**Participant 3 Transcript**

| Demographic Information | |
| --- | --- |
| Age Group | (4) 36 - 45 |
| Gender | (1) Male |
| Organisational Level | (2) Employee in a managerial role |
| Familiar with retrenchments | (2) Yes |
| Currently a survivor of retrenchments | (2) Yes – Initially impacted but managed to get an alternative contract within |
| Aware of company wellness programme | (2) Yes |

| Time | Interviewer/Participant | Question/Response |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0:0:0.0 --> 0:0:0.690 | Interviewer | Hi there, how are you doing? |
| 0:0:4.830 --> 0:0:5.870 | Participant | I’m well and you? |
| 0:0:6.890 --> 0:2:47.140 | Interviewer | I’m good thanks. So, first and foremost, I want to start off by saying thank you so much for showing your willingness to participate in the study. So I've shared the informed consent letter with you. So that does give a very brief breakdown of what my study is about. But just to explain it to you, my study’s basically based on the recent retrenchments that have taken place at your company; and what we find or based on literature, majority of the time it is the case that you know when companies undergo retrenchments, the focus area is usually on those being retrenched, which those people are technically classified as the the victims are retrenchments, and very minimal attention is given to those people who remain inside the company after retrenchments, and those people are classified as the survivors of the retrenchments. So my research also has a little bit of a twist on it. So what I am hoping to get out of this is that there's actually two types of survivors, those that were initially on the list for being retrenched, but then, you know, were accommodated elsewhere, to find a job elsewhere within the company.  Those people who were just never on the list, they were always going to be considered safe from the retrenchments, so that's just basically a very brief summary of my study. There's just a few things I want to go through before I get started with questions. I just want to confirm that everything will remain confidential. So your name will not appear in my paper. It will not be shared with the company at all. The company's name will also not be shared in my paper, and then just another thing is that if you do not feel comfortable, you know, answering a particular question, given the sensitive nature of the topic, you're more than welcome to say, look, can I skip the question or if you feel like withdrawing from the interview, you are also welcome to just stop me and say, look, I don't want to continue with the the interview anymore. So you are welcome to do that. So yeah, I think in terms of formality that's done. I just want to start off with some demographic questions. So I'm going to read out some age groups. You can maybe just stop me when I reach your age group. So in terms of the groups that I've got over here is 18 years or younger 19 to 25, 26 to 35, 36 to 45… |
| 0:2:45.30 --> 0:2:47.400 | Participant | 36 to 45. |
| 0:2:47.880 --> 0:2:54.610 | Interviewer | Alright, great. Thank you so much. And then in terms of gender, what gender would you classify yourself as? |
| 0:2:57.410 --> 0:2:57.690 | Participant | Male. |
| 0:2:56.910 --> 0:3:6.620 | Interviewer | And then in terms of organisational level, would you consider yourself an employee in a non-managerial role or in a managerial role? |
| 0:3:7.900 --> 0:3:27.400 | Participant | It’s a manager role. I don't know. But I don't have anyone reporting to me. But I have graduate intake learners. But I manage a total headcount of about 50. |
| 0:3:28.70 --> 0:3:48.460 | Interviewer | All right, that should be fine then. Alright. I’m going to get into some questions. This should take approximately 30 to 45 minutes depending on how in depth you go with your answers. But that's more or less how long the interview should take. So I'll kick off. So first question being, are you familiar with retrenchments? |
| 0:3:49.610 --> 0:3:54.870 | Participant | Yeah, I am familiar with that. I think I've been through two processes. The first one I was on the list and then there was, then I was off the list. And then the second one I was on the list, but we found alternative employment now for me within the same organisation. |
| 0:4:16.760 --> 0:4:35.470 | Interviewer | Alright, so that basically answers my second question being, are you currently a survivor of retrenchment? So that's great. So just to confirm, you were initially in the most recent retrenchments that have taken place last year? You were initially on the list, but then they found an alternative job for you within the company? |
| 0:4:36.150 --> 0:4:46.660 | Participant | Uh, yes, it was actually an alternative contract and it's yeah, so I still work for the organisation, but on a different contract than I was on previously. |
| 0:4:50.140 --> 0:4:56.470 | Interviewer | Okay, great. And then tell me are you familiar with the Employee Wellness program that the company offers you? |
| 0:4:57.770 --> 0:5:51.320 | Participant | Yes, I know that is ICAS and there is a company that is outsourced for all employees of the organisation to turn to whenever they have issues that might have to do with Wellness, but I know that there's also HRBP's were available for such discussions whenever you feel like you're not well or you want to talk to someone in the organisation and then the Human Resources Business Partner’s would be the first point of contact. Especially as with issues or matters that have to do with the treatment. |
| 0:5:41.810 --> 0:5:52.800 | Interviewer | Okay, great. Fantastic. And then so you mentioned that you have also previously been a victim of retrenchments in the same company as well previously? |
| 0:5:53.560 --> 0:5:53.920 | Participant | Yes. |
| 0:5:53.280 --> 0:6:33.190 | Interviewer | Alright, so then tell me, you know, you mentioned that the company managed to find an alternative or you know at least get you an alternative contract to what you were previously on. So what other reasonable accommodation would you say the company made for you to basically just assist you with coping through some of the challenges that you personally experienced? You know, whether it was during the whole process of the retrenchments or you know after the retrenchments have already taken place and the people have already left the company. |
| 0:6:29.630 --> 0:7:11.470 | Participant | No, there were no other alternatives. It's just that for me process was handled very well professionally and the communication with the Human Resources Business Partner’s and everyone involved, you know it was done well. But there was no other alternative arrangements made in terms of maybe counseling or sessions with anyone else outside the Human Resources Business Partner’s and the consultants who were hired to facilitate the retrenchments? |
| 0:7:12.610 --> 0:7:21.110 | Interviewer | All right, so you said the Human Resources Business Partner’s were, and I just want to also just for clarification; Human Resources Business Partner’s are being Human Resources Business Partners, correct? |
| 0:7:21.630 --> 0:7:36.30 | Participant | Uh-huh. That’s correct. Yeah. |
| 0:7:22.570 --> 0:7:36.800 | Interviewer | Alright, so these Human Resources Business Partner’s in terms of communication they weren't there for consulting and having counseling sessions. It was more just around the communication of the retrenchment process? |
| 0:7:37.600 --> 0:7:43.140 | Participant | Yeah, it was more about the retrenchment process than me as an individual. |
| 0:7:45.990 --> 0:8:4.610 | Interviewer | Alright so tell me then, from your personal experience, how did you cope with some of the experiences that you dealt with during the retrenchment process? So that would be like your just general, like emotions, some of the other things that were challenges to you at that time. |
| 0:8:6.380 --> 0:9:33.990 | Participant | I think I did well and maybe for me it's because I understand the wealth of work and how careers are in these days. Because I sort of have an understanding that you cannot, there's no such thing as a permanent contract, you know, and you have to be in charge of your own career and you need to generate yourself very well to a point where if you are out of a job this month, you can get another one in two months, and I think it's also because of the skill set that I have and the kind of work that I do. So I sort of knew that I will find something after the retrenchments so I wasn't stressed about it. Yeah. So I think that's it knowing the skill set that I have, the kind of work that I do, and me owning my own career to point where I network myself around and I can find a job much easier maybe compared to everyone else. |
| 0:9:27.990 --> 0:9:41.150 | Interviewer | So would say you took or you had some opportunities that you could have potentially leveraged on, and so you didn't really see it in too much of a negative light as such? |
| 0:9:41.930 --> 0:10:48.150 | Participant | No, no, it wasn't in a negative light. That’s because I understood why the process was implemented. And maybe it's also understanding that the kind of work that I do is sort of in demand and it's done by a few people in industry and very small people who know each other and I could call and text or e-mail people in that same cycle and get something in not a long period of time, but compared to my colleagues who were doing different types of work, I could see the stress that they had you know because it wasn't going to be easy for them to get something else outside of what they have here within the organisation. |
| 0:10:43.600 --> 0:10:52.910 | Interviewer | And then just reflecting back on their stress, do you think that that by any chance impacted the way that you felt in any way about the retrenchments? |
| 0:10:55.520 --> 0:10:56.850 | Participant | Can you just repeat the question? |
| 0:10:57.780 --> 0:11:19.810 | Interviewer | So I was saying that if you reflect back onto the stress that your other colleagues were dealing with at the time, would you say that their stress by any chance impacted on how you viewed the retrenchments or just how you generally felt, whether it was regarding the retrenchment process itself or whether it was how you felt about those employees actually being retrenched? |
| 0:11:21.930 --> 0:12:51.570 | Participant | Yeah, so for me we were a small team. It's two people who I had worked with for five years, you know? And we worked very well together and it wasn't a good fight, you know, when they were sharing, when we got to talk about the experiences and you feel sorry for people because here you are not worried about this thing because you know that you can get out there and get a job within six months if at most, and you have other colleagues who might not find it easy to get a job outside of the work they are doing now. And they've been at this job for 10 -15 years. And then you sort of feel sorry for them in that regard to say that they might not be able to find anything. I mean before this retrenchment and they would rather stay in this job and retire within the organisation, while I on the other hand, I'm open to leaving the organisation and find something and continue working, but yeah. So it does get pretty emotional. Because you understand the situation, yeah. |
| 0:12:48.920 --> 0:13:11.50 | Interviewer | Yeah I can imagine. Yeah, alright. You mentioned that you obviously did speak amongst yourselves. But did you ever have an opportunity to actually speak to someone that was perhaps your manager, or whether it was maybe the Managing Director or anyone else? |
| 0:13:13.120 --> 0:13:15.90 | Participant | Do you mean speak about the retrenchment? |
| 0:13:15.810 --> 0:13:18.250 | Interviewer | Yeah, just your general feelings. |
| 0:13:19.350 --> 0:13:56.580 | Participant | No. I think the discussion were about the retrenchment and the possible alternative and payment for me. But it wasn't to do with feelings of I feel this way about the process or I feel this way about the colleagues who are affected by the process, but it wasn't like that. It was more about the retrenchment itself and the alternative employment that could possibly come through. |
| 0:13:58.20 --> 0:14:5.120 | Interviewer | And have you made use of ICAS as you mentioned? Have you ever made use of them during the retrenchment process? Or you just didn't feel the need to? |
| 0:14:12.90 --> 0:15:23.790 | Participant | No, there was no need to. Like I mentioned, that for me there was no high stress levels or or worry about me leaving, because I think it also had to do with the discussions that we were already having with management to say, you know, we are sort of limited in terms of headcount, we know the value that you had to the organisation and we would not let those type of skills go, then so it sort of maybe made it easy for me to not worry about the future, I'm gonna find work or not, and I think like as I mentioned, the belief in the skills that I have and the value that I add in the team, you know, sort of made me comfortable, not worry and end up contacting ICAS and speaking about feelings and the stress that the retrenchment is bringing for me. |
| 0:15:24.810 --> 0:15:32.240 | Interviewer | Alright. Were there by any chance any surveys that were distributed in terms of employee well-being post the retrenchments? |
| 0:15:33.590 --> 0:15:37.490 | Participant | No there wasn’t. Not that I know of. |
| 0:15:38.420 --> 0:16:1.960 | Interviewer | Alright. So, just back to the colleagues that were retrenched. You mentioned some of them or some were in your team as well? Were these people that you worked with on a daily basis? Or were there other people as well that were also retrenched that you also worked with quite often in different departments? |
| 0:16:2.750 --> 0:16:46.510 | Participant | Yeah. So we've been through two retrenchment processes. So in the first one, because there's a very small team and a very small office, everyone knows each other. Each of our jobs is intertwined and we depend on each other for certain parts of the value chain of what we do. Yeah, so it was people that I worked with closely. Even now, the thing is, with this process, most of them managed to find alternative employment. So at the end it was all good. |
| 0:16:48.660 --> 0:16:54.950 | Interviewer | And when you say alternative employment; that being within the company or externally? |
| 0:16:55.230 --> 0:17:7.770 | Participant | Externally and internally. Like some of them had to move overseas for work. And some of them found employment elsewhere. |
| 0:17:8.770 --> 0:17:16.180 | Interviewer | Okay, right. So you would say some of these relationships with these colleagues were relatively strong or? |
| 0:17:17.140 --> 0:17:32.590 | Participant | Strong. Strong small teams dependent on each other. People that you can hang out outside even the work environment, you know. |
| 0:17:31.100 --> 0:17:36.460 | Interviewer | Okay. So some personal relationships within also developed. Alright. And then you know those people that found alternative jobs externally, as you mentioned, these relationships were quite strong while being in the company. Are you still in contact with any of these people that were retrenched? |
| 0:17:55.660 --> 0:18:26.110 | Participant | Yes, we’re still in touch. It's just not the same as it was before because we would see each other in the office almost everyday of our lives. But yeah, we do keep in touch on LinkedIn. You know, even if them keeping in touch is not with me, but I see them in touch with other team members. Uh, yeah, so, but LinkedIn and social media, we are still in touch. |
| 0:18:27.460 --> 0:18:47.330 | Interviewer | Great. So, back to you, your personal perceptions regarding the retrenchment process. But now from a post retrenchment point of view. Now that some of your colleagues have left the company, do you feel as though you have a greater workload on your desk? |
| 0:18:49.480 --> 0:19:33.480 | Participant | So I sort of had to let go with my new contract. I had to let go of some of the part of the job that I did previously, then moved towards being a specialist in a niche area which is young talent. So there is more work because now we are doing more deep work than we did previously. Now we're focusing on the details and improving the programs. So it's more work, but more meaningful work, more impactful work, more engagement with the graduates and more engagement with the managers. |
| 0:19:31.830 --> 0:19:48.740 | Interviewer | Okay, alright. And then just reflecting on the retrenchment process, do you think that this whole process has allowed job functions to be more streamlined or does it carry any benefits after the retrenchments have taken place? |
| 0:19:50.290 --> 0:21:38.180 | Participant | Yes, I think the reason behind retrenchment was streamlining so that some of the parts of the jobs can be done in a country outside of South Africa. There are areas where things that improved and areas we think there's room for improvement. Like for example with payments, we had control of payments and systems to make payments, maybe even faster than we can make them now, because now it's done off site, and it's people who might not understand the context of why this payment has to happen now. Previously we had that control, but now we don't have control, so there's sort of limitation there. But the areas we know, the team took over some parts of the job like learning and development. For example, we could have a team that is dedicated to internal training and then doing reports and all of that. So yeah, there are areas we think are improved, and areas we think is still made of what is room for improvement. |
| 0:21:19.150 --> 0:21:49.520 | Interviewer | Alright. So then just, you know, from scanning the environment after the retrenchments have taken place and people have left the company, what would you say some of the observable after fix of these these retrenchments so that could be anything related to and and this is just in general based on what you're seeing from other from other areas in the company as well you know what would you said the workload, the morale, employee commitment some of the psychological changements and well-being? And what does that look like? Would you say it's been more positive or it's been a little bit more negative after these retrenchments? |
| 0:21:58.650 --> 0:22:57.20 | Participant | I think it's more positive because it's smaller teams now, so few people doing streamlined work? The office is now, speaking in terms of space, you know, that previously I mean headcount was high and obviously it was more like, you know, now colleagues have their own offices. I think in terms of well-being and the environment, I think we're doing great. In terms of performance, I'm just not sure if we are doing better than we did previously. I just don't have that information on document, but seems a better environment and place of work. And people seem to be motivated to do this work. |
| 0:22:59.860 --> 0:23:9.20 | Interviewer | That's good. And then two, to what extent would you say you're familiar with the labour legislation that pertains to retrenchments? |
| 0:23:10.550 --> 0:23:31.590 | Participant | Section 189. I think it makes it easier because I'm in the Human Resources department and I've been through the retrenchment, so I'm sort of familiar with the process and how everything is supposed to be done. I think out of five, I would say I'm somewhere at four. |
| 0:23:32.680 --> 0:23:40.700 | Interviewer | Alright, great. And I know earlier on, you mentioned as well that you do think that the process was procedurally fair. Why would you say that? I know you also touched on external parties or so coming in to assist. Would you say that would be one of the reasons? |
| 0:23:51.870 --> 0:23:54.150 | Participant | Yeah, I think. The fairness comes from them doing things by the book in terms of communicating based on what the legislation requires and also opening rooms for negotiation in terms of packages that people had to be paid when they left. Yeah, I think it was fair because of that. And there were some frustrations during the process as well. But at the end of the day, things worked out well, you know, there were points where people were unclear about certain things in terms of what's going on, you know, but at the end of the day it it, it panned out well. |
| 0:24:46.240 --> 0:24:59.330 | Interviewer | So, when you say you know some people were a bit unclear, would you say the communication you know wasn't fully open? Why would people be unclear about what was going on? |
| 0:25:0.630 --> 0:25:56.650 | Participant | I think there were some points where there was lack of communication. I mean for me personally there were times when there was no communication regarding my new contract. It took like a year for us to catch up to where we are now. You know those times when it was frustrating for me too. We checked on extending contracts until the last day of employment, because there was no decisions that were being made from management level. I think at the end of the day they were also pressured by extending contracts endlessly and then we had to come to an agreement at the end. But yeah. |
| 0:25:58.210 --> 0:26:14.680 | Interviewer | All right. And then just your view on management, do you believe that they offered sufficient support after the retrenchments have taken place in order to keep the culture positive or do you think there's anything that they could have done better? |
| 0:26:17.130 --> 0:27:11.390 | Participant | I'm not sure about things they could have done after the retrenchment. But I think before, I think decisions could have been made faster than they were made. Yeah. So I think just decision making for me was quite a challenge. But during the process, things took longer. Things that were not supposed to have taken that long took longer at some points. |
| 0:26:59.330 --> 0:27:13.600 | Interviewer | And would you say you felt uncertain about where you stood basically with the company? Especially with the contracts being extended consistently. |
| 0:27:12.840 --> 0:28:39.000 | Participant | Yeah. So, I think one thing for sure is that the company, it's a good place to work. You know in terms of the culture of work itself. You run with your own projects, the flexibility, there's no such thing as micromanagement in whatever level of the organisation you are in, whether you're a graduate or whether you are a senior manager, you know the quantity is very satisfying. It would be even when you are under the retrenchment process, you wouldn't want to leave up until the end because of like, for myself, the projects that I'm working, it is something that I'm very passionate about and something that I'm very aligned with and that I like doing. So even when we're doing the transition process, I wasn't out there like submitting CV’s and looking for alternative employment elsewhere. I wanted the process to end and then that I can start a new chapter if there was no other alternative employment within, but at the end there was alternative employment which we are still doing work for the organisation today. Yeah, I'm not sure if I answered your question, so I sort of went off it. |
| 0:28:38.500 --> 0:29:8.590 | Interviewer | Yeah. No, that's 100%. Alright. And then I think just two more questions. What would you say your current level of commitment is like to the company now after the retrenchments have taken place? And that also just touches on. You know, for example, the psychological contract as well because you know, I'm sure you'd also possibly be familiar with the psychological contract being in HR yourself. So, what would you say that commitment is like right now? |
| 0:28:53.370 --> 0:29:57.570 | Participant | I think commitment to the work; I'm very committed to the work and working on projects and delivering them on time. You know, it's exciting work, but to the organisation itself; there is no such. I think it's way low now. The psychological contract has been affected to a point that I know that I could not be here the next month or the next six months, because things can change at any minute now. So I'm very, very committed to the work, but I can't say the same about the organisation. |
| 0:29:53.0 --> 0:29:59.240 | Interviewer | And then just touching on your trust in management. What would you say your trust in management would be? |
| 0:30:1.240 --> 0:31:12.890 | Participant | I do have trust in management and I work very closely with them. But I know that if they have to let me go, they will do it. If they have to cut budgets and if they have to cut certain problems, they will not hesitate because that is what they're supposed to do at that level of management. If you have to cut headcount, you have to do it. And if you have to cut budgets, you have to do it. So, I think I'm close to those decisions to understand why they have to be done and I know that it would not be anything personal. They're doing their jobs they are required to do. So, psychological contract with the work as I mentioned, we hide our psychological contract with the organisation and management as it is affected. |
| 0:31:13.910 --> 0:31:14.390 | Interviewer | Okay, alright. That's good. Is there anything else you would like to add? I'm done with my questions. So if you want add anything else, you're more than welcome. |
| 0:31:26.740 --> 0:31:48.170 | Participant | No, there isn’t anything to add. But if you then have follow up questions after the interview and you want to to get more information, you're more than welcome to set up another session, and then we can take it further. But I hope I answered all your questions. |
| 0:31:48.800 --> 0:32:4.110 | Interviewer | Absolutely. And thank you so much for that. I think you definitely have covered everything and you've given some really in depth information, so I should be all good. But thank you so much for taking the time as well just to answer these questions and participate. |
| 0:32:5.300 --> 0:32:12.300 | Participant | Welcome, and all the best with your data collection and what comes after that. |