to consider the effects of individual survivor reactions on the employing organisation. As the redundancy process is to some extent within the control of management, research is needed to understand how far management can influence the reactions of individual survivors. The second phase[4] of the research has involved the development of a questionnaire and its distribution in the two case study organisations. The questionnaire aims to test a set of hypotheses which were developed from the redefined conceptual framework.

[4] Results from the second phase of the project can be obtained from the author.

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