**Participant 7 Transcript**

| Demographic Information | |
| --- | --- |
| Age Group | (4) 36 - 45 |
| Gender | (2) Female |
| Organisational Level | (2) Employee in managerial |
| Familiar with retrenchments | (2) Yes |
| Currently a survivor of retrenchments | (1) Yes - Position was safe. Initially on list but the position became safe. |
| Aware of company wellness programme | (2) Yes |

| Time | Interviewer/Participant | Question/Response |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0:0:0.0 --> 0:0:0.630 | Interviewer | Hi there. |
| 0:0:2.350 --> 0:0:3.810 | Participant | Hi. Hi Candice, how are you? |
| 0:0:4.730 --> 0:0:5.890 | Interviewer | Good things in yourself? |
| 0:0:6.840 --> 0:0:8.620 | Participant | I am very well, thank you. |
| 0:0:9.890 --> 0:0:26.830 | Interviewer | Great. Alright. I just want to start off with saying thank you so much for showing your willingness to participate in my study. You'll see that the interview is being recorded. I just want to get confirmation that it is okay for me to record and transcribe the interview? |
| 0:0:29.100 --> 0:0:31.110 | Participant | Absolutely yes. You have my permission. |
| 0:0:31.930 --> 0:0:32.940 | Interviewer | Right. Thank you. |
| 0:0:32.470 --> 0:0:33.240 | Participant | Happy to help. |
| 0:0:34.80 --> 0:0:43.380 | Interviewer | Awesome. Thank you so much. Alright. So, I'm not going to take much of your time. I'm hoping that it's only going to take at least 30 to 45 minutes at the most. |
| 0:0:55.900 --> 0:0:56.180 | Participant | Yeah. |
| 0:0:44.990 --> 0:2:55.920 | Interviewer | So just before I start off with some demographic questions, I just also want to mention that everything that is discussed will remain confidential. So your name will not be used in my study. It will also not be shared with the company as well. The company's name will also not be in my study. So everything will be 100% confidential. So obviously being open and honest would really be appreciated. And then yeah, also just given the sensitive nature of the topic as well, I think it's also just important to remain as confidential as possible but then also share as much Information and honesty as possible as well from your side. So yeah, I've shared the informed consent letter with you. So that is all good. So just to you, you would have obviously seen a very brief description of my study, but just to give you a very quick overview of it, is that so in terms of retrenchments, there are typically two types of people according to literature, so that’s your survivors and then your victims. So the victims are the people that are retrenched and often a lot of attention is given to these people when retrenchments take place. people that are retrenched and often a lot of the tension is given to these people when retrenchments take place, and minimal attention is given to the survivors, which are the people who remain within the company after retrenchments. So my focus is on the survivors, the people within the company. So yeah, it's so just in summary. My final focus would be on the recent retrenchments that have taken place at the company that you work for, looking at the survivors. So I'm just going to quickly go into some demographic information. I'm going to read out to you a couple of age groups and you can maybe just stop me when I get to your particular age group. So the first one being 18 or younger 19 to 25, 26 to 35, 36 to 45… |
| 0:2:56.940 --> 0:2:58.290 | Participant | 26 to 35. |
| 0:2:58.140 --> 0:3:4.220 | Interviewer | Okay, perfect. Thank you so much. And then what gender do you classify yourself as? |
| 0:3:5.250 --> 0:3:6.500 | Participant | Female. |
| 0:3:7.600 --> 0:3:15.680 | Interviewer | And then in terms of organisational level. Would you say that you are an employee in a non managerial role or in a managerial role? |
| 0:3:16.580 --> 0:3:18.250 | Participant | A managerial role. |
| 0:3:19.210 --> 0:3:28.670 | Interviewer | Perfect. Alright. Thank you so much. Alright. So I'm going to get into the actual questions and the first one being are you familiar with retrenchments? |
| 0:3:30.410 --> 0:3:31.750 | Participant | I am. Yes, yes, I am. |
| 0:3:32.980 --> 0:3:40.460 | Interviewer | Right. And then tell me, are you currently a survivor of the retrenchments that have recently taken place at the company? |
| 0:3:42.210 --> 0:3:45.380 | Participant | I would say yes, I am a survivor on my end. |
| 0:3:46.770 --> 0:3:51.940 | Interviewer | Right. And then tell me, are you aware of the employee Wellness program that the company offers you? |
| 0:3:54.40 --> 0:4:5.440 | Participant | I'm not too clear on it, but they did run a couple of programs basically to support the process. I guess I'd say. |
| 0:4:6.460 --> 0:4:21.580 | Interviewer | Yeah. Okay, great. Alright. So have you at any point been a victim of retrenchments? So have you ever been in a situation in your career where you have actually been retrenched or? |
| 0:4:21.700 --> 0:4:25.940 | Participant | No. Fortunately never. |
| 0:4:27.100 --> 0:5:2.710 | Interviewer | Alright, thank you. And then tell me, in the situation or the current or recent retrenchments that have just happened at the company that you work for, if you look at some of the other people that have been retrenched or you know some of the people that have still remained behind, was any accommodation made for them, you know, in order for them to either find an alternative job or just accommodate these people, whether it's like coping mechanisms or support that is given to these people. |
| 0:5:4.320 --> 0:5:49.20 | Participant | I would say not as far as I could see. Especially because I didn't know anyone who was going through the process directly, but a lot of the support was more operational and very process based. Just basically informational like letting people know exactly what's going on when it's happening. Whereas on an emotional level, I did not see any of that happening. I guess I wouldn't also be privy to it because I didn't know anyone close who was going through that retrenchment at the time. |
| 0:5:50.280 --> 0:5:57.130 | Interviewer | So it wasn't really in your department where it was as hectic I would say? |
| 0:5:57.200 --> 0:5:59.310 | Participant | No, no it wasn’t. |
| 0:5:58.320 --> 0:6:1.230 | Interviewer | It was more in other areas? |
| 0:6:0.250 --> 0:6:1.820 | Participant | Yes, in other areas. |
| 0:6:2.760 --> 0:6:18.50 | Interviewer | Alright. And you haven't really necessarily spoken to anyone to say, look, you know, how are things going or anyone hasn't really actually come up to you to say, look, you know, I'm actually on the retrenchment list, I'm going to be retrenched or whatever? |
| 0:6:19.320 --> 0:6:23.670 | Participant | I didn’t get that at all. I didn’t get to communicate with anyone on it. |
| 0:6:24.580 --> 0:6:50.410 | Interviewer | Okay, great. Alright. And then tell me you know obviously you haven't directly dealt with people, but I mean you surely would have seen people leave. You would have seen the changes in the company that have taken place, you know, just witnessing the emotions and all of that. |
| 0:6:50.570 --> 0:8:18.100 | Participant | Yeah, yeah. It wasn’t easy at all. Especially because we're all aware that we are heads of families. You know, we contribute to the, what? What would I say we, you know, we were the household like basically we’re the heads of households and it's difficult to watch people being stripped of you know the one thing that they knew would be steady for the next I guess how many years until they themselves wanted to move on. So I think it was also quite concerning because no one knew who'd be next. And that's far more, it just brings a lot of anxiety into the workplace, because no one really knows exactly. And that's why I was saying that the support that they gave was quite informational, more or less, just basically giving us an idea of what's happening when it's happening just to try to ease the anxiety. But it did very little to ease that, especially because there was no emotional support. Like I said, well, that I or that we even as survivors were receiving at the time. So yeah. |
| 0:8:19.550 --> 0:9:24.950 | Interviewer | Thank you. And I like the fact that you touched on, you know you personally afterwards and I think that's also one thing I want to tap into. But I'll get to that in a minute. You know, let's just go into it. So you didn't really then or would you say you had an opportunity where you could open up with whether that was HR or you know whether that was with someone that you would directly report into? Did you ever have an opportunity to discuss any of these emotions that you were dealing with? Because as I say, you see people go and as you said, some of these people were heads of families and just knowing that and some of the relationships that are built, that or that some people build with these people, it can be very difficult and it can be very sad to see. So did you at all have any platform where you could say look, it's really difficult for me to just take all of this in and and whatnot? |
| 0:9:25.840 --> 0:11:10.570 | Participant | I would say yes. At the time my boss, she's quite open. She has an open door policy, so we do have regular meetings where we just touch base with each other and not on an operational level. Just checking in to see exactly how you are and how you're doing. So we definitely did put it on the table, bring the emotion onto the table, that it's been quite difficult, you know dealing with the change. She actually has dealt with it as someone personally that lived or that was a victim as you said. So she, you know, she also dealt with it in her own emotional way. But I think for the most part of it, we just tried to be there for each other and try to be as informed as we possibly as we can with the procedure that was occurring. But from as hearing that our unit, our service unit was mostly safe and we didn't really have much to worry about, but it was a lot more worrying thinking of your colleagues who are in finance or who are in communications or something. You know that they might get retrenched at the time. So yeah. |
| 0:11:11.350 --> 0:11:38.930 | Interviewer | Alright, so I just want to tap into that. One of the questions here is were some of these people that you typically worked with or you know the people that were retrenched, were they really typically people that you actually worked with on a daily basis? So you wouldn't really say then you had strong relationships with some of the people who were retrenched, or did you at least have some sort of…? |
| 0:11:38.550 --> 0:11:42.310 | Participant | No. No I didn’t. |
| 0:11:42.780 --> 0:11:49.770 | Interviewer | All right. So then, you don't really have any contact with these people at all now, even though after they've been retrenched? |
| 0:11:50.300 --> 0:11:54.340 | Participant | Yes. Yes, I don’t have contact with them now. |
| 0:11:55.90 --> 0:12:28.390 | Interviewer | Alright. That's great. So if you look at the retrenchments or the aftermath of it, and looking at the current situation now. Do you think that you have greater workload as such, even though your business unit, as you said, hasn't really been that affected? But even if you could look at you know just observing from as an outsider looking at other departments, do you think that whether it's yourself or you know people in general have greater workload after the retrenchments? |
| 0:12:29.180 --> 0:13:38.700 | Participant | Absolutely. I think that actually does happen across the board as much as the business would have planned for, you know, or they planned for all these job losses on the side. However, at the end of the day, there's someone who's missing who is fulfilling that function. So like right now, I don't have a go to person in terms of assisting with finance, all sorts of my finance activities. I've now had to take upon myself and so much as yes, that is upskilling and you know getting some sort of depth in learning a new skill, however it does also then cut back my time on my objectives, my business objectives. So it's a catch 22, but I definitely would say that the workload does increase. |
| 0:13:39.840 --> 0:13:48.660 | Interviewer | Alright. And how does that make you feel? You know, do you think you're a little bit more under pressure and stressed out, a little bit frustrated maybe? |
| 0:13:48.780 --> 0:13:50.690 | Participant | Absolutely. |
| 0:13:49.450 --> 0:13:50.890 | Interviewer | What are those feelings? |
| 0:13:51.570 --> 0:14:36.930 | Participant | Yeah. So, there's definitely a feeling of being under pressure. A feeling of being spread thin. We have a lot that we're doing. I mean, everyone has a lot that they do. Everyone has a lot on their plates. So to have more added to it, just kind of spreads people a bit too thin and it's a bit frustrating because you're expected to know these things that are new that you've just literally started doing. But now you're expected to be towing the line with it and you're still figuring out the process of something completely new to you. So it's quite frustrating and yeah, very a bit, yeah, quite overwhelming. |
| 0:14:37.670 --> 0:14:52.980 | Interviewer | And then do you think the retrenchment process, you know, does it at all streamline any job functions that you are aware of or you know, do you foresee it at least happening in the future? |
| 0:14:56.570 --> 0:15:2.10 | Participant | Can you just repeat that question, Candice? Just want to make sure I understood you, yeah. |
| 0:15:2.640 --> 0:16:7.140 | Interviewer | Not a problem. Alright, so the retrenchment process itself, do you see that, whether it's now currently streamlining any job functions, or do you, even if it's not now, do you foresee it at any point streamlining any of the job functions? Yeah. So like that or whether it is like you know, just in the implementation of processes and how processes now work as well. Is it more streamlined? Is it more automated or is it just a case of that these retrenchments happened and now we've just got to find people to actually do the work? Is it at all really benefiting the company or is it more of like, okay, well now there's extra things to do with less hands. |
| 0:16:7.860 --> 0:16:22.660 | Participant | Definitely extra work to do with less hands, because I get the idea of what they're trying to do is to flatten structures. They're to flatten the organisational structure. They don't want too many vertical lines basically. However, yes, uh, that is then putting pressure on every single person who's on that horizontal line because functions that were never within their job space are functions that they're now fulfilling. But as I said, it's also like an opportunity to upskill. But streamlining, automated, no. I do hope that there would be an opportunity for that because, like I said, right now I'm now doing finance processes and we had a finance colleague who was doing that for us, but because now they've flattened the entire finance team and there's less and less and less of them, I feel like I don't even know any of them right now, so I now have to take upon those activities myself. I wish there would be an opportunity to automate these processes so it could be easier for the layman, especially with automation being as big as it is, I think the onus would be on the team that then had to lose the number of people that they did to create that opportunity for everyone else. |
| 0:17:58.840 --> 0:18:36.380 | Interviewer | And then tell me, if you look at the company or you know just the Holdings function as a whole. That area that was actually affected. What is your personal perception of the company culture right now? So that would be looking at for example like you mentioned, there is an increase in workload but you know looking at morale, the commitment, some of the emotional changes that people are currently going through right now since people have left. Just their general well-being? |
| 0:18:37.230 --> 0:18:37.650 | Participant | I would say the morale is quite low. Change is the only constant thing that we can expect. However, with the number of changes that have been, like it's wave after wave after wave, the morale is definitely pretty low, especially for the teams that lost mass numbers of people within their teams. And I'm sure they are under even more pressure than we would be. I'm just having to take up a few functions of the victims that have been lost. But yeah, I would say morale is low. |
| 0:19:40.690 --> 0:20:3.60 | Interviewer | Has there ever been like, for example, like a survey that's been distributed or something to that extent where people can actually raise and voice their concerns and say, look, I'm actually not doing okay, or like, I feel guilty or, because I still have my job and they lost their job. Has there been anything like that? |
| 0:20:4.250 --> 0:21:38.770 | Participant | Not that I’ve seen this. We used to have one. And I never really got any sense of it being supportive for any of the people who were leaving because I know there was like, for example, there was one person who came into one of the meetings as a colleague, but obviously has been told that “you're right in line to be retrenched.” And he came into the call aggressive and was typing up a whole lot of messages into the chat box. So it was uncomfortable, you know. But I really don't think, I mean, if a person could go to that extent to try to be seen and heard in public like that, even on a professional call, it goes to show that on a one-on-one basis, they weren't receiving that platform for them to actually voice out their concerns and voice out their frustrations. |
| 0:21:40.670 --> 0:21:54.700 | Interviewer | And particularly those people that have remained behind. Do they at all have any way of expressing themselves currently in terms of their, whether it’s fears and stresses and stuff? |
| 0:21:55.970 --> 0:22:19.670 | Participant | No. Not at all. Nothing has really been extended to survivors. I mean to me, I'll speak for myself. I'm considering myself a survivor as well, but no sort of support was extended to us. |
| 0:22:20.500 --> 0:22:44.990 | Interviewer | Yes. So it's more just like the current connections that you have. So for example, the person that you would report into like you said earlier on. Would you say it's more like a relationship-dependent kind of thing? |
| 0:22:34.540 --> 0:22:45.540 | Participant | Yeah. Really it's. It is very relationship-dependent depending on who you know, whether you're close enough to be vulnerable, you know, so yeah. |
| 0:22:46.430 --> 0:22:54.970 | Interviewer | And then just a few more questions. So to what extent are you familiar with the labour legislation that pertains to retrenchments? |
| 0:22:57.340 --> 0:23:23.140 | Participant | No, not very familiar, because I have been fortunate enough to never find myself in this situation, but I think it is, I mean, prevention is better than cure, so it would be good to know well enough in time before I find myself suddenly in that situation and scrambling to find the information because it's harder to process information when you're panicked. |
| 0:23:23.450 --> 0:23:33.490 | Interviewer | Yeah. Definitely. Alright. And then tell me do you think in your opinion though the whole retrenchment process was fair as such? |
| 0:23:35.930 --> 0:24:25.380 | Participant | Sure, I think it was. Well according to how they explained what they were doing, it sounded fair. But I mean, when you look at the men and women who then lost their jobs, it doesn't feel fair because they're more than just a, what's it called again? A cost center. You know, they are people. So, yeah, it's a very difficult question to answer, but I could say it looked fair, but it didn't feel fair. Yeah. |
| 0:24:25.570 --> 0:24:53.550 | Interviewer | Yeah. And that's actually such a beautiful answer as well. You know, even though something could potentially be procedurally fair, it might not just feel that way. And that exactly speaks to literature saying that, you know, some people just feel so bad for these other people that have left, even though it was following process, but you know it still doesn't feel like it's okay. |
| 0:24:54.370 --> 0:25:3.340 | Participant | Yeah, yeah. |
| 0:24:54.760 --> 0:25:4.140 | Interviewer | Do you know at all if there was any external involvement in the process? Were there external people that came out to help with the process as such? |
| 0:25:5.370 --> 0:25:35.190 | Participant | I don't know. No, I don't think there was any external sort of like arbitration. I don't think so. |
| 0:25:20.70 --> 0:25:35.950 | Interviewer | Yeah. So yeah, like, like, you know, for example, whether it's like the Labour Department or, you know, just just someone, you know, from an Human Resources perspective, they came externally to basically make sure that, you know, the conversation, the right conversations were happening. And you know, the right process is being followed. |
| 0:25:37.490 --> 0:26:4.30 | Participant | I don't know of that, but I really hope they did have that for the sake of the victims. Yeah. |
| 0:25:47.240 --> 0:26:18.360 | Interviewer | Yeah. And then again. It's also very difficult for you to also say, because like you said earlier on, it's not like your department was so heavily affected as such. So it was more, well from what you're saying, it was more like finance kind of side. Okay, no, that's fine. So just, and I know you've touched on this quite a bit, but just for confirmation, you know in terms of support from management, do you think they offered enough support, do you think there's more that they could have done? |
| 0:26:21.120 --> 0:27:10.780 | Participant | Yes, I think there is more that they could have done. I do understand that it is a work setting professional setting, but I think they could have catered to the emotional effect on the entire company. I just feel like a lot more could have been done in that sense. It's just that at the time, I guess I wasn't, I didn't feel as affected and I did have a close relationship that I could just, you know, chat with. |
| 0:27:9.510 --> 0:27:40.140 | Interviewer | It's probably hitting a bit harder now that you know everything's now kind of settled in its dust under the rug in a way. And now you're only really feeling it. Sure, alright. And then the last two questions is, looking at your current level of commitment to the company, and even if you want to give that you know a rating from one to 10. What would you say your level of commitment is still the company right now? |
| 0:27:41.250 --> 0:27:52.590 | Participant | I would put it right now at a 6. |
| 0:27:53.610 --> 0:27:55.320 | Interviewer | 6, and why would you say that? |
| 0:27:57.570 --> 0:29:29.760 | Participant | Because change is constant and nothing seems to be as secure as it should be. And I mean like I'd say that, I mean, I'm also on embarking on my own journey, like looking for something solid elsewhere. Am looking for purposeful, solid employment elsewhere because morale isn't like we said, morale isn't high, even if I wasn't affected and my unit is not going to be affected seemingly, and it still makes it difficult to work with people because I'm still working with people in my role. I have to work with people. I have to communicate with people and getting people to commit, you know, and to show up is difficult. When they their heart isn't in it. So. That's just made my job that much more difficult, so yeah. I'd say a 6. |
| 0:29:10.810 --> 0:29:40.800 | Interviewer | Okay. No, thank you for that. And then the last question is around, you know, the psychological contract, so that typically refers to the expectations between the employee and the employer and that more revolves around the trust you know. So what would you say your level of trust is in top management right now after these retrenchments have taken place? And that in a way ties in to your previous answer as well in terms of commitment, you know is it a secure place, like could I potentially be next kind of you know thing? |
| 0:29:52.960 --> 0:31:44.270 | Participant | Definitely. That is the feeling. That's the emotional climate, like around the company right now, so I'd say trust is at its all time lowest. Yeah, you can never really feel fully trusting of what do you call it? Like a captain who throws people out the bus or throws people out the plane or the ship or whatever when you know, when something goes wrong, when there's some sort of faults in the plane. I honestly would think there would be better ways of dealing with that and I do understand that they, I mean, they have to do what they have to do. They are instructed from the top from their leaders as well. That's difficult to be a leader, I guess, because you're the one who gets it at the end of the day. But yeah, trust is at its lowest. It's just sad that they had to be the leaders at the time when retrenchments were going through so. I think they should probably find ways to to engage the survivors, programs to support the survivors as well, and to also show that there is an element of care within the process and not just it being, you know, entirely operational. |
| 0:31:42.630 --> 0:31:53.100 | Interviewer | Okay, alright. But you know that's great. Thank you so much for that. Is there anything else that you maybe want to add? Because I'm done with all my questions. |
| 0:31:53.440 --> 0:32:8.170 | Participant | Okay. Okay. No, thank you, Candice. There's nothing I'd like to add. |
| 0:31:59.870 --> 0:32:11.670 | Interviewer | Some. Alright, so now that's fine. I just want to once again thank you so much for your time. I really do appreciate it. And yeah, I hope you have an incredible day. |
| 0:32:12.990 --> 0:32:18.160 | Participant | Problem. Thank you so much Candice. It was great speaking to you and all the best. |