2022

Creative Strategies; Maintaining Loyalty in Corporate Downsizing

Sara Caroline Blum-Stapleton
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Sara Blum-Stapleton

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Kimberly Anthony, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty
Dr. Lisa Barrow, Committee Member, Management Faculty
Dr. Robert Haussmann, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Creative Strategies; Maintaining Loyalty in Corporate Downsizing

by

Sara Blum-Stapleton

MA, University of Phoenix 2009

BS, Grand Valley State University, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

August 2022

Abstract

To remain competitive, organization leaders look for methods of reducing organizational costs. Downsizing is one method leaders have implemented to lower costs; however, downsizing may affect employee loyalty and trust within the organization. The purpose of this study was to highlight managers' experiences affecting practices and strategies, influencing loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing through the qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology approach. The conceptual framework provided structuralism revealing low morale and decreased loyalty and trust. The research question focused on lived experiences of managers and employees during downsizing, maintaining loyalty and trust by invoking creative strategies to retain jobs. Eight participants shared their unique life experiences. The 14 open-ended interview questions focused on demographics, loyalty, trust, and creative ways to preserve jobs. Following a phenomenological data analysis model, the interview data were coded, categorized and themes were created. The results of the study indicated that from the themes, emotions are central to how employees handle positive and negative workplace situations; loyalty and trust contributing to a healthy work environment; and downsizing can cause an unstable work environment. The social change implications are that the organizational leaders may create a more stable work environment implementing creative strategies that save the organization capital and increase employees' trust and loyalty.

Creative Strategies; Maintaining Loyalty in Corporate Downsizing

by

Sara Blum-Stapleton

MA, University of Phoenix 2009

BS, Grand Valley State University, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

August 2022

Dedication

After graduating from college and gaining life experience, my dream was to further my education and receive my Ph.D. I knew there would be obstacles, but those challenges pushed me to accomplish something I would have never thought attainable. I dedicate my work and efforts to my daughter first and foremost. A 3-year-old putting her arms around me and looking at me with loving eyes assured me I could take on the world. Now 19 years old, those same eyes still look at me with the same adoration and confidence that reminds me no dream is out of reach. I also dedicate this to my grandfather, who was always there for me, and my father, Judge Blum, who I wished would have lived to see me receive this degree.

I once heard it be said, how well a person learns has little to do with their value and more with the gifts and talents one brings to the table. My daughter is a constant reminder to me that anything can be accomplished when you put your focus and commitment into what you want to achieve. The impossible is possible, if you can dream it.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Walden University for supporting my educational endeavors. I want to thank Dr. Phlypo for helping me fine-tune my dissertation topic. I also want to thank Dr. Phlypo for her time, effort, and experience that she applied to my learning, as I worked through writing my dissertation.

I also want to thank those faculty at Walden who stepped in at the last hour to assist me in completing this process, so I could successfully complete the Ph.D. program. They each came into this not being as familiar with my work but were willing to assist in any way they could.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The notion that downsizing has continued to be one of the most appealing cost-cutting strategies to firms worldwide seems to be a plausible statement (Homburg et al., 2012). Homburg et al. illuminated that downsizing is nearly a universal business practice. Downsizing has become a phenomenon. According to Homburg et al., previous research had been reviewed regarding possible negative consequences for employees.

Gandolfi (2013) pointed out that empirical and anecdotal evidence suggested the intent or purpose of downsizing as a management strategy occurring in all industries had affected businesses, governments, and individuals globally. Datta and Basuil (2012) argued a wide range of causes for downsizing. These driving forces were insufficient to explain the urgency and trend of what is in the organization's best interest regarding leadership addressing employees' concerns and fears, which could have caused distrust and resentment.

Downsizing can affect motivation and morale within organizations. Boyd et al. (2013) remarked that organizational downsizing could occur based on financial pressure from global markets, which has left employees' well-being and motivation to deteriorate. According to Boyd et al., the research highlighted insecurities within the workforce based on job security and key stressor factors accompanying added responsibility due to downsizing. Gandolfi (2013) underlined that leadership needed to be more participatory when downsizing occurred. This study presented data collected that focused on employees who have lived experiences based on downsizing and can reflect on different aspects of the process.

Background of the Study

The importance of the literature within the study represented a diversity of views regarding downsizing. The themes highlighted by the literature and reflected in this study included the effects of downsizing, organizational changes in the work environment due to downsizing, changes in the culture, employee loyalty and trust, and creative strategies to minimize layoffs. In creating and building the research model, ascertaining relevant studies and research was a vital part of substantiating claims and methodologies in the research. The literature highlighted that downsizing might cause deterioration of the corporate structure. According to Carrington (2016), a qualitative phenomenological study was conducted, which focused on employee perception of the impact of layoffs. The study showed that downsizing was not always the answer to improving performance and survival. Studies have shown that reducing the workforce might improve organizations' financial outlook, but the solution to layoff could cause irreparable harm based on operational commissions long-term.

According to Maertz Jr. et al. (2010), employees who had survived downsizing had a higher probability of having a lower opinion of their work environment. The attitudes toward management were par to subpar. This reaction had been based on layoffs that employees saw occurring in their workplace. Nyberg and Trevor (2009) referenced employees who avoided being laid off. The researchers suggested working on and striving for creativity as the first point of interest. Researchers suggested downsizing diminished creativity within the surviving workforce. Focusing on creativity may redirect employees to focus on the job instead of the actionable item of downsizing.

The second point of interest was communication. Downsizing affects social networks, and communication could diminish if resentment or disloyalty existed from the layoff. The last point to address is perception. Downsizing could provoke insecurity, lower morale, and alter employees' feelings of job satisfaction. According to Correa (2014), the view of downsizing revealed that downsizing could cause different reactions, depending on an employee's position at the layoff. According to Correa (2014), business leaders, who have been laid off, may have filled the gap when needing to fill leadership positions within an organization. The gap in the literature may be bridged by the participants sharing their lived experiences. These experiences would be based on the participant's perception of downsizing and how each participant perceives managerial practices and strategies influencing loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States.

There was a diversity of studies viewed for this research. Studies over the last 20 years regarding downsizing covered many territories. However, they may not be solely focused on the loyalty aspect and how this component is affected by downsizing in today's corporate climate. Kraft (1980) focused on why the automotive companies failed to meet the domestic market need for small cars and how that decision affected job stability throughout the automotive community. Cascio and Wynn (2004) discussed employee downsizing and the alternatives. The study, which had similar themes, focused on why downsizing happened, the consequences of downsizing a workforce, and if other options were viable. Cascio and Wynn examined loyalty between management and

employees. There was also a reveal of best practices for managing the downsizing process and alternatives to avoid employees losing jobs.

Strom (1998) focused on moral within organizations. Strom highlighted executives' misinterpretation, assuming that morale would not have been affected when layoffs had occurred. According to Strom, downsizing survivors could experience personal emotions, affecting self-esteem and the motivation to remain loyal to the organization. Studies such as this were imperative to examine the lived experiences and how managerial practices and strategies have influenced loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States.

Problem Statement

The general problem focuses on corporate leadership who do not consider the implications of downsizing employees. The specific issue highlights leadership's handling of downsizing, which may influence loyalty and trust among employees and affect the ability to ensure creative strategies to minimize human causalities in companies throughout the United States (Stroh & Reilly, 1997). Amabile and Conti (1999) suggested that creativity supporting a perceived work environment decreased significantly during downsizing but increased later if the creativity undermined the goal. Appelbaum (1991) spoke about downsizing becoming popular in this study based on competitiveness and a need to increase productivity. According to Appelbaum, researchers labeled those who survived downsizing as having survivor's syndrome. This was one example of an opposing side of downsizing.

According to Devitt et al. (2013), the recession that started in 2007, when workforce reductions occurred, may have had long-term effects. Managers must reconnect with surviving employees to minimize negativity or backlash based on losing colleagues and friends. Tsai and Yen (2018) focused on firms striving to innovate their competitive advantage in the marketplace. Tsai and Yen used a quantitative and qualitative method to concentrate on job satisfaction research and how this motivates employees to remain innovative. Tsai and Yen focused on firms implementing a downsizing strategy to stay competitive and employee perception of the commitment by the organization to ensure job satisfaction and a creative mindset of management was a commitment to employees.

Van Dick et al. (2016) revealed that employees often report lower commitment and overall performance after surviving the layoff. Van Dick et al. highlighted that reduced organizational identification could explain what is known as survivor syndrome. A meditation analysis showed that survivor syndrome was based on downsizing causing lower connections with the employer, which related to lower-performing employees. According to Gross (2015), downsizing focused on those laid off. Gross focused on panoramic views of organizational downsizing through a past, present, and future lens. Gross predicted downsizing would continue to be used in corporate strategies as businesses try to maintain efficiency and a competitive edge.

Chaudhry et al. (2015) focused on explaining actions by management who downsized and how this can affect or negate the commitment employees have toward an organization. Chaudhry et al. dove into management implementing downsizing with

social support to have achieved specific objectives. Apergis and Georgellis (2017) focused on regional unemployment and employee loyalty in the United Kingdom. The study investigated the relationship between both. Apergis and Georgellis argued that regional unemployment depressed income and increased the potential loss of jobs. This action provided an incentive for employers to be loyal to their employees. Apergis and Georgellis examined how unemployment affects the employed. The studies published focused on downsizing and the different elements in which this trendsetting move had involved employees, leadership, and the well-being of organizations.

The following information was included in the research according to the litmus test and the four aspects of this scholarly checkpoint. Reviewing articles and studies from Aguinis et al. (2011) highlighted that downsizing still affects loyalty and trust between leadership and employees. Research has been scarce regarding qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology studies on how lived experiences have affected managerial practices and strategies influencing loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States. The topic of research needs to be further investigated.

This research study was conducted without bias or personal interception of the researcher. The conclusion was based solely on data collected through the collection process. I also touched on positive social change. Downsizing has affected society by influencing the economy's trend, creating psychological effects on those touched by the layoffs, and creating instability, which may cause a ripple effect on the economy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research study was to discover the lived experiences of managers and employees during downsizing, putting a spotlight on loyalty, trust, and leadership's ability to create options, so human causalities were minimized. According to Datta and Basuil (2012), some issues must be addressed. These issues were connected with unprecedented levels of downsizing. Management had a strong belief that this action would increase financial performance. Those who disagree argued that downsizing compromises the organization's value.

At Pepperdine University, Graziadio School of Business Management, employees were unique individuals with diverse communication styles. Leadership needed to understand what worked best for each employee, putting them at ease, no matter the news delivered, focusing on how communication is provided may be just as important as the information itself. The research paradigm focused on employees' lived experiences affected by downsizing and how management maintains loyalty and trust within the corporate culture. I intended to explore the downsizing trend and provide data by exploring the lived experiences of management who were working toward strategies to maintain loyalty among employees and organizations and creatively minimize job loss (Shore, 1996).

Research Question

The overarching research question was:

What are the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing situations?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework included employees, managers, loyalty, trust, and lived experiences based on downsizing results. According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), identifying each component in the conceptual framework was essential to provide a metaphorical and literal rationale for my study. The framework provided structure and supported the topic, justifying the problem statement, purpose, significance, and research question. Understanding each framework component helped anchor the research, leading to the literature review.

According to Moustakas (1994), using a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology research study and analyzing the data would add depth to the study based on human experiences. Miles et al. (2019) defined a conceptual framework as a visual or written product that can explain the focus of the study. This framework may have provided data to build a foundation based on lived experiences of managerial strategies and how the actions affected loyalty and trust within corporate downsizing in the United States.

Theories were an essential part of this study. Each theory provided an insight into the study based on research, contributing factors, obstacles, and the relationship between the theories and the topic. According to Abend (2008), applying theories to explain, predict, and highlight the phenomena would have provided additional knowledge to support or negate the research, such as the social responsibility theory, founded by Drucker, which focused on acting in the best interest of society, including creating a balance between the economy, culture and creative strategies used in downsizing.

Drucker (as cited in Hesselbein, 2010) stated, "Leaders in every institution and sector have two responsibilities. They are responsible and accountable for their institutions' performance, which requires concentration, focus, and limitations. However, they are also responsible for the community" (p. 2). According to Adams (1963), when this theory was developed, the behavioral psychologist aimed to seek equity for employees based on each employee's experience and the benefits received from the experience and work. Adams showed throughout this theory that an individual's perception of input and output in a relationship could reflect inequality. This would render the output/input ratio less or greater than perceived by the employee. This could put stress and a lack of trust in management per the employee.

Two theories represented the research. The first theory supporting the study was dispositional theory. According to Judge and Larsen (2001), there is a link between dispositional theory and job satisfaction. There is an influence within the dispositional lens, which can tie together clear views on job performance. Breaking down traits of employees to gain a better understanding of where downsizing had occurred can drive the researcher to review personality, culture, or a presumed image when the focus is on how these actions affect loyalty and trust are in jeopardy.

The second theory is the affective event theory (AET). This theory, developed by Wells (2008), had researchers focusing on the possibility of emotions affecting how a worker performs in a work environment. According to Beal et al. (2005), there is a correlation between an employee's internal influences, including personal emotion and reactions to any dangerous occurrences during a workday, affecting performance or job

satisfaction. The theory highlighted the positive and negative for both job performance and overall happiness within the job. Chapter 2 will include literature focused on the effects of the downsizing trend.

According to Paterson and Cary (2002), the AET-based model integrated perception and emotion to break down the effects of an employee's acceptance of downsizing and other work-related occurrences contributing to anxiety based on employee reaction. Paterson and Cary reflected that the communication through leadership affected interactional justice and pressure due to change, which created the trust and reduced stress among workers. The AET framework assisted in understanding employees' responses during the downsizing process and how loyalty and trust may be reduced on the manager's side, which may cause anxiety among workers. The AET framework could assist in understanding employees' responses during the downsizing process and how loyalty and trust were affected.

Nature of the Study

The qualitative methodology most appropriately represented the nature of this study in conjunction with a hermeneutic phenomenology design. Applying the method and tradition based on qualitative phenomenological research was appliable for this study. The methodology represented the core meaning of acquiring and collecting data based on the essence of human experience (Moustakas, 1994). The concept surrounding the phenomenon focused on the research. The phenomenon highlighted the lived experiences of managers who worked to maintain loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing and employees who were part of the downsizing process. The participants in

the interviews communicated their lived experiences. The focus was to determine the phenomenon, provide clarity of the study's purpose, and ensure the data collected reflected authentic lived experiences to ensure the study's success.

The methodology applied in the research focused on hermeneutic phenomenology, which focused on participants' lived experiences. This methodology brought a philosophical view of human experience to this research study through the qualitative study process. According to Tassone (2017), Husserl's phenomenology was viewed as an approach to justify the truth based on current conditions. The approach was considered an interpretation representing the defense of foundationalism and epistemology. The importance of Husserl's theories was to research subjects. Engaging the hermeneutic phenomenological method was the most appropriate choice for this study.

This study was based on human experience and the current conditions of companies that have gone through downsizing. The goal was to show data collected from participants revealing lived experiences based on the purpose of the research through questions presented to those involved through the interviewing process. Using this design would best represent the study and findings.

Participants were chosen through a snowball effect. Prospective participants were from various organizations. The sampling strategy encompassed one participant. The sample size included eight participants as part of the data collection. The sample consisted of four managers and four employees who had survived the downsizing process in the last 5 years. Employment at the organization would have to be at least 3 years.

Those who fell under the management title held a position in this capacity for more than 2 years. The participants were chosen based on knowledge and experience in managerial practices and strategies, which could have influenced loyalty, and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States.

Definitions

Key concepts used in the research study provided a foundation for the data to justify the research. Key terms and concepts presented below provide a big picture view of the research and support the intended purpose of the dissertation.

Business mergers, privatizations, and acquisitions: Actions are considered an operational function in which corporations combine or acquire assets. This action is synonymous with downsizing during a merger or acquisition, affecting loyalty and trust between leadership and the current workforce (Ferraz & Hamaguchi, 2002).

Cost reduction measure: Companies use strategies to reduce costs and increase profitability. This type of action is usually synonymous with employee layoffs to boost profitability, which is key to reducing the workforce (Bain & Company, 2013).

Non-essential employees: This term references the government shutdown, which refers to those employees in government who are not a crucial part of the United States' overall health or safety. In companies, this relates to employees not critical to the business or infrastructure, deemed "non-Essential" employees (Andrews, 2013).

Offboarding: The philosophy behind the strategy of offboarding is to handle departures from the organization in the most positive way possible. Managing the

offboarding process in the best way benefits the employee and the employer. Offboarding

and onboarding have become widespread in organizations today (Louisnord, 2016).

Outsourcing: This term refers to getting goods or services internationally vs.

domestically. Concerning business, outsourcing means bringing in third-party vendors to

do the job traditionally done inside the organization by internal employees. This option

comes with pros and cons. The pros are being able to streamline cost savings. The cons

include job cuts in the organization (Patel, 2017).

Outsourcing of jobs and business expansion in foreign countries: Outsourcing

pertains to obtaining goods or services through a supplier, usually international. Jobs are

outsourced due to A.I., and the need for cheaper labor is a reality. Outsourcing can strain

employees' loyalty and commitment to the organization (Siddiqa, 2017).

Resource action: This term refers to laying off employees. Companies such as

IBM applied the resource action alternative to the organization, in 2013, because of first-

quarter earnings. Resource actions can have many meanings but can eliminate

employees' jobs (Whitley, 2014).

Right-sizing: This term refers to leadership ensuring companies are adequate size

to maintain a competitive edge and maintain a level of profits acceptable to leadership

and shareholders. Right-sizing can involve a reduction in the workforce if deemed

necessary. Right-sizing involves management working to reinvigorate and revitalize the

existing workforce (Kowske et al., 2010).

Technological advancements, computerization, and *automation*: Productivity is

the data output, which can be produced and tracked per employee. Creative strategies

may derive from automation, reducing layoffs by creating new organizational roles. This step could improve loyalty and trust between employees and leadership (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017).

Assumptions

Assumptions related to unanswered or personal beliefs exist in one's psyche. The surmised conclusions are based on assumptions, not formed through factual data. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), beliefs could be misguided or inadvertently could cause the reader to have a one-sided view toward one opinion vs. the other.

The assumptions of this particular research study are reflected below:

1. The first assumption was that each candidate would be honest and upfront about personal experiences and outcomes. There is an assumption that the emotional stress and pain caused by this event would not hinder each participant from sharing their lived experiences.

2. The second assumption was that each participant would have the characteristics of inclusion criteria to ensure a successful data collection. This would mean that specific criteria must have been identified before prospective candidates participated in the study.

3. The third assumption was directed toward leadership and how those in power felt about downsizing. The premise focused on expecting those participants to make a change, ensuring jobs are kept, and loyalty and trust remain a high priority.

Scope and Delimitations

The study's scope was to show how trust and loyalty coincided with creative strategies applied when downsizing has occurred. Examining companies that have gone through downsizing and the steps taken to protect jobs and rekindle loyalty and trust in leadership and the organization after the fact was the focus of the study. The study included cases and scholarly studies on downsizing. The research highlighted the effects of downsizing and how this decision affected employees throughout companies in the US.

The research covered attributes of downsizing, including efficiency, smaller workforces, and a healthier bottom line with less overhead. The study examined creative terms used in this process, including rightsizing, reorganization, and delayering. This was explained in detail if there were any differences in the meaning of this terminology vs. the simplest of terms used to define the research study, which is downsizing. The delimitations of the study did not include certain aspects of the downsizing process, such as an employee's chances of promotability, versatility, the quantity of work, and previous jobs within the organization. Including four managers and four employees who have been at the same organization for the last three years was imperative for the constituency. Ensuring those possible participants had held the position for more than two years and had knowledge of managerial practices and strategies influencing loyalty and trust during a downsizing process in an organization in the United States was a part of the fabric of the study. Those excluded from being chosen as participants are employees who had not been touched by the downsizing process or held a steady job for an extended

period. Research expanded on this sector to further examine lived experiences of employees not affected by downsizing but who may still be consumed with fear this event could occur to them.

Limitations

Limitations to the research based on the hermeneutic phenomenological approach can be related to the interview structure. There is flexibility in how the interview is done and the questions asked. The data collected is derived from lived experiences. According to Jacob and Furgerson (2012), researchers have different ways to obtain data regarding engaging participants. Still, the goal is to expose the human part of the story to understand the lived experience better. The limitations can be identified in this process. A researcher would need to determine which data is relevant and of considerable value to the study vs. more of a personal nature and not deemed appropriate.

As a researcher, the limitations of this study are related to transferability and dependability. Transferability refers to the research design transferring to another population. The research design was based on understanding managers' and employees' experiences and individual perspectives regarding the effect of downsizing reflected through a phenomenological method. Transferability refers to asking readers to take the information they have retained from the current study and connect the data presented and a reader's personal experience. Reader's intake the information presented and may apply the specifics to a unique or familiar situation. The data collected in this study could also be used in other contexts, concerns, or similar research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to the transferability process in a research study evaluating four critical components.

These include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. According to the authors, each piece has specific techniques for establishing if these criteria have been met. The limitation of this type of process, according to researchers, is the difficulty of predicting human behavior. This study based on humanistic behaviors can also change over time depending on the circumstances and reactions. There are no controlled reactions, but maybe a temporary understanding.

Dependability is based on trustworthiness on behalf of the researcher, interpreted by the reader. According to Pitney (2004), qualitative research is based on a more humanistic view, so the dependability and trustworthiness can be found on a more personal perceptive statement by the researcher and reader vs. a quantitative perspective, where facts and figures are evident. Using strategies such as triangulation focuses on cross-checking the data collected to ensure support of the phenomenon, which may prove beneficial.

This process involves communicating with the participant to ensure interpreting the data and providing the facts are correct. There is a level of trust between the researcher and the participant. The limitation relates to the trust factor if the data is not relayed honestly to the researcher. Bias can also play a role in this process. The participant may relay a story from a specific point of view instead of a factual account of the experience. The limitations would include fact-checking, ensuring the questions are presented factually, creating a level of understanding around the context of the information, and analyzing the data to ensure accuracy and relevancy. When giving the data, this process would be done so that the reader would fully disclose that the data is

based on lived experiences, and therefore, fact-checking would have to be done extensively so there is room for error.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study reflected the importance of leaders taking the initiative to promote creative strategies when downsizing has occurred, so human casualties are kept to a minimum. Although studies have been done on this topic, there is a gap in the literature. Providing data through this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study to fill that gap will highlight the importance of the research. The first critical component is to fill the gap in the literature. Organizational goals and current results can cause motivation for the gap. Another contributing factor can be the understanding of downsizing and how this action affects the corporate innovation or demise depending on the handling of the situation. According to Wilkinson (2005), empirical research shows that the outcome of downsizing may be influenced by the type of downsizing addressed in studies. In similar studies, researchers pointed out the link between the speed of lessening in organizations, the severity of the downsizing, and the reasoning behind downsizing. Each factor plays a role in this process's effort, and the outcomes can vary from study to study.

According to Van Dick et al. (2016), many studies on mergers and organizational processes regarding the change. Still, downsizing and the many methods and outcomes do not gain the attention needed. The gap in the literature will continue to be an ongoing theme. The positive side of this realism is the room researchers must give themselves to grow and evolve regarding this topic. There will be nuances in this research, and new

data will emerge. The gap may exist indefinitely, but the ability to add updated studies can help decrease the gap in finding solutions.

The second essential component is understanding the professional application and how this is applied to this research and those who view the data and results. Using new information in an innovative format regarding downsizing and creative strategies in which leadership can foster the relationship between employees and the organizational hierarchy is essential for maintaining trust and loyalty in companies today. According to Cascio and Wynn (2004), employment downsizing has become integral in our corporate society. Cascio and Wynn (2004) showed that stability has won out over instability for companies where downsizing occurred, reducing headcount and outsourcing. However, it does not necessarily create long-term success on an ongoing basis.

Collecting data from each participant provided me with the background of what employees and managers live through when downsizing occurs. As I entered the data into Excel to hand code, seeing the similarities and differences provided a foundation to build on with experiences of either dread being laid off, new beginnings, or looking forward to a new and more challenging position at the company employee maintained their job. Hand coding allowed me to drill down to the granular meaning of shared information. I was also able to apply themes to determine the similarities and differences. The data substantiated my research, but the content collected was interesting as each participant had their own lived experience and perception of this experience.

The last component addressed positive social change and the effect the results may have on human and social conditions. This could significantly impact employees by

creating a domino effect on society. The attitudes and behaviors may dramatically impact the way employees handle themselves professionally and personally. The psychological factors included the rise and fall in emotion, attitudes, cynicism, and the ability to be engaged. Being mindful of how organizational change can affect the human element of society may evoke leadership to change the sometimes frequent need to downsize and create more of a mindset of rightsizing to protect jobs and the adverse effects on society.

According to Avey et al. (2008), organizational resistance to change is expected. Change can be handled negatively or positively. Focusing on the importance of positive constructs regarding organizational behavior and how this promotes successful organizational change and development carries enormous weight within an organization and society. Attitudes set within organizations are carried out into the culture. Creating and sustaining a commitment to a happy, cohesive workplace builds loyalty and commitment professionally and personally.

The significance of the study has shown the importance of managerial practices and creative strategies, reflecting how these components influence loyalty and trust. This is an essential aspect of this study which discusses employee perception when companies show instability. The research is transferrable as data on downsizing is in constant flux. There is always change, as the need to downsize is based on the economy, and the stock market, to name a few. This research is transferable and will hopefully continually evolve and be updated with the more current forecast on downsizing and the effect this action has on continuing the conversation about retaining jobs and possibly choosing to right size versus downsizing.

Significance to Practice

The significance of practice focused on how downsizing is handled in the organization. According to Cascio (2009), downsizing employees has become common globally. According to Cascio, studies were conducted with a downsized company. The study tracked the organization for 9 years after the downsizing had occurred. Cascio found that leaders who reduce headcount without making other strategic changes seem to reach their intended goal infrequently. Cascio pointed to stable companies doing what is necessary to retain their skilled employees.

Best practices when downsizing occurs are to ensure policies and procedures are followed. This step should be taken if jobs can be spared by invoking creative strategies. Creating and maintaining an ongoing positive culture would be necessary. Methods include ensuring leadership is continually present, applying innovative methods when cuts are required, and applying multiple techniques when downsizing emerges. This process also involved creating a plan to activate once downsizing occurred to address and protect those remaining employees and communicate when appropriate. Bringing together a diverse management team to oversee and lead the process would be necessary. Including HR, leaders, managers, and support staff would ensure employees are dealt with most professionally and effectively.

Significance to Theory

Based on two theories, dispositional and affective event theory (AET), each supported the study to reveal employees' traits and emotional status to gain a more in-depth understanding of those affected by downsizing. These findings can focus on

stability, sustainability, or the organization's environment when reflecting on how these actions affect loyalty and trust, which could be jeopardized.

Reviewing the data through the hermeneutic phenomenology lens may illuminate the emotional effects on employees based on their human experience. The data collected and analyzed may reveal a serious message to leadership that reflects employees were losing interest in a company that does not appreciate them for their skills, knowledge, and extensive years of experience. This may spark a need for more creative strategies to be implemented in the decision-making process when downsizing is an absolute necessity. Still, other options may be available to ensure jobs are retained in some capacity.

Significance to Social Change

The significance of social change with research presented to the academic and corporate population has hopefully significantly impacted society. The findings were based on data regarding loyalty and trust when downsizing occurs. Sweeney (2016) shared thoughts on downsizing. Sweeney felt that this process influenced the culture of organizations. These effects can be viewed as both negative and positive. The results from this study should reflect the need for leadership to highlight a positive culture during downsizing and after the fact. Leadership needs to show employees that steps will be taken to preserve jobs whenever possible using creative strategies. These steps will help recreate a preferred method of moving the organization forward. This type of action will hopefully allow employees to view leadership in a more positive light and assist in rebuilding loyalty. Ensuring steps to promote a stable work environment may promote a

more efficient work environment while strengthening the relationship with employees

and improving the corporate climate.

Summary and Transition

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the purpose of the study, problem statement,

literature review, definitions, assumptions, and limitations. The importance is placed on

the need for creative strategies in the workforce to ensure plans are put in place to retain

employees in other capacities if departments are closing or headcount in certain areas

may be decreasing. Maintaining employee loyalty and trust within organizations to

ensure longevity and a strong sense of commitment on the employee's side is imperative.

Research has been done regarding downsizing, but according to Van Dick et al. (2016),

undiscovered territory needs to be explored. Researching how loyalty and trust are

affected may shed new light on future action in this manner.

Chapter 2 will build a solid theoretical foundation for the argument by analyzing a

robust selection of related literature, bringing light to the topic, whether supportive or

negating the results. The literature review will justify the gaps in the research and how

this dissertation provides updated findings to existing data. Chapter 2 will also address

serval components: the effects of downsizing, organizational changes in the work

environment due to downsizing, changes in the culture, employee loyalty and trust, and

creative strategies to minimize layoffs. This chapter serves as a road map to navigate the

dissertation by providing depth into the resources while highlighting the purposeful need

for this type of research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was focused on discovering how managers' and employees' lived experiences affected loyalty and trust when downsizing occurs. My point of view highlighted creative strategies to maintain loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States. The research focused on the specific problem of downsizing. The purpose was to examine how managerial practices and strategies could influence loyalty and trust among employees in corporate environments. According to Bain & Company (2013), employees' jobs are the first to be affected when sales decline. According to the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor of Statistics (2008), approximately 1 million employees were affected by downsizing in 2007. Bergström and Arman (2017) conducted a study focused on the importance of how a reduction is implemented within an organization. How the news is delivered may determine the strength of the commitment of the remaining workers who have survived a workforce reduction. The study highlighted the importance of effective communication and creative strategies, including choices offered to those employees affected. Such decisions included voluntarily leaving vs. being laid off. "Previous research has uncovered some common patterns of change in organizational work environments during downsizing. Organizations appear to undergo deterioration of communication at many levels during such periods, even though communication appears to be particularly important" (Amabile & Conti, 1999, p. 631). The problem-focused on leadership and management turning to downsize. Leadership's goal is to improve the competitive culture and increase the profit margin in organizations today. The missing

component is the need to strategize to save jobs while maintaining loyalty and commitment.

Literature Search Strategy

Current literature included in the research is a diverse conglomeration of journal articles, studies, and articles from different sources discussing downsizing. The eclectic group of articles included studies based on the effects of downsizing relating to loyalty, job satisfaction, and the organization's commitment to employees and customers. Current literature highlighted the conceptual framework for determining why companies downsize. Literature uncovered, including 43 articles, which touched on different aspects of downsizing, suggested employee downsizing can either be an effective or ineffective method to gain the outcome needed by leaders trying to increase profit margins and lower overhead costs, depending on the particulars of the organization. The significant sections of the Literature Review chapter were broken down into categories based on the literature used. Categories included: The effect of downsizing, organizational changes in the work environment, changes in the culture, employee loyalty and trust, and creative strategies to minimize layoffs.

Each category was supported by literature, where case studies and data are presented to inform the reader of supporting or contradictory data. According to Pfeil et al. (2004), downsizing is trending in North America and has become a global phenomenon. Companies are pressured to become more efficient by cutting costs and restructuring workforces to show a substantial difference in the bottom line. Literature also reflects strategies used to retain jobs instead of eliminating employees, which is

beneficial in maintaining loyalty and trust. According to Pfeil et al. (2004), employers should discuss cutting costs and finding creative suggestions before making final decisions.

Chapter 2 is an integral part of this study. This chapter reflected literature, which was used to show support or negate the purpose of the research study. The goal is to present data collected based on participants who have lived experiences and reflect on different aspects of the downsizing process. This would encompass literature on downsizing from personal viewpoints and the value of loyalty and trust, understanding how these components directly affect employees involved in corporate downsizing in the United States.

Uchitelle (2006) highlighted the psychological effect of employee downsizing. Uchitelle argued that downsizing is an error in judgment when creating a more productive organization. Uchitelle also pointed out that the long-term value of an organization does not increase when downsizing occurs. The focus is to encourage leadership to use creative strategies when downsizing and move toward a rightsizing initiative to retain jobs and lower the casualties of the downsizing process.

The literature also reflected on companies that have laid off employees and how management and leadership have dealt with the fallout of those losing jobs.

In time, these uncertainties can lead a company to downsize, as it is seemingly the quickest and most viable plan. Companies must know how downsizing can affect their business via the retained employees, innovation, and subsequent reputation

in making this decision. It is equally worth looking at those downsized individuals who lost their jobs because of the decision to downsize. (LaMarsh, 2009, p. 7)

The study's primary purpose was to collect data from a group of participants, uncover lived experiences, categorize the data collected, and hopefully show the importance of rightsizing, not downsizing. The study also reflected on strategies that can be used if downsizing is the only option, examining how to retain employees if possible—also, the importance of maintaining loyalty and trust among leaders and peers.

The importance of the literature review assisted in discovering pertinent data related to the research. The literature used in this study provided a broad spectrum of different views of the topic, providing new knowledge and identifying gaps in the study. The literature was meant to highlight new ideas and ideologies, not duplicate other studies done in the field. The literature review is key to justifying purposeful research by reflecting on different aspects of downsizing and the various studies shown to reflect different perspectives.

The search strategy was based on a conceptual map. The map included the phenomenological hermeneutic methodology, highlighted as the search strategy. The supporting points had loyalty and trust based on creative solutions to downsizing. Adhering to the issues in the conceptual map would ensure the process would support the research and provide guidance in presenting the research honestly and ethically.

Terms and phrases used to search journal articles and other literature sources included *downsizing, rightsizing, strategies, loyalty, commitment, layoffs, corporate*

culture, social implications, benefits of downsizing, understanding the decision to downsize, and *management/leadership's experiences within corporate downsizing.*

Table 1

Details of Literature Reviewed by Year Publication

	Older than 5 years	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Peer-reviewed articles	93	4	3	5	8	5	118
None peer-reviewed articles	34	1	4	6	8	3	56
Books	45	0	1	3	1	0	50
Web pages	35	1	4	6	9	3	58
Totals	207	6	12	20	26	11	282

Using articles retrieved from Ebscohost, ProQuest, ABI/Inform Collection, Academic Search Complete, Business Market Research Collection, Dissertations, and Theses at Walden University allowed material relevant to the topic to be reviewed and familiarity with previous and current studies to be identified in this field. Reviewing the literature to identify gaps and understand the research, methodologies, and theories applied to the studies have provided a more comprehensive view of the work done and the gaps that need to be addressed.

The terms used in the literature had been extracted based on the data found and how those terms would apply to the methodology. These terms are relevant in this research study. Using the search terms helped create a solid foundation on which to build this research. These terms included *downsizing, rightsizing, strategies, loyalty, commitment, layoffs, corporate culture, social implications, benefits of downsizing, the decision to decrease,* and *management/leadership's experiences within companies.* Searching terms on three levels, closely related, narrow, and broader, allowed the ability

to be thorough. With this process in mind, the key is to apply the iterative search method, which means

> An iterative search starts just like a non-iterative search. The query sequence is compared to the database, and the score list, pairwise, and multiple alignment outputs are reported. The multiple alignments were used to create a query "profile. "This profile is then searched against the database, a score list, pairwise and multiple alignments are output, and the process repeated. The iterations will stop either when the number of iterations has been reached, or if two successive iterations find the same sequences. (Barton, 2002, p. 1)

As this relates to this particular research, this would require searching articles, journals, case studies, and other resources based on downsizing until the search has seen saturation. The search terms were compiled from a diversity of words and themes, but the implication was to stay within the realm of the research topic. The literature collected for this research study provided attainment of learning to educate the reader fully on the research topic. The resources shown to support or negate this topic were readily available.

Figure 1

Conceptual Mind Map-Creative Strategies in Corporate Downsizing
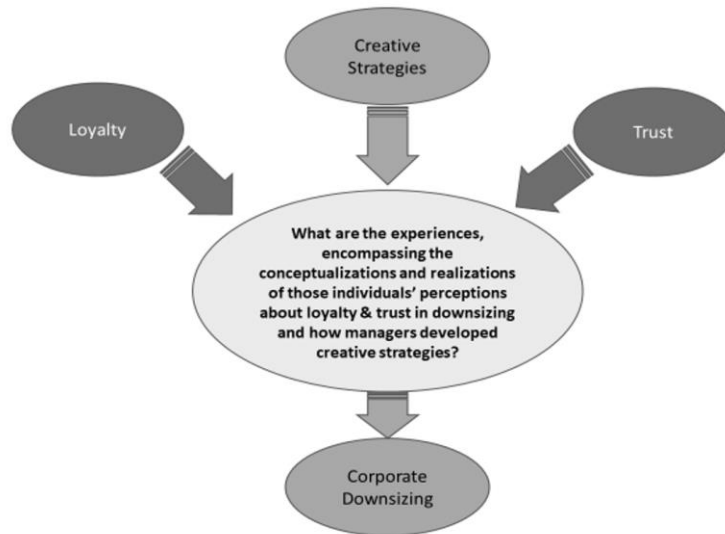
Conceptual Framework

The basis for this study was built on a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological approach. This approach focuses on lived experiences. This approach would illuminate exact details within an experience to achieve an in-depth understanding of the human experience, according to Wilson and Hutchinson (1991). The research focused on creative strategies to maintain loyalty and trust during downsizing. The conceptual framework is built on the lived experiences of the participants. Theoretical coherence refers to a set of beliefs justifiable. The ideas surrounding creative strategies applied during downsizing to maintain loyalty may create stability and security for remaining employees and those leaving. Justifying those actions by leadership can cement the process in the future so that employees may be less psychologically affected by the loss of employment.

Gandolfi and Hansson (2015) had referred to the downside of downsizing by highlighting that, "A considerable body of literature indicates workforce reductions often lead to negative financial and operational outcomes for the downsizing firm as well as negative psychological outcomes for victims, survivors, and executioners" (p.1). This hermeneutic phenomenological study focuses on the experiences, conceptualizations, and realizations of individuals who have experienced the phenomena of downsizing. Strategies of management, ensuring loyalty and trust, and considering creative solutions to maintain and preserve during a downsizing effort are crucial. The conceptual framework is built on the research design and how the results are implemented. Applying the phenomenological method to the research may explain the human experience and the perception of how leadership handled downsizing. Moustakas (1994) highlighted the importance of showing accuracy in the data presented, ensuring the data is pliable, and representing this phenomenon appropriately. The phenomenon focused on creative strategies set forth by researchers and leadership to address the concern of significant layoffs in organizations without providing alternative options to allow employees to remain employed.

According to Budros (1999), downsizing has become an integral part of the corporate world in the United States. While theoretical and empirical studies have been done, the author suggested a negative connotation relating to downsizing. Budros made three points. First, the author referred to downsizing as a way to reduce personal. The second point is that when downsizing occurs, the enhancement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization could be at stake. Third, downsizing has a different

meaning for everyone. Some view this action as overlapping or restructuring, and others view this activity positively. Each employee has a different perception.

According to Budros (1999), organizations consider downsizing as a structural rebuild of a strong organization of tomorrow. Leadership views decreasing as a positive, as do many organizations simultaneously with the process and efficiency improvements and organizational engineering. Budros referred to downsizing as radical" because the changes alter the organization's structure, as employees affected leave and others remained employed. These changes may relate to a company's internal structure, which can cause employees who remain employed to be skeptical at best or, at worst, lose loyalty to the organization.

Downsizing has become a concept to which most of the business world has become accustomed. Harney et al. (2018) conducted a study in the Republic of Ireland using a job-demand resource model focused on employees' lived experiences of companies restricting and downsizing based on employee well-being. The sample included 5110 participants. The results highlighted the damaging impact restructuring and downsizing had on employees' well-being. The perception of employees' views on this phenomenon, not biased by the researcher, does not view the actionable strategy positively. Highlighting choices made by leadership in particular incidents were perceived by some as not applying strategic methods to reduce the loss of jobs while strengthening an organization.

Cohee (2019) did a study on General Dynamics Corporation. Cohee highlighted 27,250 employees who lost their jobs from 1991-to 1993. Cohee focused on leadership's

views on the size of employees who were a part of the cutbacks. CEO William Anders expressed that employee were not loyal or obligated to maintain employment as a part of their workforce. According to Cohee, higher compensation was provided to leadership based on the number of reductions put in place by those in leadership roles. Ander was awarded $54 million for his part in this process. Business ethics came into question, and in 1993 Anders resigned.

While the reduction did increase the profit margin of GDC, and the decision to downsize was viewed as a success, many employees lost their jobs. Companies like Ericsson reduced 24,000 Swedish employees during the dot-com phenomenon, and the company experienced a 90% share price decrease. Armstrong-Stassen (1994) studied the survivors of downsizing, encompassing 200 unionized technicians in the telecom industry. Those survivors were optimistic and predisposed to feel in control of their destiny. Other survivors felt a sense of helplessness.

> The present study had other limitations and concerns about the post-layoff cross-sectional research design and common method variance, which was addressed. Single items were used to measure the sense of powerlessness and job performance. The use of single-item measures precludes establishing the reliability of these measures. The stress appraisal-coping outcome relationships were tested as a unidirectional relationship, but as Lazarus and Folkman (1984) noted, these relationships are probably reciprocal rather than unidirectional. (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994, p.617)

Kraft (1980), and Johnson (2013), focused on organizations rethinking their infrastructure to keep up with a changing economy and a fiercely competitive marketplace, often reducing the workforce. Amundson et al. (2004) explained that employees who remained working while coworkers were being laid off had their account of the lasting effects. The overarching concern of existing employees was the loss of their jobs in the immediate future. According to Child (2015), firing people had become common in America, compared to companies creating new plants, which catapulted them to leadership investing in America approximately 25 years ago. Morris et al. (1999) dug deeper into the phenomenon of corporate downsizing. According to the authors of all the articles written, most of the print-focused on the negativity downsizing brought to individuals, families, and the communities affected. In contrast, the companies focused on becoming leaner and financially stronger. The researchers wanted essential questions answered. The researchers focused on why downsizing had occurred in this volume and whether this course of action had been practical; who had been downsizing; and did the companies who substantially decreased their workforce improved their financial performance. Another pertinent question focused on the long-term, addressing cost savings, whether or not companies that reduced outperformed companies that did not, and where there was a benefit to the investors. The study focused on whether the outcome of downsizing is worth the cost on all levels. The literature reviewed has produced mixed views on downsizing. However, the theme of the majority of the research suggests other methods of creating a strong, viable, financially sound company that does not cost job elimination might be a possible solution.

Literature Review

The literature review was in-depth and covered in the broadest sense possible. Downsizing has become a concept to which most of the business world has become accustomed. Harney et al. (2018) conducted a study in the Republic of Ireland using a job-demand resource model focused on employees' lived experiences of companies restricting and downsizing based on employee well-being.

Morris et al. (1999) highlighted upsizing and downsizing and whether one wins over the other with a noticeable jump in financial stability or financial gain. The study showed no consistent evidence that downsizing meant a more robust bottom line. The study also revealed that aggressive restructuring plans outperformed other industries in the same field and improved profitability. Gross (2015) took on a different view by highlighting the positivity of downsizing. Gross pointed out that cost reduction, surviving in a competitive business arena, and showing versatility in the marketplace by restricting methods to become leaner may increase the ability to be highly competitive. Mishra and Mishra (1994) showed that regularly downsizing companies have a more significant advantage in outperforming their competitors. Studies also showed that there is a need for stability for long-term sustainability. This is essential to bring to light to ensure loyalty and trust in a company's success. The consensus leans toward organizational leadership working toward strategic solutions to preserve jobs and minimize casualties. According to Budros (1999), downsizing is an integral part of organizations today. The author highlights the phenomenon of downsizing based on social action and social context. The goal is to understand companies' need to downsize and how this course of action is

beneficial. Budros, as other researchers have shown within their studies, has defined the downsizing phenomenon as an organization's attempt to reduce the workforce to improve efficiency and the bottom line. This action aimed not to create smaller companies by laying off employees but to level the playing field out until economic conditions improved.

Key Statements and Definitions-Framework

Studies reflected statements and definitions regarding loyalty and trust in the wake of downsizing. Appelbaum et al. (1999) showed that although downsizing can reduce expenses in a troubled economy, the restructuring can also cause a decline in loyalty. This can cause a sense of displacement for those workers left behind and increase negative churn with staff turnover for fear of losing their job shortly. Appelbaum et al. highlighted that the need for alternatives to replace downsizing is imperative. The phenomenon, centered around downsizing, reflected on organizations' leadership working toward strategic solutions to preserve jobs, minimize casualties, and retain trust among employees.

Primary writings from literature, including studies from Devitt et al. (2013), reflected employees' lived experiences relating to loyalty and perception. According to the survey, there are substantial differences in perception regarding how downsizing affects employees. The study focused on loyalty and trust through lived experiences from those affected by downsizing. According to Sadri (1996), the data collected using the Towers Perrin study surveyed 350 senior managers and 275 major organizations surmised that management did not concur that using the cost-cutting efforts of laying-off

employees was beneficial for the organization achieve their initial goals. The conclusion focused on strategies regarding management downsizing to preserve loyalty and trust with those remaining employees, where the foundation had been shaken and even, on some level, had irreparable damage.

According to Mishra and Mishra (1994), creative strategies have reflected several factors that have broken down differences in downsizing strategies in companies. A critical component is mutual trust within management and how this is associated with the organizational redesign. According to Faltermayer (1992), downsizing affects confidence in employees when laid off. The quality of work from motivated people would be significantly higher than those less motivated. The gap in the literature speaks to loyalty. Still, the research stops short of explaining the aftermath of commitment once layoffs occur, whether existing employees or those who lost jobs can reenter the workforce confidently and comfortably. Mellon (1998) reflected on the gap in literature today based on other studies compared to his own, arguing that downsizing can damage social networks. In contrast, Baumol et al. (2003) and Boone (2000) discussed that downsizing could spark innovation. Key journals, case studies, and articles were reviewed and are included in research from many authors.

Literature within the study reflects a strong collaborative theme relating to downsizing and how loyalty and trust can be damaged if creative strategies are not applied when company layoffs occur. Alshrif Al-Hammali et al. (2017) highlighted the adverse effects of downsizing and the level of employee commitment as the foundation is shaken by the act of restructuring. As part of a downsizing process, strategies such as

transferring employees to other work environments without training or pressuring early

retirement so as not to be a part of the layoffs can affect employees' attitude-behavior and

decrease loyalty and trust in an organization. These actions are futile. Strategies applied

to the downsizing efforts, such as working to maintain an employee's status or providing

solutions where employees can move to a role with a level of familiarity, are in the best

interest of the company and the employee. Mellahi and Wilkinson (2010) reflect on the

relationship between downsizing and innovation. The data showed the speed and

accuracy of implementing downsizing and the number of casualties affected. The data

also highlighted the connection between downsizing and choices to support innovation

while cutting back. The other side of the data reflected barriers that can decrease creation

depending on how the downsizing process is carried out. According to Appelbaum

(1991), research revealed that if leadership can show care, dignity, and respect to

terminated employees, this will shed light on surviving employees and how they will be

treated if they find themselves in the same situation in the future. The efforts of

leadership to reflect this behavior would assist in creating a positive environment, which

can help maintain trust and loyalty amidst the chaos of downsizing.

Purpose of Literature Review

The literature review is the backbone of this dissertation. The purpose is to

substantiate factual data based on the literature chosen for this research and how the

studies are relevant to the research problem. The literature will also justify a qualitative

methodology using a hermeneutic phenomenological design to represent the research

effectively. The literature used to support the study was chosen based on the subject area, gaps in the previous studies, and current literature based on downsizing.

Winchester and Salji (2016) referred to the literature review as a formal critical appraisal of the contemporary collective literature on the research subject. This process will be unbiased as the literature is discussed and presented in the research. The literature review will address the effects of downsizing, organizational changes in the work environment, changes in the culture, employee loyalty and trust, creative strategies to minimize layoffs, and manager perspectives on downsizing. This section presents the literature used throughout the dissertation. This overview will contribute to a more in-depth look at the current research. This step should assist in identifying gaps and highlighting those studies, journals, and articles which will provide another layer of substance and contribute to the substantiation of the purpose of the research.

The Effects of Downsizing

Downsizing has played a significant role in society in a dominant way since the recession of 2008. The downturn of economic stability and status had not seen such a dive since the Great Depression, 1929-1941. According to Egan (2014), Bernanke, the former head of the Federal Reserve, said the financial crisis, he felt, was the worst in history, surpassing the Great Depression of 1929. According to Zorn et al. (2017), during the recession of 2008, companies started downsizing their workforce and set the trend. In the U.S., more than 8 million workers were laid off between 2008-and 2010. As the economy has improved, the expectation would be to put employees back to work. However, the reality is that this is not necessarily occurring. Companies are still

downsizing to reduce costs and become leaner organizations to create a more substantial, efficient workplace. Even though downsizing seems to be a viable answer, researchers such as Zorn et al. (2017) believe this corporate action to become leaner and more efficient could have an adverse effect by increasing the likelihood of the probability of driving some companies into bankruptcy.

Devitt et al. (2013) highlighted studies on employee layoffs, reflecting on employees' lived experiences relating to loyalty and trust. Different opinions and perceptions can play an important role, depending on the circumstances. According to Devitt et al., there are substantial differences in perception regarding how downsizing affects employees. The critical factor in this study focused on employee perceptions of losing jobs. If data are not collected from each affected employee, the fluctuation in employees' thoughts and lived experiences could be an unknown variable. The study thoroughly explained the psychological contract breach between leadership and employees.

In studies such as this, where the focus is based on perception from survivors and those affected regarding blame, fairness, actions taken by leadership, and security, the importance is to understand the psychological and physiological hardship of those involved. Data collected to reflect the importance of understanding how strategies can be applied to ensure companies become leaner and stay competitive while maintaining their workforce in the most productive capacity could decrease the percentage of downsized employees.

Organizational Changes in the Work Environment

Downsizing can cause organizational change to occur. Employees reflect on reorganizing in different ways. Some employees could have difficulty accepting and adjusting to changes, which can happen amid downsizing workforces. Some employees would embrace change and thrive on the emotions, and instability downsizing can cause. According to Love and Nohria (2005), there were those in favor of downsizing. The argument suggested downsizing was an effective strategy for becoming more successful in sales and overall performance. The rebuttal was that performance and productivity would decline, and customer satisfaction would be a downturn. A leaner workforce could also cause undo-stress on employees, as with large corporations such as Victoria's Secret, Lowe's, and Pepsi Co. As employees have worked through the aftershock of downsizing, behaviors tended to differ from employee to employee. Communication between those who remain employed and those downsized could also cause friction and negativity, which could carry over into the company's environment.

As layoffs have occurred frequently over the past eleven years, since 2008, company cultures have been altered. After downsizing occurs in an organization, the corporate environment can consist of stress and worry at work and in employees' private lives. According to Boyd et al. (2013), based on a study done with four long-standing employees, the perception reflected that with a reduced level of staffing, those employees who remain have increased demands made on them, extended hours to work, and can be asked to work harder and longer to compensate for the decreased staff. Psychological effects are associated with downsizing, and the pressure can be too much for some

employees. These occurrences can lead to a harsh work environment, which may counteract the purpose of the layoffs.

Cultural Changes

Cultural changes when downsizing occurs can vary depending on the severity of layoffs and how those affected copes with the event. Amabile and Conti (1999) focused on themes in their study that helped define a company's culture through a downsizing effort. Researchers, such as Amabile and Conti, focused on how creativity would decrease in the wake of downsizing and the relationship between creativity and layoffs. The researchers' concern was whether stimulants or obstacles would be the case based on the current conditions. Variables that could affect the cultural environment affected by downsizing included freedom, challenges, resources, loyalty, management support, organizational support, and workload pressures.

Another view by Devine et al. (2003) focused on the importance of occupational stress when dealing with downsizing. According to the study, survivors feel helpless when witnessing past layoffs and insecure about knowing the next steps. Lynham and Chermack (2006) pointed out that downsizing has a greater success rate of accomplishing purpose when accompanied by best practices in treating existing employees. This course of action would include loyalty and trust, which are associated with a strategic plan for handling downsizing with respect and consideration to all employees. While maintaining positive company culture, these actions by leadership could be vital in providing a sense of security to employees, even in times of uncertainty.

Employee Loyalty

Studies on how layoffs have affected employees are reflected in Devitt et al. (2013), reflecting on each employee and their lived experience related to loyalty and perception. Different opinions and perceptions could play a formative role depending on the circumstances. According to the authors, there were substantial differences in perception when reflecting on how downsizing affects employees. This study's critical factors, concepts, and variables were built on diverse perceptions from those losing jobs. The fluctuation in employees' thoughts and lived- experiences could be defined as an unknown variable if data was not collected from each employee. In this study, variables ranged from nervousness regarding job security, employee optimism, and the concern that favoritism may have played a part in the downsizing decision.

The success of any organization may be tied back to employees' and customers' loyalty. Keiningham et al. (2010) showed that less than 30% of U.S. employees are loyal to their organization. The data also reflected that only 25% of U.S. employees have felt that a company has earned the employee's loyalty. Keiningham et al. believed when downsizing occurred; management focused on complex numbers, such as the cost of labor, versus reviewing the soft numbers, which included customer service and loyalty of employees. The study's conclusion revealed that companies surviving through tough times must keep in mind that customers must remain loyal to succeed, and productivity must rise. What drives these two components in any organization is employee commitment and loyalty.

Employee Trust

Employee trust needs to be rebuilt and revered by leadership in companies today. Iqbal et al. (2019) shed light on the social exchange theory exploring impersonal faith in organizations and how HR views productivity. The study reflected events based on impersonal trust within organizations and employee productivity. Seven hundred-line managers were surveyed, and the results revealed empirical evidence that technology-enabled HRM was an incentive to build trust and would create a more outstanding productivity outcome with the ability to manage in a more autonomous environment currently and in the future at organizations. This step in allowing a self-supporting approach may assist in building trust with employees. Reviewing loyalty, employee relationships, and organizational commitment might not be factors when leadership decides to downsize in some organizations. However, research shows long-term cost savings are not necessarily inevitable in all downsizing attempts. Companies valuing loyalty and commitment from their workforce by improving productivity and creating strategies to build up the bottom line while maintaining the status quo in the employment department would be considered a strategic move. According to Keiningham and Lerzan, this may only happen through an organization's commitment to remain loyal to the workforce.

Creative Strategies to Minimize Layoffs

When making crucial decisions in today's economic environment, creative strategies may be imperative for leadership to consider. Maintaining loyal, trustworthy, and highly experienced employees have been vital to organizations that wish to remain

viable and competitive within their industry. According to Sucher and Gupta (2018), in tough economic times, companies struggle to sustain themselves and manage their workforce's most valuable resource they have. An example is Nokia. In 2008 Nokia had record profits of 67%. Competition, though, drove Nokia's prices down by 35%. Labor was costly in the Bochum German plant, so leadership's answer was to downsize 2300 employees. The employees were so angry they protested against the action. 15,000 people who threatened to boycott Nokia products the following week. The ripple effect of this event cost Nokia $221,165,400.00, broken down, $88 418.60 per employee, and bad press. Their market shares significantly declined; from 2008-to 2010, Nokia lost 700 million in sales and 100 million in profits. 2011 Nokia continued to have issues and decided to restructure, cutting 18,000 employees in 13 countries within 2 years. According to the author, leadership was determined to find a more viable solution, which involved creating a program where employees felt the process to be more tolerable and a softer landing.

Creative strategies may be an essential part of the downsizing process for organizations that need to restructure and create a leaner workforce. Relating this data to the focus of the research, which highlights the importance of understanding the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining loyalty, and trust in corporate downsizing situations, these studies shine a light on the choice companies make to downsize and the effects of this decision. Data is needed from organizations that find alternatives to job loss to counteract these particular organizations.

Manager Perspective on Downsizing

Studies that correlated to the constructs of interest in the research focus on lived experiences regarding downsizing and creative strategies, which one day may lay off workers. Downsizing within organizations can cause perceptual assumptions by employees and society. The idea of rightsizing organizations to increase profits may not always be as effective as leadership expects. Events are taking place in corporations today, such as outsourcing and focusing on financial performance to determine the worth of loyal employees; maybe a company's overcompensation for underperforming based on leadership, competitiveness in the industry, or lack of creative strategies has caused outperforming against competitors. According to Nègre et al. (2017), studies based on workforce reductions are explored for their impact on society. The authors pointed out that researchers such as Wilkinson (2005) carried the same view regarding downsizing. The perceptual concept based on culture is that downsizing operations reflected a non-verbal contract as such, which in the eyes of the population showed a disregard for commitment and, on some level, a breach of a social contract between companies and the general population or society. According to Vuontisjärvi (2013), from an ethical perspective, downsizing would set into motion questionable motives or business dealings. Even though downsizing was meant to improve efficiency in organizations that would satisfy shareholders, employees, and local communities, downsizing can also reflect potential losses, which would leave some companies or organizations with no choice but to go out of business.

Nègre et al. (2017) referred to the empirical literature on downsizing and sustainability by breaking down the components into four sections. The authors first defined downsizing as proactive and reactive operations, representing the need for cutbacks. However, with this line of thought, this strategy was viewed as firms justifying downsizing operations using a reactive theory based on a lousy marketplace or internal financial difficulties. The second component takes into account how downsizing operations were made public. Companies could control how the communication is delivered if driven by a press release. Still, according to this study, news of this, provided in this fashion, could do more damage to a firm than being considered an asset. The third component was a reaction to the announcement. In the case of this study, the location was France, which is a code-law country. Labor issues are considered very serious. According to Sucher and Gupta (2018), in the United States, which is common law, managers create arguments to justify downsizing, and investors and shareholders react positively according to the research. The last component was based on the social dynamics related to sustainability. Research is needed to address the gap in this issue.

Methodology

The methodology applied to this research was built on a qualitative study focused on hermeneutic phenomenology. Literature showed similar methods that supported or negated the study, including qualitative methods in conjunction with hermeneutic phenomenology. According to Moustakas (1994), this methodology represented the core meaning of acquiring and collecting data based on the essence of human experience. According to Avey et al. (2008), who devoted a study to understanding employee

resistance to change, the researchers identified a noticeable gap in examining the impact

of positiveness from employees regarding the organizational change. The research

examined the attitudes and behaviors impacted by restructuring an organization of 132

employees from a broad sector of organizations and jobs. According to the authors, these

identifiers included a psychological state regarding optimism and resilience, relating to

positive emotions vs. cynicism, heightened awareness of predicting positive emotions,

and positivity between psychological capital and attitudes combined with behaviors.

Boyd et al. (2013) discussed job characteristics regarding transactional and action

regulation theories by highlighting the models, which showed the relationship between

job demands, which encompassed psychological cost as well as consume effort and job

resources, including meeting basic needs of employees, reduced demands and assistance

regarding coping with job stress. The study focused on quantitative research documenting

lived experiences based on working conditions and employees' responses to change,

which could shed light on the phenomenon of interest. The study linked job

characteristics, transactional, and action regulation theories relating to employee

perceptions of increased job demands and the absence of resources to handle those

demands as a crucial role in understanding how this affects employees.

     According to Laverty (2003), applying a methodology such as hermeneutic

phenomenology has become famous according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000). These two

concepts were considered interchangeable but understanding the differences before

applying this methodology to this study was necessary. The perception of both methods

was viewed through Husserl with the exploration of phenomenology and continued by

Gadamer and Linge (1976) with the hermeneutic phenomenology regarding the similarities and differences in approaches. Data could include personal reflection and experiences from surveying and questioning the participants in both phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. The goal was to extract these experiences that apply to the study with a level of diversity to gain a full view of the lived experience from all angles. According to Koch (1996), using this methodology provided openness, which is critical for this type of study. The author also suggested encouraging the interview process not to go outside the lived experience realm. Geertz (1973) had described this process of gaining lived experiences as much more valuable than their simulations. Kvale (1996) referred to the importance of not focusing on what was said but on what was not said. Applying the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology to the research study opened the door to much firsthand information from the participants.

Research Problem Strengths and Weaknesses

Research is continuous until all avenues have been exhausted. Every era has challenges in business, and analysis becomes outdated as the world evolves. According to Appelbaum et al. (1999), downsizing has been a reality for many North American organizations for the past three decades. According to Mishra and Spreitzer (1998), more than 3 million jobs have been downsized each year since 1989 by both public and private organizations. According to Mishra and Spreitzer the downsizing or rightsizing effect was implemented for companies to become more efficient and, most importantly, increase their bottom line by decreasing unwanted or unneeded surplus.

Cohee (2019) referred to corporate downsizing as activities taking place to improve efficiency, the productivity of workers, and a competitive edge in the marketplace. Cohee addressed the downsizing epidemic on corporations by assessing potential workforce reductions from a strategic standpoint when considering the cost of the cutbacks and how morale would be affected. Cascio and Wynn (2004), through work for the Society of Human Resource Management, identified precursors that should be reviewed before a decision should be made on restructuring. Cohee suggested downsizing as a last resort and creatively strategizing to increase profit and efficiency without eliminating jobs. Cohee pointed out that corporate downsizing is here to stay. The practice of corporate downsizing has been used as a strategy designed to increase profitability and competitiveness in tough economic times. Methodologies have varied over the last decade, but a consensus of research concludes that downsizing is now a part of our reality and future for corporations and private enterprises. Cohee also highlighted that with several financial, manufacturing, and retail companies applying the need to carry out reductions, the corporate strategy seems to default to this solution for encouraging results. Cohee's research could implement temporary redeployment for employees, cutting back or eliminating overtime, offering unpaid leave while maintaining employment status, voluntary retirement, and salary freezes as incentives to avoid a layoff and encourage employees to make sacrifices for the greater good.

As Cascio (2009) noted, employees wanted to know the truth and hear from leadership. Keeping employees updated on the business's stability and wellness would create a higher loyalty and trust and show the workforce that the administration does

what it can to reduce costs without possibly cutting employees. As automation and global

competition have set into our corporate society, organizations have seemingly struggled

to keep afloat. Sweeney (2016) reflected on the newspaper industry and the effect

downsizing has had on this industry.

According to Sucher and Gupta (2018), two tremendous forces were transforming

the very nature of work: automation and ever fiercer global competition. Many

organizations have had to rethink their workforce strategies to keep up, often making

disruptive and painful changes. Typically, they turn to episodic restructuring and routine

layoffs, but both components have damaged employee engagement and company

profitability in the long term. Some companies, however, had realized that they needed a

new approach. The authors highlighted the critical discussion by published data in the

Journal of Business Research, focusing on the theory of downsizing and what issues

could stem from this continually occurring. One of the issues that revealed itself was

filing bankruptcy. Losing loyal and valuable employees, whether, through layoffs or

personal choice, productivity falling behind, new staff not being effectively trained, and

innovation decreasing, companies could risk spiraling out of control and not being able to

recover.

Conceptual Framework

According to Adom et al. (2018), the importance of a conceptual framework has

justified substantiating research. The rationale for the concepts has provided meaning and

validity to the study. The conceptual framework was built on hermeneutic

phenomenology regarding how lived experiences affect managerial practices and

strategies influencing loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States. The research focuses on past and present literature, case studies, and data collected. Discussing studies, which focused on lived experiences of employees who lost jobs and were affected by the trending wave of downsizing to increase profitability and productivity, provided a realization of the personalized experiences employees have faced in the wake of workforce reductions. The literature supported this topic by showing a multi-diverse view of downsizing and how loyalty and trust have been affected.

Focusing on the research question, the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing may provide insight into the minds of employees who have lived through this epic occurrence. Studies may also show how those affected by downsizing feel this course of action helps or hinders corporate America, impacts job satisfaction, and environmental changes. Some literature supports or negates the research based on loyalty and trust and how creative strategies in downsizing could affect these variables.

The research in the study provided essential data concerning companies in the past and presented shaping our corporate culture. The case studies, journals, and articles highlighted in this study may encourage future generations who may benefit and reflect on the downside of reducing workforces and any implications of this current phenomenon. Providing perceptual data to explain humanistic experiences, which cannot always be validated, allows the reader to determine if the researcher's role was successful in informing and educating.

Substantiating the concepts was accomplished by choosing literature, which provided timely and accurate data relevant to the research and can support the main points. Schulz and Johann (2018) focused on corporate downsizing, data pulled from S&P 100 between the years 2010-2012, examining the effect of this turn of events and how this action affected corporation's reputations. Data produced were meant to inform the reader of the trends occurring and the outcome on society and corporations.

Polkinghorne (1989) focused on phenomenological research methods and referred to these as plans used to find knowledge. Research methods and concepts should be created and designed to be paths or a road map and, if laid out correctly, reflect the researcher's validity and other researchers' points of view. The routes followed are built on accurate conclusions from researchers, as the data collected are analyzed and processed. The purpose of creating the research around the conceptual framework was to take the ideas and components and organize them to reflect the true nature of the study.

Gap in the Research

Studies focused on downsizing may have reflected a gap in the research. The case studies in the research highlight justification for either downsizing or applying creative strategies to cut costs and improve a company's bottom line without eliminating employee jobs. The focus of the studies highlighted whether to maintain employees or reduce workforces and how these points of view were supported. These actions affected loyalty and trust among employees and leadership. Research like a journal study by LaMarsh (2009) discussed the reality that downsizing is a purposeful effort to reduce the number of employees to reach specific goals of leadership and shareholders. The article

provided examples of why downsizing occurs, including environmental and organizational events that led to downsizing and possible ties between downsizing and the compensation awarded to executives. There are many case studies where factual data and personal speculation could be made regarding the reasoning for whether downsizing would be the right strategic move for companies. Still, there are also several gaps in the literature regarding this topic, as there are many variables to each scenario. LaMarsh (2009) had brought to light that although research in downsizing has revealed individual reactions to those reduced, there has been little understanding of consequences regarding employee perceptions of the organization. There has also been a lack of examining the relationship between motivating and hindering factors regarding downsizing and the consequences.

According to Brookman et al. (2007), executives may be motivated to lay off based on financial gain. Although Brookman et al. (2007) also pointed out that top executives who downsized could lose credibility and power due to losing human capital. According to Iverson and Zatzick (2011), questions still need to be addressed, focusing on employees' views on downsizing as socially responsible, if executives are financially gaining from the efforts, and if the perception of downsizing is socially accountable if employees lose jobs.

In research conducted by Cascio (1993), downsizing since the 1980s has affected hundreds of companies and millions of workers. The downsizing effect prompted researchers to create many studies focused on surviving or living through downsizing at an organization. Researchers also synthesize articles to collaborate ideas and findings

from data collected through case studies. Still, according to the author, the research is not overly pursued. Many components go into the decision to downsize, according to Cascio (1993), including the need and want for higher profits, increased ROI, and high stock prices. Synthesizing case studies to gain a big picture of the effects of downsizing could provide a broad overview of the pros and cons and themes from studies done to support or negate the downsizing efforts. The gap in the research showed a lack of collaborative data and highlighted commonalities and differences focused on downsizing. It reveals whether companies who downsize benefit from lower overhead, better communications, more efficiency, and increased productivity have different reactions depending on the researcher and the study.

Examining whether loyalty and trust between employees and leadership had suffered, remained the same, or decreased, would be determined by reviewing outcomes of studies based on the criteria, data collection, and results to determine common themes. The gap could be filled through researchers reviewing studies, synthesizing case studies with similar and different articles, and creating a conclusion. The author found that long-term organizational improvements call for redesign and system changes to eliminate inefficiency and repetitiveness. Filling in the gap to explore the creativity of leadership's choices when the goal is to create a healthier bottom line may provide perspective to other companies on how to reposition organizations by making choices that could involve strategic methods, saving jobs, and, wherever possible avoid downsizing.

Literature Overview

The literature review provides insight into the main points of the research. The assessment covers downsizing, organizational changes in the work environment due to downsizing; changes in the culture; employee loyalty and trust; creative strategies to minimize layoffs. In creating and building the research model, ascertaining relevant studies and research was vital in substantiating claims and methodologies in this study. According to the University of South Carolina (2020), the literature review focused on existing research and comparative studies. This review provided a strong foundation based on the purpose of the study. A historical view, gaps in the research, and multiple sides of the issues were introduced through research and literature. This review also served as a platform to credit those researchers who have done prior research. The literature review provided a high-level overview of the topic with a granular view of specific studies reflecting outcomes of downsizing and the possible benefit of applying creative strategies to minimize job loss.

Historical Views on Downsizing

The historical view on downsizing is based on a diversity of case studies dating back to the financial crisis of 2008. According to Rauchway (2019), the U.S. financial crisis spiraled into a worldwide economic collapse based on our global financial markets. Companies seem to struggle, and downsizing has become a trend that will continue for 12 years and beyond—the literature views downsizing as a continuous trend rather than a short-lived decision. According to Shaw and Barrett-Power (1997), downsizing has become a deliberate decision to reduce the workforce population to improve

organizational performance. The current trend has been to minimize employees, which leadership may view as a tactic to execute fast decision-making, create more flexibility, and improve quality, efficiency and productivity by cutting the workforce (Freeman & Cameron, 1993; Tomasko, 1992). One-fourth of downsized firms have improved cash flow and productivity (Tomasko, 1992). Downsizing has created negative consequences resulting in ineffectiveness and the need for repetition. According to Pearlstein (1994), two-thirds of downsized organizations had to repeat the same action within that same year.

The current literature is descriptive and based on a theoretical foundation, highlighting the empirical research. Pearlstein (1994) stated that many disciplinary perspectives or perceived downsizing could be conceptually confusing. As researchers documented the economic crisis from 2008 to current times, there were different theories in many other studies. Brockner (1998) categorized downsizing research as multi-theoretical. Staw and Barsade (1993) referred to the actions of having to define downsizing as a stressful event. History has presented downsizing as an event that affects the organization, workgroups, and employees individually. Research has needed to develop a shared understanding of how companies work internally and how individuals react to situations, resulting in downsizing, as the data in this study is heavily weighted on the human experience. As a researcher, understanding the responses is essential to review previous data from past case studies to know if loyalty and trust have diminished through the years, remained status quo, or improved as the economy has grown stronger. Downsizing is a reality globally and not just occurring in the United States.

According to LaMarsh (2009), corporate social responsibility focuses on perception. The perception can vary depending on the circumstances. Lakshman et al. (2019) studied four countries to gain perspective on downsizing past and current views. The countries included were France, India, Turkey, and Vietnam. The study focused on whether the decision and process of downsizing were fair, ethical, legitimate, and socially responsible in the hands of leadership. Historically in certain circumstances, executives were compensated for slimming down their workforce. LaMarsh examined whether or not downsizing was socially responsible. According to the survey, downsizing included assisting employees in deciding whether the decision was positive or negative. For example, if downsizing occurred based on performance-linked bonuses with declining performance and human capital was involved, this was viewed negatively. If downsizing was related to asset restructuring and assuring employees downsized would eventually lead to a successful re-creation of the organization, the perception might be more positive. Historically, suppose a company stands to lose specific human capital. In that case, employees may react negatively, and the perception will be heightened, erasing any loyalty and trust employees have within the organization's leadership. Based on case studies highlighted in the research, historical views, which focus on loyalty and trust in downsizing, focused on both positive and negative effects on society and the corporate environment.

Davis (1998) wrote about news stories focused on the company's restructuring plans and did not mention the humanistic side of the story. For example, AT&T has highlighted in The Los Angeles Times (1996) reporting cuts. The headline read, "AT&T

lays out a bold plan for its future," Newsweek reported on four executives who laid off

131,000 employees. AT&T's President Robert E. Allen, the CEO, saw an increase in his

salary when laying off workers. This historical view was an example of how employee

downsizing could be handled, but historically Americans, since the 1970s, had begun to

see this turn of events. In the 1990s, downsizing had become a full-blown reality and

standard practice, which remains the same today. Downsizing has become a norm in the

twentieth century, and job security is no longer an assumed guarantee when accepting a

job. Downsizing is still a common practice as we move into a new decade. Case studies

and journal articles have shown that this trend is not going out of style anytime soon.

Effects of Downsizing

Focusing on the effect of downsizing could have a pivotal impact on how

leadership and management handle this phenomenon moving forward. According to Zorn

et al. (2017), downsizing is attributed to losing valuable knowledge when employees

leave. These actions then have reactions as remaining employees are faced with taking on

other's responsibilities who are no longer there, with little time to gain skill or knowledge

for a role an employee may not be familiar with. Remaining employees also may have a

diminished view of trustworthiness or loyalty from the organization toward employees.

Olsson and Tåg (2017) conducted a relevant study focused on employees affected during

the downsizing process and after-effects for those remaining employed. According to

Olsson and Tåg, the literature highlighted leadership's strategies to avoid employees

losing jobs. The literature also reflected on the stability and accountability of

organizations regarding past workforce operations, which provided a high level of

understanding of how leadership, management, and employees handled labor reductions, restructuring, and cut-bucks based on the author's research.

Downsizing has been an ongoing trend. Reflecting on the outcome of these continuous efforts to cut back, which is still occurring 12 years after the recession of 2008, or as some have referred to this event in history as the Great Recession (Amadeo, 2019, p. 1). Companies have reorganized and strived to thrive, hoping for an assumingly promising future. Olsson and Tåg (2017) focused on the effects of downsizing during a restructuring effort during a buyout of a private industry. According to the researchers, this selection educates and informs the reader on the impact of downsizing by showing an overview of companies in Sweden, where buyouts had occurred, and layoffs ultimately followed. Similar events will continue to happen in the United States for the foreseeable future.

Amadeo (2019) focused on the 2008 economic crisis, which, as shown by the author's research, was far worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s, and there are companies today still reeling from the aftermath. The topic highlights the importance of creative strategies in downsizing, focusing on maintaining trust and loyalty among employees concerning management, leadership, and the organization. Downsizing comes in all shapes and sizes and does not discriminate. Providing context around downsizing brings to light a diversity of case studies and articles, which present data on how downsizing is handled internally, and whether or not eliminating employees helps leadership and shareholders achieve the intended purpose of creating a healthier bottom line. According to Business Knowledge Source (2020), the research focused on the

general problem with leadership possibly unaffected by the implications and long-term effects of downsizing employees and the impact on stability and longevity.

The specific problem Olsson and Tåg (2017) focused on was a need to implement creative strategies regarding downsizing, which could influence loyalty, and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States, as highlighted in the study by Mishra and Spreitzer (1998). Articles focused on layoffs, and job polarization reflected a view of companies being bought out and letting a percentage of the workforce go, considered dispensable (Olsson & Tåg, 2017). Olsson and Tåg argued that layoffs after a buyout could be rationalized through a polarization lens, meaning the middle-class jobs requiring a moderate level skillset were dissolving. Nevertheless, positions below and above the middle class remained strong. The research focused on reasoning based on globalization, the shrinking of the middle class from 61% in 1971 to 50% in 2015. According to Perry (2018), labor unions had lost their strength and power.

Olsson and Tåg (2017) pointed out that layoffs after buyouts effectively avoid agency issues that can occur. The author highlighted that downsizing was crucial for improving productivity and profitability. The authors also compared the trend in the U.S. regarding the private sector with Sweden's active private equity market and job polarization, occurring since approximately 2006, before the global recession began in 2008. The study focused on empirical evidence showing that Sweden had dealt with layoffs based on buyouts for decades. Olsson and Tåg supported laying off workers, as the researcher felt the point of view should be based on viewing this research through the job polarization process. According to Olsson and Tåg, the first course of action was

slimming down the middle class, the second was automation, and the third was a weaker labor union. The study aimed to provide insight into layoffs after buyouts and whether they are justifiable. The research followed employees touched by downsizing over four years before a buyout had been announced. According to Olsson and Tåg, the timeframe ran from 2002-to 2008, tracking treated and controlled workers. The results reflected minimal evidence of changes in unemployment after a buyout occurred. Unemployment doubled in firms with a slowdown in employees who were not as technically savvy. Those with less technical skills reflected a poorer performance than coworkers with a higher productivity rate.

Through calculations, Olsson and Tåg (2017) revealed that workers performing routine job requirements showed a high percentage of becoming a causality of the unemployment trend. According to the research, those workers performing offshorable jobs also had a high rate of being a part of the unemployment statistics. These stats applied to Swedish firms because buyouts were a small percentage of Sweden's economy. Job polarization occurred but had a minimal impact on their economy based on Olsson and Tåg data. The research highlighted layoffs in private firms focused on Sweden, per Olsson and Tåg, as they identified Sweden as having had one of the most significant numbers of private firms with the most buyouts known to date. The author has argued that job polarization could be justified through this process, meaning employment had a range of wages, from lowest and highest, with what would be considered a median income job becoming obsolete. The authors highlight that private equity firms reduced

agency costs and automated routine jobs. The data reflected the workers in less productive firms doubled their chance of being a statistic in the downsizing epidemic.

The United States has continued to carry on the downsizing trend since 2008. Understanding how global organizations, both public and private, manage their business, especially regarding downsizing and restructuring, may assist leadership in learning strategies, which may benefit American companies to preserve loyalty and trust in the administration and maintain valuable employees. Literature focused on corporate environments provides a view inside the epicenter of corporate society, mainly when downsizing efforts are occurring. The journal from Amabile and Conti (1999) focused on a working environment at a large tech firm before, during, and after significant downsizing. According to Amabile and Conti's research, during the 1990s, downsizing was prevalent in many organizations. As organizations had made decisions to downsize and restructure, according to the authors, innovation was still needed to create longevity. The research addressed the question of whether these go hand in hand. The first theme of the study focused on researching creativity to determine if this component had decreased during downsizing.

The second theme focused on the correlation between creativity and downsizing. Amabile and Conti (1999) wanted to understand if downsizing diminished creativity in the work environment by preventing employees left behind from being as creative in their work as they were before downsizing occurred. Understanding how downsizing affected productivity and the ability of employees who remained at an organization to move forward with business as usual may not always consider a lack of creativity or

productivity when cutbacks occur. There are differences between organizations that downsize effectively and those that do not, according to Cameron (1994). As Cameron highlighted, overcoming the adverse effects would include specific strategies to ensure a more successful downsizing process. Amabile and Conti had a particular research method. They applied the chronological approach. The process included using the design overview, which included participants who were a part of the downsizing process. According to the authors, the sample included independent participants who experienced downsizing during a timeline focused on four pivotal moments. The elements reviewed in the study were based on a work environment focusing on creativity. The first wave of the research focused on the events before downsizing. It then shifted to events occurring during the downsizing process, emphasizing how this environment withstood the changes as highlighted. The span of participants included employees experiencing downsizing departments. Employees who remained at the organization and saw growth in departments during and after downsizing were also studied.

The components analyzed included the lived experience of being downsized, the anticipation of how the future will look, the stability of the organization, and the individual workgroups within organizations. Amabile and Conti (1999) performed their research in a Fortune 500 high technology organization with an employee size of 30,000+. During this time, the employees were made aware of a restructuring effort, which would eliminate 12-15% of corporate jobs. The creative strategy was to first work with those employees who chose to take early retirement with incentives—other options catering to those who voluntarily wanted to separate and involuntary layoffs. Amabile

and Conti collected data between 1993-and 1995. The data were collected through questionnaires and those who volunteered and were willingly interviewed. Seven hundred fifty-four employees were studied, and data were collected. The variables included stimulants and obstacles regarding creativity in the work environment during different periods of the restructuring process. The research suggested that organizational downsizing may negatively change a company's work environment. This study was conducted uniquely during phases of the downsizing process, including before and after, which could identify changes throughout the process.

Amabile and Conti (1999) uncovered in this study that the working environment seemed to improve within this organization as time passed. Still, the creativity seemed to have lagged beyond downsizing. The gap in this study regarding this organization and the data collected could not claim this was the attitude or outcome of other organizations or organizational studies. The research and literature, which focused on long-term economic effects regarding downsizing per Cascio (1993), suggested that future leaders should be cautious about applying downsizing as a specific solution to increase the bottom line. According to the author, the long-term effects of downsizing could outweigh the benefits. This study could expand to companies of multiple disciplines and sizes to gauge outcomes. This study could be considered viable as the corporate culture adjusts to an ever-changing corporate future.

Changes in Corporate Culture

Corporate culture could be a vital element in a thriving organizational environment. According to Fiordelis et al. (2019), a creative corporate culture can be

essential for innovation. As creativity may suffer in the wake of downsizing, studies such

as Tuckey et al. (2015) focused on the inconsistency regarding the relationship between

work stressors, outcomes, and the effects of the downsizing efforts. The authors referred

to the difference between threat and hindrance, relating to personal loss vs. block goal

attainment and hindering advancement at work. According to the authors, this study

focused on data collected from 609 retail workers and highlighted the threat-hindrance-

challenge. The data was supposed to reflect the stressors associated with psychological

and emotional burnout, which could cause a decrease in dedication. The information also

reflected hindrance stressors, which may not be related to distress or burnout. According

to Cavanaugh et al. (2000), work stressors can be perceived in many ways. According to

the study, challenge stressors, which could be prevalent in today's work environment,

focused on work-related demands that can cause stress while carrying the added pressure

of potential gain for an individual if adequately completed. Hindrance stressors are

associated with work-related needs, creating obstacles for an employee to advance.

Tuckey et al. complied hypotheses for study 1, meant to take an industry approach or a

high-level view of stress indicators. This study focused on a transactional model built on

stress indicators, which broke down the components of the survey into themes based on

negative emotions.

　　　　According to Lazarus and Folkman (1987), the first study focused on individual-

level appraisals or feelings based on stressors that threaten oneself. The first hypothesis

dove into the subject matter revolving around a need to understand a positive association

between threat stressors and distress. Another meta-theme based on the transactional

model raised whether employees would try to change what is causing pain. The second hypothesis focused on a positive association between the threat stressor and how the emotional impact affected employees—the third hypothesis related to work stressors and the dedication to work. Lazarus and Folkman highlighted the importance of understanding the relationship between both components, which could have provided a clearer understanding of how employees deal with the ability to handle turmoil at work and whether loyalty and trust had diminished because of the elements of stress associated with the daily job. According to Lazarus and Folkman, work stress can cause other issues psychologically, depending on the situation. The following two hypotheses presented focused on a positive association between hindrances and the emotional toll on an employee. This study also looked at the negative connotation between stress, dedication, and loyalty. Lastly, the researchers wrapped up study one by suggesting a positive connection between psychological distress and stressors and a positive relationship with stress, which could be caused by emotional stress and work dedication.

The second study focused on an experimental design based on diary entries. Tuckey et al. (2015) focused on using data collected in this fashion to explain the relationship between stress, appraisals, and an employee's psychological well-being. Hypotheses created for this study included a possible positive association between demands of the role based on skills and assessments, a positive connection between conflict and threat appraisals, and whether connecting organizational roadblocks and appraisals, favorable or unfavorable, would be likely.

According to Tuckey et al. (2015), such studies regarding challenges had revealed positive outcomes; other research had shown any consequences for each of these themes. These researchers focused on whether challenge appraisals would be associated with positive effects, anxiety, fatigue, and a level of anger on the employees' side. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), leadership delivering a threat appraisal consisting of a psychological level of severity and vulnerability, which focused on behaviors not acceptable within the job or workplace, could cause levels of stress within some employees, and others could find a positive outcome from this type of communication. Tuckey et al. hypotheses focused on identifying factors relating to this study, including threat appraisal negatively associated with positive effects but still associated with anxiety, anger, and fatigue. The last hypotheses were tied to hindrance and understanding if the assessment would be positively associated with anxiety, anger, and fatigue. Understanding these outcomes may assist leadership in creatively learning an innovative method to handle employee discipline action, reviews, and appraisals constructively, which may help minimize long-term damage.

Tuckey et al. (2015) conducted an intense study that included 445 Australian employees who filled out an online survey for three days, with an incentive of gift cards, allowing data to be collected and analyzed. There were strengths and weaknesses in this study. Trying to distinguish hindrances and threats was, at times, unclear. Tuckey et al. applied a three-dimensional challenge – the hindrance threat framework to differentiate between variables. Study 1 had very few participants, so the data was sparse. What was established were the participants who faced fewer or less intense threats had more energy

and self-confidence. The sample size and collection were restricted and more generalized. The participant pool was minor.

Study 2 reduced the importance of job level factors, including stressors, appraisals, and psychological status. The stressors were shown to reflect certain situations and not continuous behavior. The authors' focus of the two studies supported the idea that threat stressors and appraisals were their entity and should be categorized as a challenge and hindrance stressors. The research from these themes provided an accurate picture of the cause and effect of these variables and how these components affected individuals and an organization's culture. As Jones and George (2002) highlighted, organizational culture is built on values, beliefs, and morals. These attributes control how employees interact within an organization. Striving to ensure the corporate culture is aligned with the company's beliefs and values may assist in building and maintaining a healthy culture, allowing employees to remain loyal and committed to the company.

Organizational Downsizing; Strategy

As culture defines a company's core values, organizational downsizing reflects employees' lived experiences. According to Frost (n.d.), corporate downsizing demonstrates the need to maintain profitability. When the effects of downsizing come full circle, the price paid by leadership may cause an adverse reaction and not produce the intended goals. Bringing to light organizational downsizing and strategies best applied provided a lens into today's corporate world. The focus on management becoming blasé or numb regarding employees losing jobs and the ability to support themselves and their families is a component that researchers should focus on.

According to Gross (2015), management has become accustomed to laying off employees before integrating strategic efforts to save jobs and reach the organization's goals internally. According to the researcher, some studies reflect downsizing positively affects companies by strategically positioning an organization evenly or ahead of competitors. As the study points out, innovative steps companies were taking would include

- Showing cost reduction

- Surviving in a highly competitive global economy

- Adopting a fresh new strategy to take on new markets

- Continually creating innovative designs to come out ahead

The research done within this study focused on views of past, present, and future based on organizational downsizing. The goal was to understand if current resource actions would continue to increase profits and decrease surplus or if this is a phase the global marketplace is going through. Gross (2015) highlighted the optimal goal was to reflect on the importance of maintaining loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States. Gross also wanted to provide a broader overview of the justification companies provided when supporting downsizing. Understanding how strategically companies work to minimize causalities and pursue options to maintain workforces where productivity and effectiveness are at their highest levels. Palliam and Shalhoub (2002) reflected on the idea of reducing forces as a critical element in aligning the strategies of corporations. According to Palliam and Shalhoub (2002) and Trahms et al. (2013), downsizing was an essential element that could assist in strategic alignment

within companies to nurture strategic innovators to creatively increase profit and become

a stronger competitor in the market. Gross also pointed out that downsizing could benefit

organizations, hinder innovative and creative ideas, and motivate work environments.

This study revealed that more prominent companies were not always more robust and

profitable when continually making the same choices to cut back and increase profit.

Downsizing was not always the answer when companies needed to improve their bottom

line.

The research in this study focused on reducing employees by restructuring. This

process had become mainstream. Companies today may perceive downsizing as tying in

with organizational effectiveness and survival. Literature supported and negated

downsizing based on perceptions and lived experiences. There are many different views

on downsizing. Kvale (1996) found that downsizing companies had higher productivity

than companies that did not change their organizations. Kale suggested that organizations

that had applied a strategic business model took on the reputation of being versatile

enough to compete successfully in competitive environments. Leadership needed to

instill stability with employees to ensure the company had balance and longevity as part

of the overarching plan for the workforce to believe leadership was making choices not

only in the organization's best interest but the employees as well. Kvale pointed out that

the need to downsize should be reviewed yearly to ensure the timing aligns with the

competitive market environment.

According to Gross (2015), downsizing should not be implemented as a cost-

saving solution to compete. This process should be done with insight and planning on

how the strategic move would create a more innovative organization. Loyalty and trust could be diminished during this process, so proceeding with confidence and assurance that employees may see the benefits and understand the need for the restrictions was an important component when deciding whether downsizing was the most plausible solution.

Baily et al. (1996) focused on manufacturing plants and the increased productivity without the concern of employees left to carry the increased load after downsizing. Baily et al. focused on rising productivity with a significant decrease in employment. Through the data collected in this study, Gross (2015) found that downsizing did not automatically ensure organizations would improve their financial future and increase productivity. This was not a one size fits all solution.

Dial and Murphy (1995) focused on the influence of a company's decision to downsize using the creative strategy of compensative incentives. This was referred to as shareholder wealth and gave management an incentive to deplete underperforming departments and make them no longer an asset to the organization. Dial and Murphy researched CEO compensation packages and the motivation when building large organizations, watching companies lay off employees and close in tough economic times. Palliam and Shalhoub (2002) highlighted the role of downsizing as no more than a corporate strategy suggesting a solid link between downsizing and long-term profitability. The researchers agreed with author Kowske et al. (2010) that management defended downsizing by saying this step is necessary to meet global competitiveness demands and maintain an edge.

Klarner and Raisch (2013) found that downsizing in organizations vs. keeping everything status quo created a higher efficiency level in companies. According to data, making these changes, when needed, allow companies to be more competitive in the marketplace. The current study concluded that downsizing as a strategic move to remain competitive in the global market was present in the 70s and 80s. The perception of downsizing has evolved over the years. Leadership is concerned with maintaining well-trained and knowledgeable employees but also needs to ensure organizations are as lean and competitive as possible. Leadership needs to ensure companies today are competitive in their industry.

Downsizing workers has become a viable solution within companies over the past 12 years to maintain this status. According to Gross (2015), downsizing would not be the only possible solution for employers. For example, skilled workers who were no longer needed in their roles were sent to other areas of the organization. The strategy provided employees continuous employment increased productivity in areas where needed and maintained the quality of customer service and level of work and knowledge without losing valuable resources. Associating this study with the research highlights the importance of creating strategies through leadership, allowing employers to maintain employees in some capacity if restructuring occurs while ensuring loyalty and trust remain intact.

Cohee (2019) also highlighted the importance of leadership and downsizing. The researcher highlighted leaders profiting from reducing workforces, the history of downsizing, and the fact that this method to lower costs and revitalize organizations has

been woven into American culture's fabric. Cohee used the example of General

Dynamics Corporation (G.D.), which downsized from 1991-to 1993, cutting 27,250

employees. The restructuring occurred by implementing "Gain/Sharing," This entitled

executives to cash bonuses to reward them for reducing the workforce. The CEO,

William Anders' remarked that he had no obligation to their employees. Downsizing was

an "Issue of excess human capacity" (Cohee, 2019, p. 2). William Anders' was paid out

approximately $54 million. This historical view of downsizing touched by a scenario

such as this is essential to learn from. This reflects a humanistic side of leadership who

seemingly chose to focus on money first in their pocket and may not have shown as much

loyalty or compassion for those losing jobs.

Cohee (2019) pointed out that research has demonstrated downsizing does not

seem to have an end date, just an acronym of TBD. Cohee also highlighted that

downsizing had been used as a strategic move over the last four decades to increase

companies' profits and create a space where organizations can be more competitive. If

hard times fall on an organization, this strategy may help them regroup and survive. The

author estimates that approximately 30,000 employees during this decade were

downsized. Within this process of downsizing, the responsibility of management and

leadership to employees was constantly examined. Terminated employees and those who

remained behind were reviewed regarding the process and aftermath. The outcome for

companies based on the financial benefits is not always guaranteed. Still, the negative

environmental impact may be a commonality in organizations, not ending anytime soon.

The outcome of downsizing, as reflected in the research, varies. However, as Cohee (2019) revealed, the data collected among a diversity of industries showed inconsistencies in how effective this method was in reaching the goals and objectives of the expected outcome. Companies can be scrutinized during a time of downsizing. General Dynamics Corporation faced scrutiny and criticism on how it handled layoffs and executive payouts in this organization. The author suggested addressing how leadership could justify downsizing when meeting the organization's needs and corporate strategy. Ensuring human resources and leadership have a plan laying out policies and procedures for handling onboarding and off-boarding employees is a strategic move by the administration to manage employees with dignity. These strategic decisions may lessen the criticism and increase the loyalty and respect of employees.

Cohee (2019) conducted research focused on themes and addressed the corporate strategy of downsizing as the main component of this past decade. This defined course may have helped improve a company's profitability, organizational efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness. With 6.5 million jobs lost in the United States from 2008-to 2009, downsizing has become commonplace. Rebalancing goals and strategic actions involve reducing overhead to increase the organization's strategic alignment. Mergers and acquisitions can contribute to these actions and have become a part of the strategy to pare down.

Gandolfi and Littler (2015) had brought attention to companies wanting to scale back, basing the decision on corporate performance. Gandolfi and Littler had identified corporations that had turned to downsize as a solution based on company performance.

Their research concluded that even though many studies had been done on whether downsizing creates an environment where changes may be considered adequate, some leaders' company performance standards remained a component when deciding whether downsizing was the right course of action. Nixon et al. (2004) had a team of researchers review 1445 downsizing cases between the 1990-and 1998. The research confirmed that downsizing has brought down costs overall. Still, the researchers also confirmed through data collected the price of losing presumably well-trained and knowledgeable human capital exceeded the benefits of laying off workers to inflate the bottom line. The researchers went on to show findings that downsizing seemed to hurt market returns. When strategic methods were applied in downsizing, the reaction was more positive. An example of these strategic methods was to relocate workers. As with most of the research, the data reflected the following protocol on the most efficient way to handle downsizing regarding leadership: managing valuable resources to create a positive outcome carefully.

The conclusion of the study based on a survey by Cohee (2019) findings resulted in corporations choosing to downsize needed to take into consideration the cost of the aftermath, letting go of valuable human capital, and the morale of the organization when survivors are expected to move forward with the underlying tone of business as usual. According to Cascio (2009), Human Resource Management elements need to be identified, which should be considered before downsizing occurs. Reviewing workforce redistribution, cutting back on overtime, looking at unpaid leave as an option, voluntarily retiring, freezing salary increases, hiring efforts, and providing incentive packages to leave are strategies that may decrease the number of casualties. Cohee referred to

companies such as Agilent and Xilinx, high technology firms affected in the early 2000s when the dot-com market saturated. When companies turned to downsize in these similar situations, these companies chose to look at temporary minimum pay cuts for management, freezes on bonuses across the board, voluntary retirements, and sabbatical leaves to save as many jobs as possible. When downsizing would be necessary, strategies put in place before any resource action would occur might help relieve stress and anxiety for those losing jobs and those survivors who have maintained employment. Documenting criteria for organizational downsizing should be done strategically by identifying critical skills, such as job performance, any disciplinary action, and those with seniority, before deciding on who would be affected by the cutbacks.

Organizational Changes in the Work Environment

Like corporate downsizing, organizational changes can be a sign of the times. As times change based on societal needs, technology, and the needs of the business, leadership, shareholders, and employees must also align themselves accordingly. Denning (2011) suggested that changing an organization's culture is a challenging uphill battle for leadership. Organizational culture is built on collaborative goals, roles, processes, values, communicative approaches, and company attitudes. According to Market Business News (n.d.), organizational change involves leadership making adjustments regarding the company's methodology or goals based on possible economic, societal, or unforeseen changes that cannot be foretold. These changes could include adding more diversity, artificial intelligence, enhancing goals, or expanding methodology to incorporate technological advances. According to Jenkins (2019), companies today

improve diversity and inclusion. There is a need for employees to have an opportunity for advancement in today's supposed millennial model. Studies focusing on workplace trends may provide valuable data regarding future endeavors companies may need to partake in to be as competitive as possible in a fierce marketplace. According to Varner (2018), workplace trends are moving towards emerging technology, collaborative environments, and leadership taking notice of whether these trends are driving success in the industry. Strategic plans on handling organizational changes without affecting the organization's productivity or morale could be essential to map out and not jeopardize loyalty or trust between employees and leadership.

According to Schawbel (2016), diversity is trending globally within the workforce. Global presence in organizations has introduced new components in the last five years, along with temporary and freelancers. Schawbel (2016) pointed out that identifying creative strategies during layoffs could be challenging. Schawbel collected data yearly to examine trends and offer predictions based on current research, including domestic and global surveys, interviews with human resources executives, and primary and secondary researchers based on studies conducted. Schawbel reflected on participating companies from non-profits, governmental agencies, and trade groups. Between 2016 and 2017, the author predicted the job market's continuation to rise. Employers were investing in advertising, investing in employees, and offering generous salaries, as there would be more negotiating power on the employee's side. Schawbel reviewed the predictions in the study, providing a supposed forecast based on a trajectory

of a decrease in hiring freezes, more flexibility in the working environment, and human

resource exhibiting new skills to handle a more technologically savvy environment.

Schawbel (2016) also emphasized the background and experience of candidates,

productivity, salaries, overtime, and current and past employee performance reviews.

These factors included a change in how the workforce is being brought into

organizations, which has altered the landscape, including need-based workers brought

into the equation. The author also referred to workers hired as freelancers or contractors

to do a job but are not considered full-time employees temporarily. Trends discussed as

possible predictions focusing on 2017 may still be relevant in 2020. Schawbel

highlighted that companies are becoming more aware of environmental space, focusing

on internal and external improvements. According to Schwabel, the purpose has been to

increase loyalty and stability, which promotes talented employees to sustain longevity

and, in turn, improve customer service and increase revenue. A collaboration between

human resources, marketing, and customer service may provide a well-rounded view of

the gap in the process and the steps needed to make improvements.

Geller (2011), from Deloitte, referenced companies needing a business strategy to

gain a perspective on critical driving forces, which would assist in shaping the focus of

improvements in organizations based on current changes made for the business's good.

Schawbel (2016) reflected on studies that revealed job-seeking online engines, such as

Glassdoor.com or Indeed.com, reported interviewees had blogged on personal

experiences with interviews and the process and treatment of the candidates. 60% of

those surveyed reported a poor background, which can play a role in organizational

changes and improve employees' experience interviewing with organizations. Schawbel highlighted IBM, which focused on people analytics to identify the possibilities of retention to prevent employees from leaving the company. This organizational change saved the company in the range of $130 million by applying these efforts. According to Schawbel, understanding the critical drivers shaping these strategies, which involve combatting human casualties in a downsizing event, is essential.

Organizational change may involve constantly overhauling the company's mission statements and goals based on current technology and customers' latest needs and trends. According to the National Research Council (1997), companies may benefit from adjusting to the times for organizations to survive and thrive. This theory would apply to compatibility with external conditions, which are constantly changing. This would include social and economic conditions and monitoring the political climate worldwide. According to research, technological changes have affected productivity, employment, and income. Ethnographic studies have revealed that technology has altered companies' and workers' roles. Where a worker fits in regarding division of labor and how these roles are altering the structure of traditional organizations and forcing the hand of leadership to implement organizational change is set by today's trends, which may include a technological surge in our society. The resource discussed how work is being done, occupations that are now trending, and the flexibility in the workforce, which may be setting a standard for future workforces as we move into a new millennium.

National Research Council (1997) suggested a surge of technological jobs and the changes in how work had affected employees' personal lives have altered organizations

and promoted change. Studies have reflected those ideas and norms of traditional

workplace environments from history have been changed. Understanding the diversity of

workplace environments, including global and domestic workers in collaboration for a

tighter, more efficient process, and the trend of freelancers and contractors working with

permanent workers has become a common theme in some organizations. Schawbel

(2016) shed light on employee retention and highlighted that a fully engaged workforce

has become vital to human resources in corporate environments in today's marketplace.

Productivity has also been on the top of the priority list. Schawbel argued that human

resources and leadership identify productive employees as growth for the organization.

Williams (2016) uncovered that 83% of human resource departments have

divulged that the employee experience is vitally important in the success of

organizations. This study also highlighted those employees would instead work in

environments where they currently operate. This included 56% of employees who agreed

that training made available to employees enhanced their experience. The study also

found that 51% of employees were happy with an improved workspace, and 47% were

motivated by rewards. Companies such as IBM also emphasized retention. Leadership

notifies managers if employees seem at risk of leaving, so preventive measures can be

implemented to keep employees rather than lose a valuable worker. This strategy has

saved IBM over $130 million. Also, according to worktrends.com, 93% of companies are

blending workforces. Reviews may occur in organizations more frequently to keep

human resources on top of improvements needed to be made. Millennials are expecting

or hearing feedback daily on job performance rather than annually. Companies such as

G.E. and Adobe have allowed companies to eliminate annual reviews by providing this type of validation.

Literature such as Baumol et al. (2003) emphasized that Wall Street analysts welcomed the news of decreasing emergence when downsizing first occurred. According to the researchers, there was a sense that leadership understood that tough times required more challenging actions taken to survive. The financial analysts may not have agreed with this analyst, as Baumol et al. pointed out. Downsizing had, in some instances, reflected negatively on share prices, and in some cases, when restructuring occurred, this process did not increase stock prices to boost the corporation's bottom line. As the researchers highlighted, many U.S. companies underwent some restructuring and downsizing during the 1980-1990s. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, based on March 2020 data, employment fell by 701.000. The unemployment rate rose to 4.4 % based on the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the researcher's studies, the gap may reflect minimal data collected to understand the phenomenon surrounding the underlying causes of downsizing in the past. According to Inc., layoffs have occurred in times of economic downturn, where supply and demand have diminished. During the timeframe 1996-to 2003, according to the U.S. Department of Labor (2006), massive layoffs occurred, which affected 1.3 million employees. These organizational changes affected companies' internal environments for those survivors left to continue.

Corporate settings could be altered drastically during a downsizing effort, which may cause the opposite of the initial goal. Barns (2003) and King (2002) referred to a few companies which have a "no-layoff policy. "Those companies included Lincoln Electric

and FedEx Corp. King focused on the fact that these companies are turning down the notion of downsizing; leadership hopes to create a fiercely loyal and productive workforce, which will hopefully lead to high customer satisfaction rating, longevity in employment, and a lower turnover rate with the chance of losing valuable, and knowledgeable employees.

Company Leaders, such as Dick Couch, from Hypertherm, Inc., according to Barns (2003), attended a conference on entrepreneurship at Dartmouth College. Dick Couch was sitting next to a younger man who had a very different vision regarding employee loyalty. Dick believed business is to serve the customer's purpose and focus on developing the relationship between company and customer. Barnes summed up Dick Couch's beliefs regarding the importance of a no-layoff policy. Barnes also referenced Dick Couch's comment made to the effect that there are those leaders who believe shareholders should remain the focus before all else. There are leaders, as Barnes surmised, like Dick Couch, who felt loyalty and customer satisfaction should prevail.

Baumol et al. (2003) highlighted downsizing as a comprehensive initiative. The researchers discussed that the workforce has increased by 10% within 2 to 3 years when major layoffs occur by large firms. According to the research, those who adopt these processes offer hypotheses to substantiate the business practice in America. Companies get rid of minor productive employees and, at times, skilled workers to become more profitable and efficient. The authors viewed downsizing as transferring income from labor to capital- from the workforce to leadership. Baumol et al. (2003) suggested that creatively building up an organization's strategies, which would encompass making

decisions to cut back and make changes without forced layoffs, may support the intention of increasing revenue. This may allow leadership to retain loyal and talented employees while improving the bottom line.

According to Allan (2020), resistance to change is challenging. Allan described how recipients might react to organizational change by referring to four themes: enthusiast, follower, objector, and underground. Allan described an enthusiast as an employee who would use the opportunity to gain personal growth and see organizational change as a benefit. The follower would immediately respond to change complaints but adjust to the environment and do what was required to continue being productive. The objector would continue to do their work but constantly object and fight the system. Lastly, the theme of underground employees would be compartmentalizing concerns for fear of retaliation from management. Organizational changes within the work environment can cause a range of emotional responses for those who remain employed and those who have lost jobs.

Viewing another side of downsizing, Avey et al. (2008) touched on those employees with a positive outlook and their impact on organizational change. Avey et al. studied 132 employees spanning various organizations and those in diverse roles. The researchers reviewed attributes including psychological traits, such as hope and optimism. Observing the surroundings and positive emotions toward leadership and empowerment as employees, these factors may have positively impacted the environmental landscape of organizational change.

Researchers such as Armenakis and Bedeian (1999), O'Toole (1995), and Steffes (2010) discussed the rationale for employee resistance and the roadblocks which follow. The researchers focused on organizational environments in today's corporate environment. According to the research in this qualitative study, as pointed out by the authors, attention has been devoted to how change affects employees and the resistance which can come into play. However, what seems to be lacking is interpersonal relationships. Employees who face change may resist, facing the future with cynicism and a non-committal attitude regarding work, leadership, and the organization. However, focusing on the positivity relating to organizational change may alter the employee's perception when faced with reality.

According to Reichers et al. (1997) and Stanley et al. (2005), researchers highlighted disengaged employees. These employees could be detrimental to a successful organizational restructuring. Having employees with positive attitudes may portray a more robust workforce. As research has shown, attention is given to overcoming resistance to downsizing but focusing on employees who exude a positive outlook and an encouraging attitude, according to Avey et al. (2008). This factor has been grossly overlooked. According to Avey et al., the importance of positive thinking correlates with supporting an organization when changes are made. These two components may increase leadership's strength in conjunction with creative strategies developed to fill a gap when organizational changes occur. These strategies may help maintain a sense of loyalty and trust with existing employees to assist the company in reaching goals and new or updated initiatives driven by leadership.

Through research, Steffes (2010) found that management and employees need to find a path to a mutual understanding and acceptance of the change in the wake of organizational change. The underlying theme focused on the future and the importance of employees' commitment and loyalty as the driving force of a successful organizational change. The study focused on positive employees helping to ensure positivity is exuded when organizational changes have occurred, hoping this would make a difference in the process. The hypotheses focused on exposing employees' humanistic side regarding emotions, a psychological mindset, and the power of positive thoughts. The researcher laid out five themes to focus on. The researchers focused on positive and negative employee attitudes affecting organizational cynicism, reviewing the link between positive emotions and organizational unity versus negativity relating to deviance, which may show how positivity impacts organizational change. The study focused on positive psychological feedback, according to the researcher. This type of thinking was crucial in this research, which was tied to emotional values regarding positive attitudes vs. cynicism. The final component focused on mindfulness rising to the occasion to create a positive bond between the psychological capital and emotions. According to the study, the effects of positivity regarding feelings, attitudes, and behaviors based on organizational change may allow leaders to fully understand the importance of creating and maintaining loyalty and trust.

Staw and Barsade (1993) showed that employees who report more frequent levels of positive emotion show a more socially integrated side of themselves within an organization. Those employees who remain closed off remain segregated. According to

Fredrickson (2001), an environment where positivity exists may allow for a broader

spectrum regarding employees' thought processes during uncertainty, such as downsizing.

The author has said that by creating a calmer atmosphere, rather than panic, employees

affected by organizational changes may maintain a positive outlook and be an influencer

on others even in times of conflict or instability. Downsizing can create an environment

that can precipitate a negative tone in a company environment. Adding to this hostile

environment may be a level of employee resistance. Avey et al. (2008) referred to

employee resistance as a component commonly exuded by employees. They may be

related to more significant obstacles and threats to an organization attempting to make

substantial changes. Leadership trying to get ahead of internal and external forces can be

challenging. Still, according to the research, an employee's positive psychological

mindset and a positive emotional overtone may be necessary for counteracting negativity

regarding attitudes and actions of disgruntled employees. Avey et al. (2008) suggest that

positive activities or resources may balance the negative emotions and changes. Positive

employees can have a significant effect on positive organizational change.

The study had a wide lens reflecting the influence of positivity regarding the

environment within organizations and how this can affect the process. The limitations of

this empirical study did not reflect any iron-clad conclusion with proven data to

substantiate the ideas and methodology. Positivity and negativity surrounded humanistic

attitudes. Experimental manipulation or random assignments, according to the authors,

were not a part of this study. Studies based on human emotion can fluctuate from

participant to participant. They can also be swayed based on current events, the state of

our economy, and how companies handle losses and cutbacks. Podsakoff et al. (2003) noted that studies might use the same source to collect data based on dependent and independent variables, which is considered a limitation. This may cause bias. Avey et al. (2008) followed the recommendation of separating data variables of specific timetables. This effort was supposed to help minimize this limitation but did not rule this out. In a study such as this, a recommendation would be that future research is conducted as a supplement to this study or a study similar to explore on a deeper level the psychological aspects of positivity and negativity based on mindfulness, emotions, and other related components relating to organizational changes, according to Youssef and Luthans (2005). According to Avey et al., other factors should be considered, including corporate-level changes and cultural factors influencing employees' psychological and emotional well-being. These factors are tied to employee performance and the ability to handle change.

Throughout the years, organizational changes have occurred and altered the work environment. Wiley (1997) conducted surveys from 1946,1980, 1986, and 1992 on past and present attitudes of employees regarding motivating factors in the workplace. The results varied over time, but a constant was companies providing competitive wages, reflecting the value of company loyalty to their employees. Sargeant (2012) referred to leadership as a complex subject. According to the author, the main issue facing the administration in the wake of organizational discourse was how to motivate employees to actively participate in efforts that promote change rather than condemn the actions. The study focused on 15 leaders in organizations who align their leadership with a philosophy

of Servant leadership, which refers to employees becoming both the leaders and followers in this scenario.

According to Greenleaf (1977), this philosophy provided a different way of understanding and reflecting on decisions that cause change. The philosophy shared in this study by Savage-Auston and Honeycutt (2011) provided a lens showing the encouragement of employees' input in the decision-making process and allowed leaders to overcome challenges modern organizations face. According to Greenleaf, servant leadership focused on this philosophy, which addressed the role of employees, highlighting the importance of meeting the needs of followers and promoting input. The researcher pointed out that this type of philosophy served two purposes. The first purpose focused on a different view of leadership from employees. The second purpose focused on an unspoken assumption of loyalty and a personal stake in their future at the organization.

According to Chemers (2000), the literature suggested that leadership and researchers have not always had the most straightforward relations. Scholars had attempted to define characteristics of the administration phenomenon, including style, attributes, and employee relations, but historically the supporting research reflected gaps in the data. The researcher pointed out that the data sometimes contradicted or made assumptions without substantiating proof to support the findings. According to Lynham and Chermack (2006), leadership is complex and can affect company organizational changes.

When downsizing occurs, efforts to motivate employees, convincing them to buy into the organization's actions with a positive outlook for the future, and requesting survivors to remain as productive as possible may be challenging. Lynham and Chermack (2006) referred to leadership as a phenomenon examined by stakeholders regarding expectations and outcomes. Applying Servant leadership as a creative strategy to minimize organizational change regarding an employee's environment may allow the employee to experience a feeling of more control over their environmental changes. This approach is comparable to the transformational and exact method. The common attributes in these approaches were integrity, trust, and respectfulness. These attributes have set a tone for stability and loyalty to leadership and management. According to Lynham and Chermack, organizations have experienced significant changes. When we reach a new century in 2100, an entirely new organizational model could be a realistic possibility. The researchers pointed out that the role of a leader has become wholly focused on meeting the needs of the businesses, which has included downsizing if deemed necessary.

Leadership styles have changed over time. According to Greenleaf (1977), applying the servant-leadership philosophy has provided a fresh approach to empowering employees to control their working environment and future in an organization. The researcher pointed out that leadership encouraged a partnership rather than a set hierarchy, which showed a clear division between leaders and employees. This study focused on organizational obstacles and how a servant-leadership philosophy could create a more autonomous and empowering environment. According to Avey et al. (2008), investigations on this philosophy in the non-profit realm have been done. Few studies

have reviewed this specific philosophy in a corporate environment. Savage-Auston and Honeycutt (2011) focused their study on ten leaders. These participants were interviewed to gain perspective on the obstacles of leadership and what caused roadblocks. Data collected revealed items such as a philosophy referring to command and control, the distrust in the work environment, leadership based on closed-type decision-making with minimal input from employees, and a notable decrease in employee empowerment were roadblocks that needed to be overcome.

Frost (n.d.) completed a phenomenological study, which focused on barriers that stood in the way of the practice of servant-leadership. The researcher concluded that these barriers might exist, but there were solutions to these obstacles. The researcher concluded that the servant-leadership approach would work in an environment where trust and inclusion were encouraged. This study was done by Avey et al. (2008), which applied the phenomenological method to gather and uncover the lived experiences of business leaders who practiced this philosophy. The experience of being a part of this study allowed participants to look at the organizational culture and reflect on servant-leadership practices and experiences. The conclusion of this study focused on literature supporting the findings based on how a leader is allowed to show their character and personify their beliefs. This tone has set a culture within an organization that may support employees depending on the type of leadership practiced and how determined leadership is to empower employees. The researchers concluded that this leadership style is known as servant-leadership. This process would involve leaders sharing beliefs and goals. Greenleaf (1977) argued that the most influential leaders serve their people. A leader

should be a servant first and foremost and then a leader of the people. The leader's power will be provided by the loyalty and trust gained through the employees, whose trust would have been earned through this type of leadership.

Reflecting another side of downsizing, where employees are not as engaged, Avey et al. (2008) study reflected common barriers affecting employees and leadership when organizational changes occur. As decisions have impacted employees without their consent or input, the environment could become more of a combative arena than a culture of learning, productiveness, and collaboration, hurting productivity and its bottom line. Avey et al. (2008) philosophy encouraged employees to have empowerment over their future. Taking this action by employees may provide a more stable and positive environment.

Bersin et al. (2016) reflected on a quantitative study focusing on powerful forces driving change for human resources and organizational leadership.

> After three years of struggling to drive employee engagement and retention, improve leadership, and build a meaningful culture, executives need to redesign the organization itself, with 92 percent of survey participants rating this as a critical priority. The 'new organization,' as we call it, is built around highly empowered teams, driven by a new model of management, and led by a breed of younger, more globally diverse leaders. (Bersin et al., 2016, p. 1)

Companies willing to make such changes may allow for a more empowered employee workforce, bolstering loyalty and trust among employees and leadership. This may reflect when cutbacks occur, and the administration must take action to create a leaner

organization, to rely on creative strategies to make the appropriate changes, so jobs are not at stake.

Benefits of Maintaining a Strong Culture

Downsizing can affect a company's culture. Alton (2017) highlighted that corporate culture has always been influential. But according to research in the past 20+ years, corporate culture has been trending and has ignited conversation. Strong corporate culture has evolved over the years. The researcher referred to the benefits of having a solid foundation for corporate culture, which included identifying the value and goals of an organization. This process may inspire employees to set and meet goals and be more productive. The ability to retain employees in positive company culture, as Alton points out, may be easier than a culture of negativity.

According to Zorn et al. (2017), a theory was tested and published in the Journal of Business Research, where layoffs may cause various issues, leading to organizations filing for bankruptcy. According to the authors, the organization's downsized culture risks losing valuable knowledge from employees and sustainability in the industry. The culture is represented by remaining employees struggling to manage the increased workload, with no time to learn new skills or strengthen existing knowledge. The researchers referenced employees may lose trust in management resulting in a lack of engagement and loyalty, which could have long-term effects. Changes in technology and how companies conduct business can fluctuate without notice. Sweeney's (2016) research was focused on how culture shifted in the media sector by introducing the internet. Industries, such as newspapers and publishers, were significantly affected by the World Wide Web.

As the culture moved toward the internet to provide updated news and world occurrences,

printed papers became less needed or wanted. According to Begley (1996); Saperstein

(2014), newspaper publishers faced challenges in this new culture focused on the internet.

Saad (2013) referred to the internet ranking right behind live media as the 2nd most

popular news source. Egan (2014) pointed out that publishers had bought publications to

increase their value and stay competitive. When the internet began to receive information,

the culture shifted, publishers were affected, and significant layoffs occurred.

Sweeney (2016) highlighted that this industry was forever changed and

downsizing in this industry affected many. The author focused on the independent

distributor in this particular study. According to Green and Thorogood (2009), the culture

of independent distributors always focused on being the primary source of distributing

the products of newspaper publishing companies nationwide. The study was done with

contractors working for an independent distribution company in business for over 30

years. The study focused on how the culture in one industry changed with new

technology emerging and inevitable layoffs.

According to Bultin (2019), culture refers to shared values, goals, attitudes, and

practices that reflect organizations. An organization's culture may fluctuate when change

occurs, such as layoffs. Revitalizing organizations by cutting back and restructuring to

sustain the culture may have adjusted to reflect the current events. According to Jivan

(2012), downsizing can have consequences. Company culture can be altered, and how

this affects employees can be based on each worker. Sweeney (2016) focused on

independent contractors' perceptions of the effects of downsizing and how this affected

the culture. The author focused on the following component in this research study; looking at past organizational cultures before downsizing occurred instead of the present culture. Focusing the analysis on corporate culture and whether or not downsizing would affect performance, positivity, and organizational success. Cameron and Quinn (2011) discussed how leadership approaches downsizing and whether management sees the value in applying creative strategies to maintain an even culture. Using the organizational culture theory (Lakshman et al., 2019) within this research highlighted the potential changes in environments where restructuring and downsizing occurred. According to Datta and Basuil (2012), downsizing has become the corporate choice as a possible solution for companies rebuilding and revitalizing their economic status.

De Meuse et al. (2004), Jivan (2012) discussed downsizing and the negativity, which can cause less than expected outcomes. Brenner et al. (2014) and Okibo (2012) highlighted the possible occurrence of an undesirable organizational culture when drastic changes, such as downsizing, occur. Schein (2010) pointed out that culture exists not only in organizations but also in society. When life-changing decisions are made, whether on a humanistic level or within the corporate world, the culture within the realm of what people are used to, if altered, can significantly affect the status quo or business as usual. Sweeney (2016) referred to culture as all-encompassing, spreading through the workplace environment, possibly affecting employees' performance, view of the organization, and productivity. The researcher was hopeful that the data collected and analyzed could make a difference in increasing the knowledge of organizational culture and the effects of downsizing.

This research study focused on organizational culture, and the effects downsizing has on the corporate environment. Kvale (1996) pointed out that organizational culture has been a part of every organization and embedded in each person. Sweeney (2016) mimics that statement based on the study results. According to the author, downsizing has affected organizational culture, but the outcome could be positive or negative based on the lived experiences of everyone. According to Neuman (2006), ensuring stability in corporate culture may be an essential aspect of a company when prospective employees are considering employment. Kordnaeij et al. (2012) and Schein (2010) pointed out that customers would likely be drawn to a company that reflects positivity and stability. According to Schein (1999), organizations should strive to have a positive organizational culture rather than a negative one focusing on building trust and loyalty and creating a cohesive environment.

Global downsizing is also trending. Friebel and Heinz (2014) highlighted that their largest firm in Germany announced cuts of more than 800 jobs on each third working day of the year. According to Luthan and Sommer (1999), Brookman et al. (2007), Gibbs (2007); Tavallaei and Talib (2010), Nyberg and Trevor (2009), this painful experience affected attitudes, perceptions, and workplace behaviors, which might have been generally out of character for some employees. De Meuse et al. (2004, 2004); Guthrie and Datta (2008), Goesaert et al., forthcoming discussed sales productivity and other financial factors, which were reviewed when this downsizing occurred. The outcome may have fallen short of expectations, causing a correlation between downsizing

and firm performance. The negativity connecting the event and the new reality of the business may not be in line with the expectations.

Downsizing can be attached to a symbolic psychological contract between leadership and employees. Friebel et al. (2016) examined the role of the unwritten social and humanistic agreement between workers and companies, referred to as a psychological contract, per Levinson et al. (1962), Rousseau (1989). This research addressed the importance of examining the trust and loyalty employees have with organizations based on human contact. This critical component, an organization's oversight, could contribute to employees' reactions to downsizing (Friebel et al., 2016). Johnson (2013) and De Meuse et al. (2004) related downsizing efforts and performances of employees after the fact to a presumed "psychological contract." The breach of this unwritten agreement may affect how existing employees process the downsizing efforts of an organization. Datta and Basuil (2012) bring different definitions or interpretations of the need or want of downsizing efforts. Downsizing reflects itself in many formats self-reported vs. media announcement or direct vs. mediated. This study focused on the context in which downsizing took place. Friebel et al. (2016) focused on mechanisms to understand the culture focusing on employees and technology, as downsizing announcements seemed to have affected sales within bakeries, which were losing business. Friebel et al. research focused on the culture of bakery locations whose employees were affected. There was a significant disappointment as the unsaid psychological contract had been broken in the proverbial sense. Shops were closing, and

employees were losing jobs. Employee questionnaires, hours worked, and employee contract status was used as part of the data analyzed in the research.

Friebel et al. (2016) understood how closing bakeries and losing jobs would affect employees. The study focused on surveys, which were handed out to employees addressing job satisfaction, the ability to receive information regarding the downsizing efforts, the original commitment by the owners, and reciprocity per Cohen et al. (2017). The data was collected and analyzed by district managers and broken down per bakery shop. The research was examined, compared, and contrasted. According to Datta and Basuil (2012), focus on surveys pulled from downsizing literature associated with an assumed psychological contract and identify where the literature gap would be as pertinent in this study.

According to Love and Nohria (2005), the positive aspects of downsizing may benefit an organization when underperforming employees exist. According to Freeman (2011), downsizing may occur based on a performance dip, or downsizing is partnered with a restructuring effort of an organization. This study provided value by examining the unwritten rules regarding the humanistic agreement between an employee and manager, Friebel et al. (2016). Literature in this study also reflected a negative effect. According to Luthan and Sommer (1999), Allen et al. (2001), Brookman et al. (2007), and Gibbs (2007), there was a downside to reducing workforces. Attitudes of employees became jaded, per the data collected. Job satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, and motivation were analyzed. Luthan and Sommer, Allen et al., Brookman et al. (2007), and Gibbs (2007) highlighted the perceptions of employees interpreting whether supervisor support may

present another aspect of a possible negative attribute of downsizing. This study also included turnover and absenteeism, pointing out that the balance between the gain in operational efficiency and the losses in morale, motivation, and loyalty may cancel each other out or not meet the expectations of right-sizing. Love and Nohria (2005) suggested that downsizing may be used to reduce low-performing workers, which may, in the end, provide a more efficient workforce.

Friebel and Heinz (2014) had shed a positive spotlight on the downsizing efforts by referring to the benefits of downsizing or restructuring. Friebel and Heinz shared that this process may be a more expediential business decision and essential to benefit organizations. Connelly et al. (2011) referred to the correlation between downsizing and psychological contracts presented at employment. The presumed contract was interpreted as the unspoken agreement, which implied "An individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party" (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). This was taken in good faith by an employee who promised employment stability (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). According to Johnson (2013) and De Meuse et al. (2004), a breach in this psychological contract could be considered a violation, resulting in a decrease in performance, and can affect employees' attitudes and cause a withdrawal reaction for some employees. Friebel et al. (2016) explained that psychological contracts are diverse.

According to Rousseau (1989), transactional vs. relational and vertical vs. horizontal is part of the psychological family. Different conditions apply to each preverbal contractual agreement. According to Rousseau, these psychological agreements

provide a commonality or the underlying assumption that loyalty and stability will be unwavering during employment. Morrison and Robinson (1997) refer to the caveat regarding downsizing by stating,

> Yet, despite the variety of dimensions of the psychological contract, its applications in downsizing research are limited to viewing downsizing as a violation of the vertical psychological conceptualize reneging and inadvertent violation (or "incongruence" in their terms) as two distinct initial states of the process leading up to psychological contract violation. (Morrison & Robinson, 1997, pp. 226-257)

The study was done by Friebel et al. (2016), which focused on a retail business, mainly the bakery shop, already introduced, closing locations over 6 months. The study focused on an empirical method to reflect the shops closing due to poor performance and the need to condense. Friebel et al. shared in the research those new owners stepped in and sold locations that could be sold to streamline the business instead of keeping places where there was little to no profit. As presumably other companies experienced, the industry's downsizing may have seen a decrease in sales or service from workplace performance by those who had remained after the initial layoff. This new culture was caused by low morale and employment instability per Mishra and Mishra (1994), Brockner et al. (2004) and Drzensky and Heinz (2014) forthcoming.

The research showed that companies had put a price tag on downsizing based on employee performance, for example, Brookman et al. (2007) and Armstrong-Stassen (1994). Friebel et al. (2016) focused on workplace performance by reflecting on the gap

in literature lacking the consequences of downsizing. The author highlighted that there is no clear correlation between individuals and performance. The author also pointed out that downsizing may not affect every worker in the same capacity. There may be certain employees or teams who may be excluded from losing jobs. The author highlighted that the limitation when using data based on lived experience versus lab data might be incomplete when substantiating evidence. According to the author, future research should focus on administrative data within companies to obtain more precise results.

When downsizing has occurred, a culture change is inevitable. Components such as faithfulness, devotedness, commitment, trustworthiness, honesty, dependability, and reliability, Merriam Webster (2020), might be tested and affected from an employee's perspective. According to Stroh and Reilly (1997), at the beginning of the financial decline in 1998, employers considered money an organization's essential aspect. Making money was more important than maintaining employees. Stroh and Reilly highlighted that loyalty, stability, and commitment may not have been the main components when maintaining organizations and ensuring the company culture remains stable for management and employees.

According to an anonymous manager, per Stroh and Reilly (1997), the constant upheaval of restricting and downsizing in today's economy has created a lack of trust and loyalty in employees and employers. Stroh and Reilly also referred to another anonymous statement per a mid-level manager, referring to employees' loyalty. The midlevel manager spoke at length about the hoops an employee was willing to jump through to accommodate the job or meet and possibly exceed the organization's expectations.

According to Stroh and Reilly, the manager highlighted the possibility that employees are highly likely to be let go when a prospective buyout occurs at organizations. Employees' loyalty and solidarity toward their employers could affect the company culture. According to Stroh and Reilly, management has never felt more alienated and resented as they do in these times.

Stroh and Reilly (1997) pointed out that organizations and leaders have crossed the line of expecting solidarity and loyalty without understanding the importance of how downsizing has affected employees and the culture of organizations. The researchers also highlighted managers and subordinates who show loyalty and a commitment to a solid culture to have an innate responsibility to remain with the organization as long as the company remains loyal to them. Loyalty can also prevent management from losing employees with valuable experience and knowledge. This commitment would exude confidence and resilience to a company striving to be competitive and maintain stability. Building on a solid platform as this may promote longevity and loyalty.

Employee Loyalty

Loyalty is a component that can be intertwined with many aspects of a successful organization. According to Davies (2017), loyal employees are more willing to invest time and energy. According to Biro (2014), Forbes reports that happy employees make healthy profits. According to Stroh and Reilly (1997), loyalty and trust play a crucial role in successful organizations. According to Matzler and Renzl (2006), employee satisfaction is one of the most critical aspects of quality, customer service, and intense productivity.

Matzler and Renzl (2006) conducted a research study understanding what motivates employee satisfaction. The most emphasized in the research was the trust employees had in management and peers. This aspect for employees was the influencing factor for employee satisfaction and how this affected loyalty and trust in management and peers. This study was based on an Austrian company. Collins (2019) reflected a statistical analysis using structural equation modeling, which confirmed a strong link between trust, employee satisfaction, and loyalty.

Collins (2019) broke down the definition of a loyal employee. The researcher described a dedicated employee as someone who has worked for an organization with the primary goal of ensuring the company is successful. This focus, at times, could challenge an employee to sacrifice personal time and interests to reach goals and reflect a selfless side. Still, this type of employee has a level of loyalty that is hopefully valued by leadership. This type of employee radiates loyalty. Collins pointed out that loyalty becomes a mutual agreement. Leadership must show loyalty and dedication to employees on an ongoing basis.

In today's corporate environment, loyalty has a very different meaning than twenty years ago, according to Collins's (2019) study. Loyalty as a norm used to be more of an unspoken idea that could have been automatically accepted into corporate culture. In today's societal culture, loyalty comes from tangible actions. These can include employee recognition, corporate rewards, monetary gifts, and a strong marketing communications strategy relating to a strong connection with employees.

Collins (2019) broke down the qualities of loyal employees into themes of perseverance, dedication, and leadership. The researcher pointed out the critical aspect that employees work for the company and themselves. The loyalty exuded is for the organization's success and themselves. The author highlighted that those truly dedicated employees usually take the extra mile to complete the task and show true loyalty internally and externally to the management and leadership.

The importance of companies respecting employees' loyalty should be based on ROI. Collins (2019) spoke about the return on investment when investing in employees. Loyalty and trust can benefit companies in the productivity arena. Employees who possess these morals and values have a strong desire for improvement and success when referring to the commitment to their jobs and companies. Commitment influences employees to work harder, maintain morale, and absorb those employees' responsibilities if needed. The author also highlighted that the experience a customer has with an organization is vital to an organization's success. If employees are not valued, and leadership lacks loyalty, the attitude may reflect how employees treat customers. This could affect customer service. Customer loyalty is crucial, and the ties between the customer and employee loyalty correlate to a successful partnership, which companies depend on.

Downsizing can affect loyalty and trust among employees. Maintaining this commitment may be challenging in these times. According to Mishra and Spreitzer (1998), who referred to an interview done with Robert Reich, U.S. Labor Secretary; Reich (1996), the Secretary took the position on downsizing, as the focus should be on

downsizing carried out rather than why downsizing is done. The U.S. Labor Secretary referred that reducing buyouts and attrition should prompt leaders to help workers obtain new jobs, provide outplacement services, and set up employees for success in securing other employment instead of leaving those who will lose jobs to fend for themselves. Even when cuts are made, companies that have invested in employees showed a level of commitment, which assisted in retaining the loyalty and trust of employees, even those who lost jobs. Maintaining loyalty and trust can benefit both sides, corporations, and employees.

According to Collins (2019), dedication is an image builder on the company's side. Image is built on customers' views and how employees are represented within an organization. When a company experiences challenging times, leadership may depend on employees maintaining the status quo and a business-as-usual attitude, especially with customers, so confidence and satisfaction remain intact. Loyalty and trust on both sides assist leadership in regaining composure while maintaining the existing customer base and keeping their competitive edge. Davies (2017) reflected on the importance of loyalty and the long-term effects of reducing turnover and providing a solid platform for employees to cultivate their careers by working collaboratively with management and leadership to ensure longevity and commitment on all sides.

Creative Strategy

When downsizing has occurred while maintaining loyalty and trust is vital, another critical component is minimizing layoffs. According to Mizra (2008), businesses have faced challenging times and may turn to downsizing as an option. In 2008 in the

third quarter, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008), layoffs affected 218,000 workers in a 31day period. According to Mizra, releases of employees totaled 1,330, and separations of employees totaled 218,158.

Mizra (2008) referred to a study done in R. Magazine by Wells (2008), which highlighted companies that have laid off 0.5% of workers, as shown in this study, who then experienced a higher turnover rate than those companies where layoffs did not occur. According to Wells (2008), companies could avoid laying off workers and reduce payroll by applying innovative methods. The CEO of The Alternative Board, Zickerman, per Wells, created a company focused on minimizing layoffs and maintaining the status quo with the employee workforce while still growing. Wells (2008) highlighted the approach Zickerman (2020) suggested regarding strategic options for employers to cut back without eliminating jobs.

Creative strategies should be invoked to retain employees and limit causalities in downsizing. Techniques such as slimming down the workweek may reduce payroll by approximately 20% or extending time off by combining, for example, a two-week vacation and adding two to three more unpaid weeks before returning to work. Zickerman (2020) also suggested creating a challenge for employees to save the most money internally on company materials needed to run an organization. Applying those saving tactics as an ongoing commitment focused on cost-effective measures may allow employees to maintain employment and reduce layoffs. This action would also allow employees to feel empowered over their futures. Sabbaticals may also be an alternative and could free up employees to help at other companies where help may be needed.

According to Mizra (2008), a study done through Human Resource Management (SHRM), engaging 633 members as randomly selected participants, weighed in on company tactics to cut back without cutting jobs. The following components reflected possible cost-savings measures and the percentage of participants who applied each step to avoid layoffs. The top five per a poll of 33 randomly selected members responding to the survey showed attrition was 72%, a hiring freeze was 74%, unrenewed contracts were at 21%, and cutting back on employee hours was17%. Respondents to this poll were not as fortunate to retain employees during the financial downfall in 2008. Forty-eight percent of the participants who responded to this survey did have to lay off employees within the survey's year. The aftermath of downsizing per the data collected from this research showed that nearly half of those surveyed spent significant time calming fears about job security and stability and providing counseling to those worrying about their retirement investments.

Zickerman (2020) provided insight into strategies for employees to have a sense of peace and belongingness. Allowing employees to remain engaged, empowered, and communicative may have provided a connection between leadership and employees, so when layoffs may be a part of the solution for companies struggling, employees will remain loyal, have a solid moral compass, and a sense of belonging to an organization, which has respected and valued them.

Type of Studies- Qualitative/Quantitative

Studies throughout the literature review weighed heavily on qualitative data. Studies by Zorn et al. (2017) highlighted the need to re-examine downsizing as an option

to revive or bail out an organization; reflected on the pros and cons of taking actions in this way, with the expectation of a company being saved. Data collected within this study drew from lived experiences of employees and the perceptions of why and how these actions were carried out. Data representing participants' lived experiences would serve as a way to close the gap in this type of literature supported by quantitative data.

Highlighting studies like Arshard et al. (2017) focused on psychological contracts among employees and leadership. Although quantitative data would not be present to reflect this, as this is metaphorically in place, the lived experience of an employee entering into a psychological contract does symbolize employers representing a trust-based informal agreement among both sides. Highlighting a study from Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), information was pointed out from an organizational change perspective. Reviewing from a critical lens, social capital is lost when employees exit an organization. This is based on an employee's ability to network through relationships among those who worked and cohabited in a particular group or society. Studies focused on actual data brought to light by authors such as Collins (2019) and the U.S. Department of Labor of Bureau of Labor of Statistics (2008). Collins reflected on studies based on statistical analysis highlighted by an equation model.

The data delivered connected to trust, employee satisfaction, and loyalty as one unit to review and analyze the link between these factors. According to the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor of Statistics (2008), in 2007, approximately 1 million employees were affected by downsizing. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, based on March 2020 data, employment fell by 701.000. The unemployment

rate rose to 4.4 % based on the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the researcher's studies, the gap may reflect minimal data collected to understand the phenomenon surrounding the underlying causes of downsizing in the past. According to Inc., layoffs occurred in times of economic downturn, when supply and demand had diminished. During the timeframe 1996-to 2003, according to the U.S. Department of Labor (2006), massive layoffs occurred, which affected 1.3 million employees. Quantitative data collected, according to the Bureau, was based on data collection and processing. Surveys and Diary Surveys are collected and processed separately. Data were based on surveys such as the census and interviews rather than lived experiences.

The diversity of studies in the research provided a balance of quantitative and qualitative data to support the research question and goals. Highlighting the critical connection between creative strategies used in organizations to maintain jobs while making concessions to improve profits and strengthen the organization's financial standing while preserving trust and loyalty between employees and their organizations have a commonality. Pfeil et al. (2004) focused on downsizing in North America and globally. Downsizing, according to the authors, has become a worldwide phenomenon. Companies are pressured to become more efficient by cutting costs and restructuring workforces to show a substantial difference in the bottom line. Literature also reflects strategies used to retain jobs instead of eliminating employees, which is beneficial in maintaining loyalty and trust. According to the authors, employers should empower employees by collecting input on cutting costs and strategically streamlining without cutting jobs.

Highlighting quantitative and qualitative data reflecting on participants' lived experiences affected by downsizing is an essential aspect of corporate culture that needs to be studied continuously. This is not just a personal issue but an important societal issue. Ensuring the study is substantiated by the research presented through historical and present literature, along with case studies, supporting creative strategies being applied when organizations need to downsize or restructure, is the goal to substantiate the purpose of the research and support the need to use creative, strategic options to strengthen the financial foundation of companies, while still maintaining talent and knowledge of dedicated employees.

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 provides a foundation for the literature presented in this research study. The problem statement focused on leaders and managers not considering the implications of downsizing their employees. The problem focuses on managers' experiences affecting managerial practices and the ability to produce creative strategies to maintain jobs while promoting loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States. This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology research study aims to discover how lived experiences of managers and employees are used to maintain loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the U.S. The overarching research question focused on the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing situations? Applying the conceptual framework to reflect structure and support illuminated the importance of this study.

Reviewing the literature, which supported the study, and highlighted the positive and negative effects of downsizing, has been a continuation of other studies showing the benefits of supporting and negating downsizing. The purpose of the study highlighted the importance of loyalty and trust by supporting this research effort with data. Reflecting on whether to retain employees no matter the financial outlook for an organization or the world's economic climate vs. taking resource action to eliminate employees, cut overhead, and support they need for human causalities would need to be analyzed through data collected and reviewed to know if the purpose of this study was supported or negated.

The purpose of the research was reflected in the literature applied to this study thus far. In today's economic climate, 12 years after the financial crisis in 2008, companies have continued to restructure and, in doing so, cut employees' jobs, lose valuable, knowledgeable employees, and jeopardize customer relationships between clients and companies. Leadership should rethink options when looking to streamline. Suggesting leadership review case studies where creative strategies were applied to avoid layoffs while increasing value and financial stability may be indicated during the data collection and analysis for leadership to review. Maintaining valuable employees may also help in the efforts to build trust and loyalty between employees and leadership. Allowing employees to create a unified and supportive work environment may serve organizations well as companies rebuild, rebrand, and restructure.

Supporting these statements will be substantiated in Chapter 5. Data collection will reflect employees in organizations who have been through downsizing efforts and

leaders who have decided to cut overhead. Understanding lived experiences in dealing with downsizing from the perspective of management and employees will provide a high-level overview of how downsizing affects the economy, society, and humankind. Chapter 3 will provide an in-depth look at the infrastructure of the research method.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The primary purpose of this study was to discover how lived experiences influence managerial practices and strategies based on loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States. According to the Academy of Marketing Science, Lewin (2001), surviving in competitive markets in today's economic environment has caused companies to initiate fundamental changes in organizational structure. Gandolfi (2013) pointed out empirical and anecdotal evidence suggesting the intent or purpose of downsizing as a management strategy occurring in all industries has affected businesses, governments, and individuals globally. Datta and Basuil (2012) argued a wide range of causes for downsizing. These driving forces may not have been enough to explain the urgency and trend of this phenomenon or fully support how employees are affected by downsizing. The human experience should shed some light on this topic and provide substantiating data. This study suggested that leadership applies creative strategies to maximize the need to streamline while retaining valuable employees vital to a company's successful future.

Downsizing can affect motivation and morale within organizations. Boyd et al. (2013) remarked that organizational downsizing could occur based on financial pressure from global markets, which has left employees' well-being and motivation to deteriorate. According to Boyd et al., organizational instability based on job security and other stressors can affect loyalty and trust due to downsizing. These can be factors affecting workplace culture. Gandolfi (2013) suggested that leadership must be more participatory when downsizing occurs. The administration must be willing to address concerns and

fears to lessen the resentment and distrust of top management while losing loyalty and trust in the organization. The general problem is that there is little understanding of how lived experiences of managers and employees have affected loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing.

The specific issue was that managers and employees have different views of their experiences with commitment and confidence in the service industry related to corporate downsizing. Chapter 3 explains why a qualitative strategy was chosen along with hermeneutic phenomenological design. This chapter focused on several components, beginning with the research design and the role of the researcher. Other elements of this chapter included instruments, a pilot study, procedures for data study, a data analysis plan, and the issues and variables involving trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

One research question was used in this study:

What are the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States?

The qualitative phenomenological design was the most practical research design based on the attempt to understand managers' and employees' experiences and perspectives regarding the effect of downsizing. According to Schuemann (2014), the phenomenological method uncovered how individuals understand and break down the meaning of human experiences. Moustakas (1994) remarked that showing the spirit of the respondents' perspective improves accuracy and believability in representing the phenomenon. This study provided an in-depth view of lived experiences related to the

downsizing phenomenon. The study focused on understanding lived experiences and how this played a role in managing the downsizing process.

The hermeneutic phenomenological design was meant to provide data to support this research. This method would offer the opportunity to go in-depth into the data obtained from literature and interviews relevant to the topic. The data collected were reviewed to identify results supporting and opposing the views reflected in this study. Steffes (2010) revealed that studies done in this fashion leveraged techniques, which were used, such as interviews, lived experiences, audiotapes, transcripts, and public documents.

Reviewing peer-reviewed literature using similar designs and methodology would expand the understanding and provide a direction as to the most effective way to conduct this design in a qualitative study. The central phenomenon focused on little knowledge of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions based on management and the influence of loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States. Interviews were the representation of the data for the analysis.

There were many research methods to use within a qualitative study. The main focus was highlighting employees' lived experiences with loyalty and trust based on how management handles organizational downsizing. According to Van Manen (2011), choosing phenomenology would focus on lived experiences. According to Polkinghorne (1989), phenomenological research is based on personal reflection as part of the research process. This type of study produces an understanding of human experiences on the deepest level (Moustakas, 1994).

The goal focused on providing data based on reflection and perspective based on the research purpose. Using a phenomenological data analysis model allowed hand-coding, categorizing, and applying common themes to the data collected. This process reflected evidence to support the conclusion based on a qualitative method using a hermeneutic phenomenological design. The data collected are based on lived experiences would highlight the after-effects of downsizing. According to Seglin (2001), when layoffs are inevitable, companies have an unspoken ethical duty to make sure the decision is based on the business's needs and not malicious will.

Applying the hermeneutic phenomenology approach highlighted the human experiences and behaviors of the participants. According to Smith (2016), phenomenology relates to studies based on lived experiences from a first-person perspective. According to Cohen (2001), the goal of phenomenology is to assist in helping researchers understand the concepts of lived experiences before we try to conceptualize or philosophize this methodology. The purpose focuses on highlighting lived experiences through phenomenology and understanding common themes. Phenomenology focuses on the study of phenomena.

According to Finlay (2009), the goal focuses on understanding how concepts and views are experienced through our consciousness, as the phenomenological researcher highlights the lived experiences of those participating. Using the phenomenology approach Davidsen (2013) would shed light on participants' lived experiences and how each of these experiences was interpreted and reflected on. Davidsen also referred to phenomenology as an approach developed into the mainstream in modern philosophy,

especially in Europe and the United States. Phenomenology has brought together philosophy, science, and lived experiences. Natanson (1974) discussed phenomenology as an approach based on a subjective scientific method that focuses on studying phenomena. According to Wrenn (2005), phenomenology treats a phenomenon or subject matter as a process of discovering and uncovering data instead of making assumptions and false innuendos.

Applying the qualitative research methodology supported what Kuhn (1977) referred to as a paradigm and remarked that this methodology translated into revealing structure, patterns, and framework based on the study. The author also added a historical view which defined a paradigm as an integrated group of concepts, variables, and issues intertwined with methodologies to serve as an approach or tool. Paradigm refers to patterns or frameworks consisting of ideas, values, and assumptions. The data were gathered for the research. The collected information was based on beliefs, personal and professional values, and assumptions. According to Olsen (1992), this created a paradigm of ideas based on a qualitative approach. Using the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the focus was on acquiring and collecting data highlighting the essence of the human experience that was pointed out by Moustakas (1994). Moustakas shared that five qualitative inquiry and research design methods exist. Applying the qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology approach to this study was the most appropriate approach to represent the research.

Reviewing methods from other studies allowed for an understanding of the importance of the methodology and knowing the most applicable process which should

be applied to this study. The ethnography method, defined by Parthasarathy (2008), was

described as writing or representing a culture. Parthasarathy said ethnographers look for

similarities, formal or informal, and meaning to try and make sense of a place or social

setting regarding the research. This method would not accurately represent this study.

The narrative approach, which focused on a sequence of events from a small group of

participants and, according to Riessman (1993), speaks to how culture showed itself

through individual stories, would not be appropriate. This approach would be heavily

based on personal accounts of a situation told through levels based on individual

perception. This would hinder the process of collecting factual data to support the

research. The last method, the grounded theory, allows researchers to develop their idea.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) described the grounded theory approach as techniques

and procedures which enabled researchers to identify key concepts and form a solid

theory from qualitative data collected through the data collection process. This tool,

rather than an approach, can be used as a helpful guide. Corbin and Strauss described the

purpose of grounded theory as discovering systematic data collected and analyzing it

based on a phenomenon. According to Babbie (2010), this particular method is heavily

based on statistics, objective measurements, and numerical data. This would not align

with this qualitative study.

Each of these five methods provided benefits to research. There are many

methods used for analysis. The most appropriate method and approach for this research is

a qualitative method with the hermeneutic phenomenological design. This allowed for

data collection based on lived experiences to identify themes, commonalities, and

differences, highlighting the importance of managerial creativity toward those affected by downsizing.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher uncovered the thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences of those participants in this research study. Applying the qualitative paradigm, reflecting on the belief that downsizing has become a phenomenon in today's corporate environment, whether right, wrong or indifferent, looks at participants' lived experiences who have lived through downsizing. The role of the researcher was to present the data and reflect on how the research was able to either substantiate the analysis or negate it based on the data collected.

The researcher should also ensure the problem is shown in the study. Highlighting the data shown in the literature reviewed, employees are losing jobs, and companies who set out to ensure their organizations are financially stable are deciding to reduce human capital. A constructivist approach to understanding this topic and the data presented is a theory built on many shades and perspectives, according to Kiraly (2000). Applying the constructivist approach to analyze the data collected may provide a diversity of results as the data is analyzed. Ethical issues can also occur within research. To avoid any ethical mishaps, Marcus Aurelius (AD 121-180) explained that ancient historians lived by their words; if the actions did not feel right and there was no truth to substantiate, better not to act on or say mistruths. This type of thinking can be applied to analyzing the data.

Suppose the data are there to substantiate the research. In that case, that should be displayed, but if the information does not support the purpose of the problem stated in the

study, being honest about what was discovered is also critical to the ethnicity of the study. Fritz (2008) addressed ethical issues by suggesting a researcher can include learning something about a participant crossing the line between right and wrong and possibly illegal.

Another point to consider is ensuring participants' confidentiality, consent, and anonymity. Ensuring all participants are well-informed about the purpose of the research is imperative. They must know why they are being asked to participate. Each participant needs to understand the risks and benefits of participating, and no adverse consequences will come to them if they decline. Bias is a valid concern when conducting a research study with a personal connection. As the researcher, suspending personal beliefs and knowledge to ensure no bias will occur when receiving data from the participants is a constant goal. According to Norris (1997), bias and human error can occur in quantitative or qualitative research. Biases can include how the questions are presented, places, events, issues, and the balance of drama and normalcy in the questions and responses. Norris highlighted that labeling potential sources of bias is more evident than creating rules or regulations around eliminating bias. The author suggests an internal social process to maintain honest and fair equality. Each researcher must make this choice. Choosing as a researcher to internalize interpretations and compartmentalize feelings as the participants respond ensures integrity and fairness to all participants.

Methodology

Applying the hermeneutic phenomenology within this qualitative research focuses on lived experiences as a large part of this research design. This methodology explored

the meaning of lived experiences of each participant in the study. According to Wilson and Hutchinson (1991), focusing on this methodology enhanced the research with in-depth occurrences and minor details, which might be overlooked but are essential to the study's content. According to Gadamer and Linge (1976), hermeneutics was a method of clarifying the conditions in which the essence of understanding occurs. According to the author, Hermeneutics has a solid bond to the subject matter and connects with the experiences while seeking data. This may allow the researcher to understand better the lived experiences shared by participants, during or after their downsizing experiences, in the data collection process.

According to Wilson and Hutchinson (1991), the hermeneutic approach focused on the life world and human experiences in real-time, as life was being lived. The goal of the hermeneutic approach was to highlight the menial details that might otherwise be forgotten and create meaning and a sense of understanding around them. The hermeneutic approach may bring value to the study, provide an overview of the lived experiences, and fill in the gaps of minor points, which might not seem as relevant, but is essential in providing a high-level overview of the occurrences as they happen. Analyzing data related to the purpose of this study would be presented through the hermeneutic phenomenological lens. The goal is to show data collected from participants who reveal lived experiences based on the purpose of the research through questions raised to those involved through the interviewing process. Positive social change plays a significant role in this research study. Positive social change can occur by contributing to existing literature with the hope of future research exploring and developing solutions to

unresolved issues brought to light by researchers on this topic, such as this particular

dissertation has.

Participant Selection Logic

Qualitative selection for research was heavily based on those participants who

could provide vital information and enhance the understanding of the phenomenon

surrounding the study. According to Sargeant (2012), the art of subject selection in

qualitative research was essential. The sergeant suggested that participants are chosen

based on those most qualified to address the research questions and adequately

understand the phenomenon within the study. A snowball effect applied when choosing

participants enabled a researcher to obtain participants who meet the criteria to participate

in this research study.

The sample size was also a factor. According to Malterud et al. (2015), the

concept for sample size in a qualitative study was saturation. Malterud et al. said

saturation is tied to the specific research methodology but is often incorrectly applied.

Concurring with the researcher on sample size, Mason (2010) pointed out that many

issues can affect sample size in a qualitative study. According to Malterud et al., in a

qualitative research study, the sample size criteria are based on the survey's goal,

specifics of the sample size, the theory used, and the analysis strategy.

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), participants must have met a

predetermined criterion in a phenomenological study. Researchers searched for shared

experiences with the underlying phenomenon related to the research. The variance

between participants is the characteristics of the knowledge and their own experience. In

a qualitative research study, the guiding principle is only to sample until the data saturation point has been achieved. Data saturation is the collection of qualitative data when the closure has been attained as the data is becoming redundant.

The sample size in a qualitative research study does depend on the depth of the data collected, the broadness of the research question, and the phenomenon. The most important aspect of collecting data is to collect enough in-depth data to reflect patterns, categories, and diversity of phenomena to support the study. Validating a smaller sample size means that the data collected was sufficient and had reached saturation point. This would be evident as the same data would be restarted by participants, with very little in new revelations or unique perspectives. According to Boddy (2016), sample sizes as small as one participant are justifiable as long as the intended data is collected and can help substantiate the study. In a qualitative research study, the sample size is dependent on the scientific paradigm, such as a pattern or an accepted answer in the data collection process, which can be viewed as a phenomenon corroborating the purpose of the research study. Theoretical saturation can occur with a smaller sample size once the data becomes a reoccurring theme from several participants.

In a phenomenological hermeneutic research study, smaller sample sizes, according to Mason (2010), are typical and much smaller than those in quantitative studies. According to Ritchie et al. (2003), more data may not mean new information. One piece of data from a sample may lead to the exact code needed to solidify and justify the purpose of the study. Qualitative research focuses on the meaning of the research. Qualitative research can be very labor-intensive, depending on the amount of data the

participants provide. There can be a point where there is no practicality to break down data based on the timetable.

According to Ritchie et al. (2003), qualitative samples should be robust enough to show diverse opinions and lived experiences but not too large where the data is repetitive and eventually unnecessary. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), when new data does not provide any further insight into the issues, that may be a signal that saturation is near. Researchers generally use this as a guideline to move to the following data analysis phase and stop interviewing new participants. Van Manen (1997) referred to phenomenology as the study of lived experiences or the living world. Carrington (2016) focused on a qualitative phenomenological study based on employee perceptions of the impact of layoffs. The researcher used a smaller group of participants. Twenty participants were used to share their personal experiences and contribute to the interview and observation data study. There is another theory to reaching saturation. According to Green and Thorogood (2009), the researcher felt saturation was a practical weakness. Suggestions were made that researchers do not have the time to continue with open-ended research until saturation occurs.

This study focuses on lived experiences based on phenomenological hermeneutic qualitative research, and the data collected needed to encompass each participant and their lived experience before, during, and after downsizing. The data collected for this study should contain data based on the world according to each participant and how their lived experience during downsizing was perceived and interpreted.

The sample size for this research study included eight participants. The sample consisted of four managers and four employees who have survived the downsizing process in the last five years. Employment at the organization had to be at least three years at the same organization. Those who fell under the management title would have held a position in this capacity for more than 2 years. Choosing those participants with knowledge and experience in managerial practices and strategies, which could have influenced loyalty, and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States, seemed most advantageous. The number of participants used in a research study, according to Boddy (2016), in qualitative research is contextual and dependent on the paradigm under which the research is focused. The sample size involved collecting data until saturation was reached. This would encompass one participant, a small pool of participants, or, depending on the study, a large sample size to gain what is needed to substantiate the data and complete research. Justifying the sample size could have been done by analyzing and presenting data used to confirm the study and provide enough foundation for the investigation to build a solid case and create a factual conclusion, which would either support or negate the survey based on the analysis.

Instrumentation

This qualitative phenomenological research study was based on data collected through the interviewing process of e participants through a Zoom interview. The questions are carefully crafted based on the research question; What are the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing in the United States?

Deciding on the appropriate data collection instrument was important. This tool may determine the amount of data a researcher can collect. As Adosi (2020) highlighted, an interview guide, structured or semi structured, was the most appropriate choice for this research study. This instrument allowed for flexibility in the questions that were now asked. There was also the ability to add, delete or edit the final questionnaire after the pilot study to ensure the questions were open-ended and robust enough to warrant sufficient data to collect. In the interview process, the questions were semi-structured. Within each question asked from the participant, there needed to be flexible in adapting the question based on experiences, reactions, and data provided. Semi-structured interviews allow for a wide range of points based on the main topic. When conducting a one-on-one consultation, capturing data reflecting the phenomenon and providing enough information on each participant's background and human experience could open up other avenues to explore the main topic. A semi structured interview allowed this to occur. There was also the ability to compare data collected from participants, as there would be a diversity of information provided to analyze and hopefully find similarities and differences.

According to Newcomer et al. (2015), a semi structured interview allowed for a blended array of questions, including open and close-ended questions and why, how, or follow-up. There were advantages and disadvantages to these types of questions. In contrast, the focus would need to be to stay on point and gather all data relevant to the study; veering off to ask for more information about a particular response provided by a participant which could lead into another area of the topic, may lead the researcher off-

topic and collected irrelevant data which could not be used. The advantages of a semi structured interview allowed participants to dive into their human experiences and provide more in-depth answers. This type of questioning offered a forum for participants to express their views on their human experiences based on the questions asked. This opportunity allowed the researcher to fully grasp the meaning and intent of the participant's responses in a communicative and non-communicative fashion. Adosi (2020) pointed out that the primary purpose of conducting research is to contribute to the existing knowledge to develop a better understanding of the research by interpreting the data and applying the possible solutions to the ongoing issues or adding to the research with future data, reflecting the times. The questions can directly correlate to the research questions and objectives by collecting data in this interview.

According to McGrath et al. (2019) and Johnson et al. 92020), qualitative research depends heavily on the interview process producing essential data to analyze and hopefully support the research. According to the authors, there are 12 tips for successful qualitative research interviews to achieve maximum capacity. The first two tips involve identifying when qualitative research interviews are appropriate for the benefit of the research. Referring to this interview, attempting to prove this type of instrument would be helpful based on the interviewee's qualifications and the need to collect data from substantiating the study's usefulness. The second tip mentioned is to be prepared as an interviewer. Carefully planning out the delivery of the interview questions and how to ask each participant involved knowing the participant's background and experience related to

the purpose of the research. This knowledge will help the researcher ask questions where the narrative reflects the research question and provides data related to the study.

Setting up interviews by emailing each participant and sending an explanation of the study along with a consent form and the interview format is the beginning step in the data collection process. Zoom was used for the interview calls, and those were recorded. Each call ran in length, approximately 30-60 minutes. The recording was saved and downloaded via Otter.AI and transcribed into a PDF or Word doc to review. All information was kept confidential, and the participants' names were not used throughout the study.

Pilot Study

The instrument utilized in this study focused on 12 to 19 interview questions to collect valuable data to assist in this research. The critical points of the pilot study were focused on participants' comfort as the participant was being interviewed. The questions asked and answered were interpreted as data was collected and analyzed. Analyzing the data by coding or labeling changed once the pilot study had been completed and this process was reviewed. Examining how the data were analyzed and calculated was always checked against the goals and objectives to ensure the needs of the research study were being met. Reviewing the process would assist in determining the probability of success in the research and assuring the process of collecting and analyzing the data efficiently was essential. The process would allow for the study's primary purpose to have merit or if any changes would need to be made. If the investigation proves feasible, without modifications, and determining the scope of this study is comprehendible to the

participant who took part in the pilot study, moving forward with the remaining

participants would be the logical next step.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The data collected encompassed eight participants. The recruitment process began

with one employee who had met the qualifications. Once that participant was established

as a consensual participant, the Snowball method was applied to recruit the remaining

seven participants. Social media was not used. The data were collected utilizing survey

questions via Zoom. The calls were recorded and transcribed through Otter (Otter Voice

Meeting Notes - Otter.ai), producing PDF or Word documents. The vocabulary was fully

transcribed and broken down by identifying what each participant and researcher said

during each interview session.

The goal of choosing participants was to use the two perspectives of employees

and management from different companies that had experienced downsizing. The

inclusion criteria included needing to be employed at their organization for at least three

years in one of the roles (either employee or manager). To be familiar with the

organization's environment and how downsizing had affected the company's culture.

Collecting data via Zoom calls was the process used. The goal was approximately

three calls each week until the eight participants had been interviewed. The duration of

the calls ranged from 30- 60 minutes. These calls were recorded on Zoom and transcribed

into a Word or PDF document for review. The communication began with an email

describing the purpose of the study in detail. The email covered background details as

well as procedures during the interview process. The consent form also provided sample

questions and thoroughly explained to the participant the point of the study. Participation was strictly voluntary and in no way contractual or attached to any other type of obligation. The risks and benefits were disclosed. The right to privacy was shared with each participant and made sure the participants knew no monetary value was involved when participating in this study. After the explanation, the participant's written consent was required. Along with a consent form, an email followed introducing the research project and requesting permission from each participant to set up a Zoom call to conduct the interview. Once the confirmation was received, a Zoom call was scheduled, and a Zoom link was sent to each participant.

After the interview is completed and the data collected, fulfilling the commitment to each participant, ensuring they will receive a summary of their answers to the discussion, referred to as member checking to validate the data collected is accurate and true to form, would occur. Participants would then be sent out follow-up emails after the interview is completed. These emails will provide a chance for any further questions or concerns that need to be addressed by the participant or any participant that needs to make changes or discuss their responses. A scheduled Zoom would occur or communicate via email. If the participant is happy with the process and the member checking met their expectations, they would confirm that with a simple reply. This would then conclude their participation in the study. The goal was to reach out to 8 participants, or saturation would occur.

Hand Coding Data

Once the data collection had been completed, coding the data was the next step. Elliott (2018) referred to coding as a universal process in qualitative research. An essential aspect of the analytical process allowed the researcher to break down the data, interpret the meaning, and apply context to the content. Elliott described coding as a decision-making process. This means deciding how to code based on the data analysis and what context surrounds the data. Step-by-step directions do not apply to coding. According to Saldaña (2013), strategies for qualitative studies fell into six coding methodologies when approaching the coding process based on a hermeneutic phenomenological study. These included process coding, NVivo coding, descriptive coding, values coding, dramaturgical coding, and versus coding. The method of coding most applicable to this research study was descriptive hand-coding.

Saldaña (2013) referred to Bazeley (2009), who explained that hand-coding might provide a sense of ownership and control over the process of coding your data. Using Microsoft Excel to track the data collected and using the hand-coding method has been described as a repository by Saldaña for the data to hold thousands of entries and the codes accompanying them. According to Saldaña, the efforts should focus on the researcher reading the qualitative data collection and coding passages according to the topic. The measures should then concentrate on descriptive codes found in nouns within the feedback, which summarizes the overall topic view based on the data.

According to Swanson and Holton (2015), the coding process can begin once a researcher is familiar with the data. As a solo coder, Saldaña (2013) pointed out that the

critical point is member checking when confirming the data collected. This step allows the researcher to validate the data. This also enabled me to conduct a data analysis that is authentic and free of bias or untruths. Discussions with participants in reviewing the data provided would alleviate any miscommunication inaccuracies and, lastly, build trust with the participants as the researcher shows an interest in assuring the data collected was accurate.

Saldaña (2013) pointed out that coding the data is not a precise science with a specific rule book to follow. Ideas can come during the coding process and maintaining flexibility will help. Coding is a cyclical process that requires this process to be done more than once. When coding, there is flexibility when deciding on specific codes and then changing direction by taking a deeper dive into the data, reflecting various thoughts and ideas on the researcher's side. Most researchers developed coding schemes as they moved through the analytical process. Being creative and flexible in compiling data and creating codes and themes may allow for a more in-depth look at the data and show the results to reflect the importance of the information collected and the resilience of those willing to participate.

According to Hycner (1985), there are critical factors to analyzing data in a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research study. Transcription was vital to this process. Having any recording transcribed would be crucial in understanding what was said. Knowing the literal statements, maintaining the participant's thoughts and words, and staying true to those ideals and beliefs were vitally essential in reflecting an accurate analysis. Rewatching tapes to view the verbal and nonverbal communication of the

participants would also reveal how the person was feeling at the time of the interview. The researcher can examine the non-verbal feedback from each participant to determine the level of the participant's comfortableness with participating in the study and how each question and answer affects the person and their overall mood during their interview.

Proceeding with segmenting the data by coding and creating themes allowed for an understanding of the data collected and how each segment of the data assists in substantiating the research. Nowell et al. (2017) spoke to thematic coding. This type of coding followed the strategy of highlighting parts of the text where the researcher wanted to represent data valuable to the study. The next step in this process was identifying themes and trends with the collected data. The final step would be to review the coding process and ensure the data is correctly placed and adequately represented.

To be accepted as a trustworthy qualitative data researcher, according to Nowell et al. (2017), the researcher must show their data analysis has been done precisely and consistently, which is transparent to the reader to determine if the process was credible. Applying the thematic analysis guide allowed the researcher to use proper techniques for interpreting and representing the data collected. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis can result in trustworthy and invaluable findings. Braun and Clarke (2006) and King (2002) explained the advantages of thematic analysis. This method provides a flexible approach that can be modified based on the particular study through academic freedom by providing an in-depth and intense data account. The thematic analysis offered a more accessible form of analytics. The thematic analysis comes without many boundaries and procedures.

Charmaz (2008) dove into the levels of coding and the importance of each group. In this example, a three-phase approach for coding was discussed. The coding method is an enabler in establishing codes, how they originated, their relationship to each other, and how they provide integration, which may lead to specific themes and the data supporting or negating the research study. The coding method provided a verifiable way to establish appropriate codes to represent the data collected.

The process applied to the data analysis involved hand-coding the data and creating tabs in the excel file, representing the different steps in the coding process. These tabs and columns included:

- Tab 1- Summary of Participant's Coding
  - Columns:
    - Participants
    - Position Held in Organization
    - Years in Company
    - Number of Questions Asked
    - Coding
    - Keywords
    - Deductive Coding
- Tab 2- Coding Level 1
  - Columns:
    - Participants
    - Initial Coding

- Description

- Example of Raw Data

- Field Notes

- Tab 3-Themes/Level 2 Coding

  o Columns:

    - Participants

    - Synopsis of RQ

    - Themes

    - Sub Themes

    - Initial Coding

    - Level 2 Coding

    - Description

    - Raw Data

- Tab 4- Initial Coding- Sub Themes

  o Columns:

    - Participant

    - Sub Themes

    - Level 1 Coding

    - Description

    - Raw Data

As a researcher, analyzing the data began with categorizing the data into two

levels of coding. The significance of this process was to provide insight and clarity based

on the data collected. Analyzing each participant's data was critical. At the end of this process, a determination would have to be made as to whether or not there was enough data to support the research. Raw data also shed light on whether or not the information was enough to substantiate the analysis or negate the purpose of the study.

According to Saldaña (2009), deductive coding is a top-down approach. Reviewing and breaking down the data were involved as the data analysis began. Assigning codes to vocabulary in the transcript to identify particular words or phrases took a well-thought-out strategy to ensure each entry reflected each participant's data and perspective. Continuing to refine coding until the results became unequivocal and granular was a consistent effort.

The first level of coding signified the need to significantly reduce qualitative data and provide an overview of the interviewer's response. Summarizing the data in a few words or short sentences clarified the meaning of the data collected to apply the initial coding. Level 2 coding continued by examining Level 1 coding and identifying the data used to address each research question. Level 2 narrowed the focus from level 1 to become more specific in a descriptive fashion. Level 3 coding was the final coding of the analysis. This stage refined the data to allow for a more vivid description to show each participant's transparency. This level presented a more accurate and exact meaning based on each participant, so the data could be clearly understood and interpreted as meant to be.

According to Williams and Moser (2019), coding qualitative would involve collecting the data, creating categories for the data, and sorting the data. The assumption

would follow that the nature of the data would be familiar to the researcher, and a bond would form between the data being analyzed and the researcher. The information also showed that the initial philosophic frame suggests that researchers applying qualitative research methods refrain from engaging in organizational data strategies. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), researchers should apply guidelines for coding in a perfect world. Using a rigorous coding method that can be duplicated is essential. One researcher may complete the study, but future scholars may do more work. Using a method of coding and categorizing to analyze the data should be clear and concise and can be duplicated if needed. According to Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019), coding is there to help enhance the quality of a researcher's analysis and findings. Coding also improves a quantitative researcher's understanding of their data analysis. Coding takes the data and breaks it down into management subsets to fully understand each participant and how their data ties together within the sample size. Coding provides clarity and shows a more in-depth view of the data analysis.

In conducting this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study and moving to the coding element of this process, the critical factor focused on identifying the organic and unwavering components that would support or negate this research study. A phenomenology is an approach that promotes qualitative research. Embree (1997) explained that a researcher could apply seven strategies to a study: descriptive (transcendental phenomenology), naturalistic constitutive phenomenology, existential phenomenology, generative phenomenology, genetic phenomenology, hermeneutic, and realistic phenomenology. Langdridge (2007) explained that descriptive and hermeneutic

phenomenology were the two traditional approaches that drive most psychological research. These types of strategies promoted the lived experiences of participants. According to Freeman (2011), understanding cannot be produced as a fixed meaning, but how the purpose is created and transformed as spoke to the researcher. According to Giorgi (2011) and Lopez and Willis (2004), to find meaning in data is to have an open mind and attitude to allow the unexpected to submerge into the subconscious, as the expected responses may not be what occur. Giorgi and Lopez and Willis also pointed out that methods such as bracketing related to the researcher's personal experience, but the research would not influence participants' understanding of the phenomenon. Bracketing is a method that would appropriately be used to explore human affairs. According to Gearing (2004), the precision of bracketing is not definitive and can confuse.

The author's perspective was that this type of practice could cause a disconnect with phenomenology. This study is built on a hermeneutic phenomenological study. Applying the bracketing method would not be applicable. Intertwining perceptions and understanding of the data collected reflected in the knowledge and output of the data, and whether or not the analysis highlighted the research as supportive or unsupportive would be based on the responses during the interviews and interpretations of the reactions.

According to Keen (1975), researchers should focus on the phenomenon and the meaning and structure of each of the transcripts to highlight the importance of the data and relevance to a research study. Keen also discussed bracketing and phenomenological reduction. The researcher highlighted the importance of listening to the recordings and reading the transcript, abstracting the general meaning. The phenomenological reduction

was necessary to elicit the variables of the broad sense, which correlated to a conscious effort to open up as a human to the phenomenon as a phenomenon. The author mentioned that examining phenomena is crucial to look at each phenomenon if multiple should have an individualized meaning and structure and should be highlighted individually and not grouped.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility needed to be established, so the reader could find truth in what was being presented. Researchers Holloway and Wheeler (2002) defined credibility as truth based on research findings. Credibility established whether research findings were legitimate based on actual data collected from the participants. Tools used to verify credibility include using reputable resources, and properly representing negative case analysis, to show bias was not a part of this research process. Presenting the other side provided an ethical balance in the study, as no data was concealed.

According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), reflexivity, triangulation, or interview techniques could reduce bias. The methods of triangulation applied to the study would reflect the validity of the results. According to Begley (1996), triangulation is invaluable when researching by increasing the quality and amount of data collected. Using more than one method within the triangulation method, such as data, investigator, theoretical, and methodological, may have provided a broader lens to gather a more diverse data collection. According to Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999), triangulation methods provide a deeper understanding of the content. The first method, which may be

feasible depending on the participant and the time that each can contribute to the data collection, would include scheduling the interview once during working hours and a second time on a weekend, outside of working hours, to gage possible diverse responses, which may show a difference in tone. The second method would compare participants with different viewpoints, such as management vs. employee, to interpret the data provided.

According to Webb et al. (1966), researchers should employ more than one instrument to measure results. As in the case of the current study, this process was not feasible based on participants' time constraints. Another tactic to ensure credibility was to cross-examine the integrity of the responses received from the participants. Using tools such as this to test credibility would allow for more secure insurance for integrity in the collection and analysis.

Transferability

Transferability represented the validity of data and sources. I used references from scholarly works that provided factual and trustworthy data. The literature used in this research included documents discussing downsizing in any format, legal documents, past documentation, corporate documents reflecting the subject of downsizing, and lived experiences from managers and employees who had experience with this process— ensuring the accuracy and authenticity of records required sites such as the US Department of Labor and US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and published articles and case studies from accredited institutions.

Transferability within the research may have shown how the data collected and verified could apply to other situations involving the downsizing process within the US. The information presented was meant to be transferable to further ongoing research studies surrounding the topic of downsizing and managerial strategies to mitigate the severity of the situation or transferrable to a continuation of the thesis and where the data will leave off. The goal was to provide the data to support the research and to judge whether the information provided is worthy of transferring based on need and subject content. Another critical aspect of the study was dependability. The data collected had shown consistency with participants' lived experiences, the literature reviewed, and the data which would be presented. Hand coding would allow the data to be documented, interpreted, and categorized to show consistency, reliability, and an audit trail created throughout the process. These steps reflected dependability in presenting an accurate account of the data.

Dependability

Data accuracy and reliability were concerns throughout the research process. The conclusion will be false if inaccurate information finds a way into the data. Data could be verified using the two methods based on triangulation, including scheduling the interviews at an off time, beyond business hours, and comparing participants with different viewpoints. Validation could also be done through the triangulation method. This is a research tool that, according to Patton (1999), attempted to verify the accuracy of data within the field of study. Using data from multiple sources with several different

perspectives would show a more multi-dimensional view of the data collected and reflect the data's accuracy.

Confirmability

Two components could establish confirmability, an audit trail, and reflexivity. An audit trail could capture details of the data process within the study. This would consist of how participants were recruited, and the method used to collect data.

Keeping notes of how the interview process, including the exit interview, was conducted and the process results for each participant was vital, included in the audit trail where data analysis and interpretation of the data. This would have consisted of the software used and the coding system to categorize the data.

The second component, reflexibility, would be helpful in a phenomenological study such as this. This allowed for reflection on the background and analyzing any experiences which would reflect or influence the research process. This would include why this methodology was chosen, analyzing the data, interpreting results, or presenting the conclusion. According to Anney (2014), reflexivity is applied to this research. This concept would reassure confirmability by reflecting on a journal and capturing the collected data's values, interests, and interpretations.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical procedures were also tied to the IRB. Walden University is responsible for ensuring the thesis complies with the university's ethical standards and US Federal regulations. The IRB procedure required an application to be filled out and submitted for approval based on the information provided by the researcher. Based on the research and

qualitative research study chosen to pursue, the process for IRB approval includes but is not limited to obtaining "IRB approval before data analysis. Private records might include test scores, student work products, employee work products, employee performance ratings, outcomes records, or any other type of data generated under an organization's auspices as part of its operations" (Carrington, 2016). Ethical responsibility on the researcher's part included the responsibility of the data, including storage and who has access to this area. The integrity of the data remains vital to the validity of the study.

The responsibility lies with the researcher to ensure the integrity of the information is never compromised or misused. Ethics also included documenting data, where and how the data was obtained, and ensuring correct procedures were used to collect and use the data for the intended use. Ethics was the main driving force in how the research moved forward. The goal was to document all steps to provide a trail showing the efforts taken to work through this dissertation process. This will serve the research well and ensure the process has followed the correct procedures deemed by the school.

Summary

Applying the qualitative methodology with a hermeneutic phenomenological research approach was most applicable for this study. Using this type of lens to highlight how lived experiences of managers and employees are used to maintain loyalty and trust and apply creative strategies in corporate downsizing may help minimize job loss in the United States. I used eight participants. Collecting and analyzing the data provided a

high-level overview of how employees are affected and what can be done to promote

change. The data collection will be described in detail in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

I focused on identifying employees who have lived through downsizing and their lived experiences. The analysis highlighted Creative Strategies; Maintaining Loyalty in a Corporate Downsizing. Applying the Qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research approach supported the need to focus on eight employees who remained loyal to their organization during a downsizing effort. This approach provided supportive or non-supportive data to substantiate or negate the effects of downsizing in organizations and the importance of maintaining employees' Loyalty and commitment by applying creative strategies when downsizing occurs. Data were presented for each participant's experience showcased in the table and charts displayed.

Applying this study's qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research approach reflected a realistic interpretation of loyalty and trust in organizations during or after a downsizing event. The process allowed for an open-ended discussion of lived experiences during each participant's interview regarding their experience with a downsizing effort. The primary purpose of this approach was to bring to light and expose the lived meaning of each of these participants' experiences. The research question was:

What are the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining

loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing situations?

Understanding the cause and effect of downsizing and how this affects the trust and loyalty of employees toward leadership is an essential factor. Identifying the long-term impact of choices companies make to decrease cost and boost the bottom line by downsizing employees could be causing a downward trend in an employee's ability to

maintain loyalty and trust in management. This chain of events could cause a higher turnover in organizations and a deterioration of employees' commitment to their job, company, and leadership. Filling in the gap left by past studies has allowed this process to highlight the importance of loyalty and trust among employees. The presented research could make a difference in leadership's ability to apply creative measures to cut back financially without job loss. It was crucial to understand the human experience to empathize with each participant on their own experiences and how downsizing had affected each participant professionally and personally.

<div align="center">**Pilot Study**</div>

The pilot study was carried out with P1. The interview was completed without any implication or gap in the flow of collecting data. Researching how a pilot study may have affected the research outcome shows that this process which was the beginning of the data collection, drove the study's accuracy and provided checks and balances. The pilot study allowed researchers to ensure questions were interpreted correctly, participants understood the process, and the interviewee was comfortable with the interview process.

According to Yujin (2010), the pilot study reflected its usefulness in qualitative research. The pilot study acknowledged the practical and methodological positives and negatives of the first study. The crucial points that should have come to light from this study include making sure the participants are a right fit for the study. If the participant was unwilling to answer the questions in an explanatory and complete fashion instead of a possible one-word answer without expanding, this action may have posed an issue in

collecting enough valuable data to substantiate the findings and corroborate with the remaining participants to show accurate results. The pilot study offered a chance to modify or edit interview questions that may have been interpreted as having an ambiguous meaning, or participants may not have understood every aspect of the question.

There also might have been strong feelings about a question not being appropriate or relevant to the study. These were components that were important to identify. Using this as a small-scale test to ensure the methodology was carried out as prescribed allowed the chance to edit any part of the actual process. Conducting this pilot study was crucial to test the function of knowing if key steps taken would achieve the goal of collecting data from participants in a comfortable fashion. The participant could respond in a safe space, where no judgment was passed. This would traditionally be built on trust from the researcher. Resources such as Zoom may have created issues with some participants regarding their comfort level using this platform. A pilot study allowed for understanding any obstacles and how to avoid those moving forward in the interviewing stage.

According to Castillo-Montoya (2016), there are four pilot study phases. The first phase would be ensuring the interview questions correlated to the research question. The second phase initiates a conversation that would promote openness to respond and keep the interaction fluid. The third phase focuses on when the interview is completed. Receiving feedback from the participant would be crucial to understanding if there is anything that needs to be adjusted. The fourth phase ensured the interview process was successful and met the expectations of the researcher and participants. Examples of two

questions asked of P1, who took part in the pilot study, are reflected below. Feedback on how the interview process went from the viewpoint of P1 is also included.

Question: What does loyalty mean to you?

P1's response referred to loyalty as tough to describe. P1 continued to share that if exactness is needed, there is the dictionary definition, but on a personal level, loyalty represents someone's personality and approach to a situation. Empathy means loyalty to P1. People who care about others and do well in their work inspire P1 to show a more loyal side than someone who shows little concern for peers or their job performance (P1, 2021).

Question: What could be done to improve loyalty and trust for those who retained their jobs after a downsizing?

P1 can determine whether trust in the organization is justified by honesty. Being honest and upfront with peers or subordinates about process changes or any event that could affect an employee's job shows a level of trust. P1 also reflected that showing employee confidence is a way management and leadership provide the tools needed to do the job and then stand back and allow those to do so and be successful. One of the final questions asked focused on last words or opinions which come to mind that P1 could share relating to trust and loyalty in corporations in the current climate we live in today. P1 responded that the organization that P1 is employed by is big on promoting trust and loyalty from middle management. P1 had alluded that top leadership cannot be counted on to expect loyalty and trust toward employees, but middle management fills in the gap.

P1 shared that the choice to work one-on-one with someone is more desirable than letting them fail. P1 also shared that people, not the process, reflect trust and loyalty (P1, 2021).

P1's Feedback on the interview experience:

P1 highlighted that all the questions seem to be on the positive side. P1 observed that no questions were asked about dealing with distrust or disloyalty on the management or employee sides.

Gaining the feedback from P1 was essential to acknowledge and considering adding those opposing viewpoint questions to the interview was also valuable feedback. This was the time to ensure all objectives were met. The pilot provided each phase in this process. These steps would allow refining and improving the instrument for the participants and ensuring the research goals were met.

Research Setting

The importance of the research setting can be determined by a participant's physical, social, or cultural background, as to where each participant is when the interview is being conducted. In this research study, as the focus was humanistic experiences in corporate downsizing, the participants needed to be in a comfortable setting, without distraction, where each participant was comfortable answering all questions honestly. According to Sutton and Austin (2015), the location or environment of a participant is as important as the participants in a setting with stability, comfort, and familiarity. This environment may produce a participant's most honest and humanistic side. This environment may allow the participant to feel comfortable opening up and being as open as possible about their lived experience. In a qualitative research study, the

focus is heavily on an immediate reaction to a question. Participants in a natural setting where each participant is comfortable yet focused are essential to collecting accurate and sufficient data. This is imperative to ensure the conclusion is based on honesty and accuracy.

As the research setting is the physical environment where the data collection occurs, each participant who participated in the study was at their home when they were interviewed. They were on Zoom and camera except for P8, who chose not to participate on camera but still proceeded with a Zoom call. The data collection was done during a pandemic. Due to the Corona virus, the participants were all working from home. Their verbal and non-verbal tones were relaxed when speaking about their background in their organizations. For example, P2 referenced the commitment felt to a company that had provided a roof over P2 and their family's head for the past 40 years. The tone in which P2 shared feelings toward the company was relaxed and unscripted. The response came from a place of personal experiences and a level of loyalty P2 had felt toward the organization.

During questions about participants' background and personal experiences with trust, participants' verbal and nonverbal communication fluctuated from relaxed to tense. For example, when asked about describing trust within the organization toward employees, Participant 3 relaxed their shoulders and, in a matter-of-fact tone, said, "Trust used to be pretty good at the company. Since downsizing had occurred, changes are constantly happening." P4 was asked to describe experiences during downsizing. The tone was somber and reflected anger and annoyance in their voice. P4 expressed sadness

at losing half their team, stating, "Loyalty has to go both ways. You need to be loyal upward but also to your team. When downsizing occurred at the organization, I was asked to rate my team as a manager, and the lowest person would lose their job" (P4, 2021). After that question was addressed, there was a moment of silence. P8 was more verbose with their response when asked to describe an experience where P8 felt a great sense of trust within their organization. P8 responded, "I do not trust anybody within the organization, no matter their level, including my peers." The tone in P8's voice was severe, and there was a detection of sadness.

Each participant shared lived experiences without feeling inhibited or somewhat censored in what they had to say. The answers to the interview questions were complete and robust. The participants spoke their minds without judgment or personal opinions being interjected. The responses to the questions were geared toward downsizing, and when answering, each participant was able to do so without interference or interruption. This was an essential component in this qualitative research study, and the focus was on an immediate reaction to a question. Participants in a natural setting where each participant is comfortable yet focused were crucial. The confidence to know the data received was honest and forthright based on the questions was vital to ensure the conclusions were based on honesty and accuracy.

Demographics

Presenting participant demographics and characteristics relevant to the study is vital to a complete understanding of the data and a background of where and whom the data was extracted from while maintaining each participant's anonymity. Working to

identify two individuals who met the criteria for the study was the main focus of

beginning the process of choosing participants. This would encompass prospective

participants at a company for the past 3 years and survived downsizing in the past 5

years. Each participant must share their lived experiences based on the interview

questions. As participants were chosen, one of the qualities to look for was diversity in a

particular organization where the participant worked. Another quality was the role each

participant had within the organization. This would allow for a more well-rounded study

with mixed results. The participants would need to meet or exceed the requirements to be

considered.

According to Salkind (2010), demographic information provided data regarding

the participants taking part in the research. This information was vital to ensuring those

chosen are representing the general population.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Participant	Yrs. in Org.	Job Title	Responsibilities
2	20	Client Support Specialist	• Supported largest accounts working alongside sales to ensure the client's expectations were met. • Worked in integrated systems to place orders and manage any IT issues. • Managing billing issues and fielding questions • Managing large projects- ordering and requesting the installation of data lines i100-1000+ locations • Liaison between client and <u>company</u>
3	10	Product Development Engineer	• Design and develop new automotive models for the organization • Work as part of project teams to conceptualize and carry out plans for new ideas and concepts regarding the product • Work with internal groups to <u>ensure projects are successful</u>
4	39.5	Area Manager Customer Service Sales Support (Retiree)	• Manage a team of 15 team members • Oversea accounts • Tracking employee's progress and handling any disciplinary actions needed to be taken • Preparing reports for superiors • Carry out initiatives from <u>leadership</u>
5	5	Senior Client Support	• Working under the manager to ensure employees were doing <u>their</u>

		Specialist- Team Lead	<u>jobs</u> • Work to handle any complaints that came in and address the specific employees involved • Track employee timesheets and vacation balances • Provided training for <u>subordinates</u>
6	18	Chief Information Officer	• Responsible for managing IT Infrastructure • Implemented computer technology to ensure the company was up-to-date on its software and hardware • Provided leadership updates on the latest trends and needs of the organization in a technical capacity • Supported IT and took the initiative to become a break/fix expert when there were computer <u>issues</u>
7	6	Client Executive	• Responsible for selling widgets to small businesses • Working to create relationships with clients • Initiating any help with clients who were having service or <u>billing issues</u>
8	18.5 (37 yrs.)	Service Executive	• Managed installations and outages for large accounts • On-call 24/7 to take care of any issues the clients faced with their data lines, billing, or installations at any of their sites

Data Collection

The data collection process encompassed eight participants being interviewed. Each interview lastly approximately 30-60 minutes in length. These interviews were done on Zoom. Calls were scheduled for each participant through Zoom, with each participant receiving their own time and Zoom link provided by email. Qualitative data were collected based on the lived experiences of downsizing and focused on specific details reflected in questions asked during the interview. The goal was to have each participant represent a different organization within various industries. The expectation was to identify four managers and four employees who have dealt with the downsizing process and share their lived experiences. Each participant could expand on the occurrences and shed light on the effects of the process. The participants would be located throughout the United States, male and female, from diverse industries with differentiating backgrounds, holding white-collar jobs.

The pilot call took place first, with the results from the call analyzed and opened to adjustment if optimum results were not achieved. The remainder of the participants would be interviewed in the same fashion. The calls ran approximately 30-60 minutes. The goal was to ask the questions prepared for the participants and provide each person with enough time to answer each question to the fullest extent. Allowing each person to finish their answers with all the information each participant wanted to share to capture the data relevant to each question was vital to the study. Each participant had similar questions but depended on the answers, and some participants were asked more or fewer questions than others.

The data collection encompassed lived experiences of the participants with vivid and detailed data shared, as seen in Appendix A. Applying the phenomenological approach, according to Alase (2017), was used to explore an employee's perception of the downsizing process, including the interaction and communicative experience employees have with leadership during this type of event. The objective was to understand how downsizing affects employees and the company regarding the internal structure and increasing the bottom line. The interaction was done over Zoom, with each participant engaged in their private call. This allowed for a one-on-one experience, asking each participant questions similar in structure but moderately tailored to fit each participant's background, as previously stated. The questions posed were focused on behaviors, diversity of roles and responsibilities, and the process of how downsizing efforts affect trust and loyalty within organizations. The call was recorded and once completed, downloaded to Otter.ai - Voice Meeting Notes & Real-time Transcription. This application transcribed the data onto a Word doc or PDF.

Personal feelings and an attentive look at how loyalty and trust were affected during and after a resource action were integral to the data collection. As the questions were asked, P 6 and P7 had more calmness in their body language, whereas P1 though P5 showed more facial expressions and upper body movement when specific questions were asked. P4 had shaking in voice tone when speaking about the experience of having to lay off workers who had worked for P4 for 10 years and some even longer. There was more of a monotone in the voices of P3, P6, and P7. Each participant was descriptive of their lived experiences while maintaining a tone of solidarity and seriousness.

The last participant, P8, declined to be on camera. Still, the nonverbal communication came through very clearly as questions about trust and loyalty involving peers were asked. P8 was very descriptive and detailed oriented when answering the questions. P8's voice tone was raised when speaking about downsizing and trust. P8's style became lowered when responding to the questions about the overall experience at the company, where P8 had spent 18.5 years at the current job and a total of 37 years at the organization. There was an underlying tone of depression and anger when talking about those affected by layoffs and how management had handled these resource actions over the past couple of years. The lived experiences provided raw data to substantiate the participant's expressiveness. This also reflected each participant's experience without bias or editing of the data collected. Each participant has also assured confidentiality.

Table 2

Sample Interview Questions

Participant	No. Questions Asked	Sample Question
1	18	Can you share with me a time when you felt absolute loyalty to your org
2	19	What do you feel someone has been trustworthy to you and exhibits those qualities
3	12	During the time of downsizing in your org., did you feel a sense of loyalty toward your org?
4	12	Can you describe loyalty and trust and what they mean to you as a manager?
5	10	During the downsizing efforts through the yrs. can you think of creative ways leadership could improve on how this resource action would be handled or how to minimize human casualties
6	10	What are your thoughts on how trust and loyalty are handled in corporate America?
7	15	What are the short and long-term effects on organizations?
8	14	When loyalty is shown to you through management, does this behavior affect you or how you do your job?

Data Analysis

To capture and report the data throughout the study, the tools used were MS Word and Microsoft Excel in this process. In creating the file, there were four tabs:

1st Tab: Summary of participants

This created a foundation for introducing each participant while maintaining privacy by individualizing them, providing a history of how long each participant had been at their company, what position they held and how many questions were asked of each of them. The first tab reflected possible themes based on the raw data collection from each participant, which would assist in setting up coding for the data analysis. Keywords were identified to provide an extensive picture analysis based on creative strategies for maintaining loyalty and trust amid downsizing.

2nd Tab: First-level coding.

This process involved identifying the initial codes based on descriptive words and sentences. An example of raw data was provided to substantiate the level 1coding and the descriptive vocabulary. Field notes were supplied for each participant to be added to the narrative as a spoken event that ties into the coding and descriptive verbiage provided.

3rd Tab: Subthemes.

This descriptive process started with themes and evolved into subthemes, which modeled the thematic analysis to analyze qualitative data, including interviews. The subthemes were developed to narrow down the original themes on Tab 1. Drilling down more specifically into the data and moving from the generalized interpretation to a more defined or specific idea based on data provided by each participant was crucial to

ensuring the critical points of this data analysis were seen and understood. The subthemes were supported by Level 1 coding and then substantiated by descriptive data collected, which helps define the subthemes and the coding. Along with those components, raw data was provided to perpetuate the meaning of the data collected and how the information is being categorized.

4th Tab: Sub-themes

These themes are supported by the initial coding and continued the dissection, similarities, and differences in the data collected. These components provided a baseboard to build Level 2 coding, assist in descriptive verbiage and highlight raw data to provide an analysis reflecting the research. The hope is that this effort will guide the reader through the study in an organized manner showcasing the generalities of the data collected and moving toward finetuning the data, so the results are clear and concise in understanding each participant's lived experience with downsizing and their interpretation of trust and loyalty during a resource action.

Table 4

Themes and Codes

Participant's	Sub Themes	Themes	Coding Lvl 1	Coding Lvl 2
P1	Loyalty	Healthy environment	Personal definition of trust	How does this company exude dependability and stability
P2	Experience in Downsizing	Leadership's mission and goals for the organization	Feelings of loyalty shown to an organization	Loyalty is reflected differently as the goals of the organization have been altered
P3	Loyalty & Trust	Transparency-understanding of action being taken	sense of loyalty to management/leadership during downsizing	How does downsizing affect your personal and professional life?
P4	Effects of Downsizing on Organizations	The atmosphere during a layoff	Personal/Professional feelings in decisions you had to make regarding job loss in your group	Keeping up morale and standards in the organization
P5	Improving Loyalty and Trust between management and subordinates	Downsizing causes instability	Great sense of loyalty toward employees, peers, or leadership	How to build those bridges with employees and foster the professional relationship
P6	Trust and Loyalty	Leadership supporting recognition of employees	Communicating effectively with employees throughout the downsizing process	Does the realism of trust and loyalty exist between

				managers and employees
P7	Effects of Downsizing on Organizations	Leadership reaching out to highlight loyalty toward an employee	Short and long-term effects of downsizing	Will downsizing be beneficial in the long run for companies
P8	Short Term/Long Term Effects of Downsizing	Remembering a culture promoting trust and loyalty	Employee's perceptions of downsizing and who will be affected	Understanding the value of the loyalty shown and reflecting on the value of the trust

Transcribing the data was the next step when the interviews were completed. Interviews were downloaded onto Microsoft Word documents individually. Having the vocabulary transcribed provided clarity and brevity that allowed for the ability to read over each interview, creating member checking for each participant to review and dispute if needed. Once that was completed, the data through transcription was ready to be inputted into a data analysis file in Microsoft Excel.

The data collected focused on loyalty within organizations between management and employees, the human experience of downsizing, and creative strategies which could be used to limit human casualties. These topics were relative to the material covered in the interview questions. Appendix B provided a sample of all the interview questions asked. The data collected fell under different themes, as three examples are listed below:

- Loyalty to maintain a healthy environment in the wake of downsizing

- Loyalty to employees

- Transparency in open communication internally between employees and leadership.

The responses collected from the eight participants are displayed in Appendix A. The interview questions were expected to be addressed with humanity, honesty, and lived experiences. This was based on the interpretation of the data collected. A sample of interviews and responses are reflected in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Sample Respondents Data Sample Question

Interview Question

Can you share a time when you felt loyalty toward your organization?

- P3 Response: A remarkable amout of loyalty as an employee towards my company was shown as the company had provided us with tools to continue to work safely and remotely while maintaining our level of productivity during the pandemic.
- P4 Response: Loyalty was shown to my customer's, the company and my team.
- P8 Response: I have always had loyalty toward the organization always. 37 years of of being with the same company, that reflects loyalty.

Interview Question

What are employees perceptions as a result of the downsizing efforts which had occured at your organization?

- P3 Response:For most people or those I have worked with once downsizing is done there is kind of a unifying effect. Employees look at this as it will be ok. P3 was the only participant who had an understanding of why downsizing had to happen and in some circumstances reflected on downsizing not being as bad of an idea when leadership feels this measure is needed to survive.
- P4 Response: People are very hurt when they are affected by downsizing. They're angry, hurt and in disbeleif.
- P8 Response: There is a lot of confusion going around about this. Employees do not make this decsion. We are seeing bizarre decisions being made about folks who have done nothing wrong, yet losing jobs. Overall the folks I have spoken with feel like they just want peace of mind and a level of security.

Interview Question

Can you think of creative ways that leadership could have improved the experience during downsizing or found a way to maintain jobs and still accomplish thier goals?

- P3 Reponse: The first company I was with did it perfectly, but the second company I was with could have handled the downsizing proces a lot better. I would rather be told by my own supervisor that I am affected then by someone I did not know. The take away when a downsizing event happens is looking how to improve for future efforts if they arise so employees feel valued no matter the outcome.
- P4 Response: It is very difficult when you have to downsizing an organization. I can't tell you how many nights I would lay awake trying to figure out a way around letting any of my people go. It is very hurful on both sides. The only action that should be appplied to this in a consistant manner it transparency.
- P8 Response: Management needs to let those who are going to be donwsized go with dignity.

The data in figure 2 provided a sample of questions asked during the data collection process. The questions were formulated based on the RQ. The data collected were coded based on survey questions and commonality in responses. Specific data were highlighted that reflected more of a humanistic approach. Lived experiences were also highlighted to illuminate the downsizing experiences and creative strategies that could be applied to save jobs. The questions addressed to participants focused on feelings of loyalty and trust based on management, peers, and their efforts to mirror these traits toward fellow employees. Coding, such as, what loyalty would mean to the participant, and personal feelings felt or lived based on the effects of downsizing, was a part of creating codes applied to the data to drill down to the most granular form. This process was vital in highlighting the most pivotal pieces of the data collected.

According to Gibbs (2007), preparing data using tools such as coding to develop the final analysis and ultimately the conclusion is a crucial part of analyzing qualitative data to understand how the data can substantiate or negate the goal of the research. According to Saldaña (2016), coding in a qualitative study is a symbolic effort allowing a researcher to identify the data to be viewed in a definite format, capturing the comparative essence, commonality, and opposing views based on the interview questions posed by each participant. Coding can range from one word to an entire paragraph of descriptive words relative to the responses and questions asked.

When deciding how to code the data collection, the most appropriate choice for this study was to apply hand-coding vs. using technology such as NVivo. Evaluating data from eight participants could be considered a small data set. This type of coding would

allow for coding without using a software program, unlike a large data set which might require a database to assist in the process. The disadvantage of hand-coding could result in lacking an in-depth overview of the elements, which can be elevated to new revelations from the original data collected.

According to Madelyan (n.d.), coding is to properly label and organize the qualitative data to identify themes and how the data are collected from each participant. The data collected may provide many similarities or differences. Enabling the thematic analysis allows for themes to be extracted from the data collected by examining the responses from each participant. Hand coding, according to Medelyan (n.d.), provides the researcher the ability to analyze unstructured data, which is a term occasionally used when referring to qualitative data. According to Medelyan, qualitative coding data can make the process less challenging to interpret the information collected from the interviews. Assigning or coding words from each participant can help capture the meaning of the data the participant was trying to convey. Compiling responses, organizing, and categorizing the data can provide a clear interpretation of the information and assist in coding the data.

According to Charmaz (2001), researchers view data through an analytical lens when coding data. Perception and interpretation may depend on the researcher's filter to apply over the lens. According to Richards and Morse (2007), coding is a method of linking the data to the study's main idea or purpose and then attaching the main picture to the data provided. Coding is an ongoing process. The first level of coding data began breaking down the information collected and starting the categorization process.

Second level of coding provides a data filtering process, which will help identify Level 2 coding. Moving into another level of coding can help highlight and focus on more specifics of the data, solidifying the purpose or meaning of the research. Breaking down the data to an even more granular level as in Level 2 is similar to turning on filters and drilling down metaphorically. This step provides a deeper dive into the analysis. According to Charmaz (2001), coding the data allows for a linkage between data collection and the meaning of the data.

Gibbs (2007) suggested that coding was a way of indexing or categorizing the data to establish a framework of thematic ideas based on the data collected. Gibbs also suggested that in qualitative research, coding reflects the meaning of the data and how to maintain authenticity when analyzing participants' responses to the interview questions. Coding identifies a passage in the text or other data items (photograph, image), searching and remembering concepts, and finding relations between them. Therefore, coding is not just labeling; coding serves as a bridge that connects the data to the idea and back to other data—making sure to document Levels 1 and 2 of coding and identifying the themes allowing for a more systematic approach to analyzing the data. Member checking after the data was collected from participants assisted in solidifying the data collected. This step assures that the data captured was recorded as intended. This step also ensures the data was based on accuracy and followed all the rules regarding ethical behavior. Table 5 provides a sampling of coding.

Table 3

Sample of Level 1 and 2 Coding

Level 1 Coding	Level 2 Coding
Definition of loyalty through the years at this organization has loyalty altered over time	Loyalty is reflected differently as the goals of the organization have been altered
Feeling a sense of intense loyalty to the organization	Feeling like you can trust leadership to have your back
A personal description of trust and what can occur when faith is not reciprocated	Has trust been achieved between the company and employee
Maintaining work culture in a downsizing effort	Keeping up morale and standards in the organization
Feelings toward management and employees during the downsizing process	The sense of trust shaken by the downsizing efforts created difficult emotions, which were reflected by some employee's negatively
Communicating effectively with employees throughout the downsizing process	Knowing how strong the line of communication can affect an employee's sense of stability during this time
Employee's perceptions of downsizing and who will be affected	Knowing that the downsizing effort might affect you and your peers- preparing for the worst might help to prepare you emotionally

Evidence of Trustworthiness

When conducting a qualitative research study and engaging participants to collect data, there needs to be a level of trustworthiness between the researcher and those who volunteer for the study. Qualitative researchers must show that the data collected is done ethically, precisely, and confidentially, so the participant's privacy is protected. This part of the process is essential for the data collection process. Portraying a high level of trust with the participants involved transparency, open communication, and addressing any questions or concerns that arose during the introduction. The consent form was sent to

each participant, laying out the format for the interview. The method of ensuring each individual's privacy was maintained throughout the interview process and beyond was reassured to the participants in the consent form and stated this was strictly voluntary and a participant could stop for any reason.

Member checking after the interview had been completed for each participant. Feedback or validation to the participants reconfirmed what was said in the interview was crucial to the researcher's trust. This process ensured the participants that data was captured accurately during the data collection. Member checking could reassure the participant and improve the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

According to Nowell et al. (2017), the research that may prove most valuable is familiar and understood by the audience intended for a particular research study. Gaining not only the trust of the participants but the intended audience can reflect a level of integrity and honesty in the way the study was compiled, including the trust that in the data analysis process, there was a high level of ethics and complete trust and respect for the operation and how the data was interpreted and analyzed.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness is based on whether the audience, including myself, can be convinced that the findings from the data study are valid and credible. This credibility would have to be enough for the intended audience to pay attention to the data and, if needed, act on those actions' results, which may create improvements. Knowing the audience might review the data and question the value and whether or not the research is applicable and timely shows the audience is paying attention to detail. Reflecting a fluid consistency in the data, highlighting a level of

neutrality demonstrated by the researcher, and showing no bias in the study is vital in building trust with the intended audience. These components make up the ability to highlight the trustworthiness of the research.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlighted that credibility encompasses different components. As the study progressed, emphasizing the findings as believable and credible to the intended audience who reviewed the research was necessary. The credibility of qualitative research is based on human experience, perception of the data, and interpretation as the data are analyzed. Substantiating the data to ensure credibility would be done by backing up the findings with other studies. Reflecting the same or similar results could provide a foundation to build on, based on data identical in nature or research, which provided an opposing side to the current data, showing diversity to the study through a lens that negates the recent data provided. Reflecting credibility can be accomplished by taking steps to complete member checking with participants, reviewing data several times to ensure no information was overlooked or misinterpreted, and examining the raw data as makeshift checks and balances. This helps ensure the data was reviewed and analyzed and not misinterpreted. These steps showed credibility, which was vital to the authenticity of the study.

Transferability

Transferability, according to Tobin and Begley (2004), is the responsibility of the researcher to provide enough information, so other researchers or those of an academic nature would desire to use data or additional information from the study for the use of

sustain their data or collaborate through shared case studies or views. This process should be able to be done with the ease of accessibility. Providing the correct information, including accurate sources, dates, and paraphrased opinions on different aspects of a study, shows credibility, and believability in the current research. The perception should be that the data are scholarly, not without room for growth, and fully supported by acceptable case studies. The data should also reflect a nonbiased look into the phenomenon and address the research question highlighted by the data collected and referenced material used from other scholarly studies, cited to reflect the appropriate use of the data. This qualitative phenomenological study analyzed the data and created an analysis reflecting comparative results among each participant with similarities and differences shared in the data collection process. These results are based on each participant's human experience. The results presented in this study could be developed into a more in-depth analysis, which can be ongoing as the current corporate environment fluctuates. Data supporting or negating this study reflected a climate change among leadership and employees.

Dependability

According to Tobin and Begley (2004), achieving dependability may depend on how researchers showcase their data. Ensuring the data is clear and concise, with accurate results documented in the data analysis and summation of the research study, may provide a high-level of dependability and ethnicity of the data collected. Being consistent or showing trustworthiness is critical for the quality of research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), dependability in qualitative research correlates to reliability. The

researchers refer to dependability as auditing oneself to ensure the credibility of the data and the authenticity of the way the data were recorded. The outcome would be based on reliable information, reflected in the analysis, and presented in the findings. Data were initially collected by conducting a video interview and viewing the participants' verbal and nonverbal actions and reactions. The ability to see the nonverbal and verbal communication while questions were being asked allowed for a level of assurance that the participants were honest. Each participant answered the questions truthfully and honestly based on their own experience. As some of the questions were sensitive, covering trust, loyalty, and the personal downsizing experience, the raw data collected were based on professional backgrounds and tapped into human emotion. The participants were engaged in a frank exchange of thoughts and human affairs based on individual experiences. The analysis reflected a high level of dependability. The data captured included the participant's knowledge and factual information based on each participant's lived experience.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the validity of the data presented in the study. Ensuring that other researchers can confirm the data for reference or further research can cement the ethnicity and validation of the data collected. According to Tobin and Begley (2004), confirmability refers to the precise adaptation of the data based on the interpretation when transcribing the data collected in the interview and translating the information into an analysis. According to Cutcliffe and McKenna (2004), using audit trails to confirm qualitative research overuses the need for justification. This step will not create the

credibility of the findings in the study. According to Cutcliffe and McKenna, testing

credibility in qualitative research remains debatable among some researchers. Confirming

the data collected had remained true to form with the original meaning of the vocabulary

not altered in any way, reflected in the raw data, which was captured and transcribed in

the original format as intended. This step was imperative to provide trustworthy research,

which can be viewed and expanded on, knowing the research presented is authentic,

transparent, and accurate. According to Tobin and Begley (2004), ensuring the

vocabulary is delivered in the way the data was conveyed to the researcher shows the

study's validity, which is reflected in the research and provides the data presented is done

so without bias, misinterpretation, or altering the meaning of any data collected from the

study. This course of action reflects a level of solidarity and truthfulness to the survey.

Study Results

The results reflected in a phenomenological study, according to Moustakas

(1994), were meant to highlight the need to discover the objective and subjective reality

of the phenomenon, which is vital to the study's success. This type of study depends on

the researcher refraining from predicting the study's outcome with any bias based on

personal interpretation to suit the researcher. In a study such as this, according to

Moustakas, there is a relationship between the perception of the data based on human

experience, internal perception, memories from the participants, and perceptual

interpretation on the researcher's behalf. The results from this study are without bias and

reflect the data collected from eight participants. This section highlights the process taken

to analyze the results from the data collection. The data analysis study has provided a clearer picture of how the data was reviewed, interpreted, and categorized.

According to Bekker and Clark (2018), presentations of qualitative research findings can be effective depending on how these results are presented. Qualitative research findings should be accessible and intuitive. The results should provide accuracy and transparency surrounding the research question and how that question was either substantiated or negated by the data collected. Studies such as this have the unique opportunity to provide new or updated data, which can spark new ideas or creative strategies for addressing issues such as downsizing. Reviewing archival material and renowned researchers' works will continually benefit. As Bekker and Clark (2018) pointed out, researchers raised awareness around the issues with such studies to create meaningful discussions and debates by reviewing more recent studies with new findings. These studies may also provide education to those up and coming into positions of power that may make a difference.

There is also the importance of knowing the background of each participant. According to Dennis (2014), the ethical commitment to take each participant's experience into account individually is relevant when preparing to interview the participant. Understanding a participant's background may help anticipate how participants respond and react to their interviews. This may include how the questions are being asked and how the participants may answer. This can also encompass how in-depth the responses are and how willing they are to reflect on their human experiences related to the research question. According to Hebenstreit and DePrince (2012), depending on the topic,

concerns could have arisen where the trauma occurred during the interview process.

Understanding the motivation for a participant to participate in the study and how the

questions will affect each person is essential to know so psychological harm is not

intentionally caused.

Understanding the responsibility of recruiting participants and ensuring their

psychological well-being remains intact may reflect on the questions asked and the

support given by the researcher during the interview. Also, understanding each

participant's background can shed light on what type of situations they have been through

and how downsizing played a role in their vast experience.

Figure 1

Flow Chart Loyalty and Trust – Creating Strategies to Neutralize Downsizing
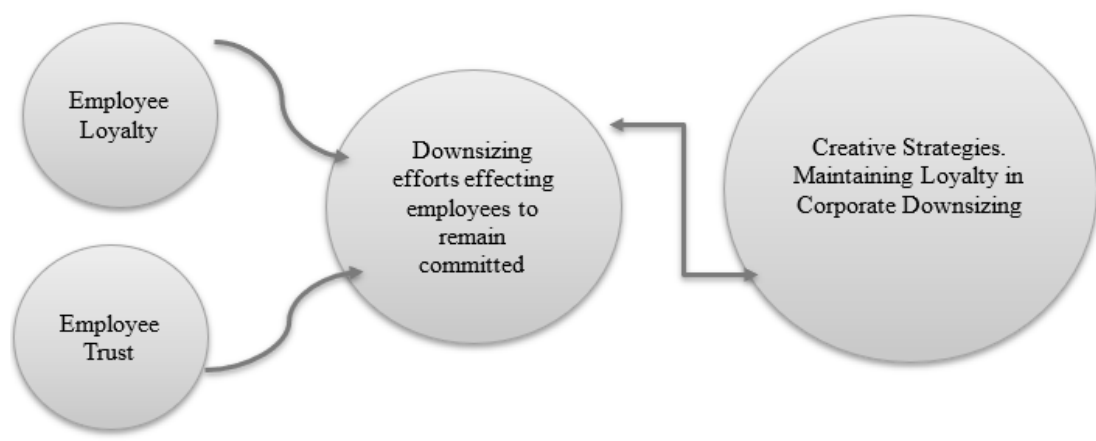
The data analysis of these eight participants was broken down into four tabs in a

Microsoft Excel file before applying the hand-coding, themes, and sub-themes to conduct

the research. An example is listed in Table 6.

Table 6

Data Analysis Using Microsoft Excel

Worksheet Tab	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
• Summary of Participant's Coding	Years in company	Number of questions asked	Themes (Coding)	Summary of Keyword	Deductive Coding		
• Coding Level 1	Initial Codes	Description	Raw Data	Field Notes			
• Initial Codes- Sub Themes	Synopsis of RQ	Themes	Sub-themes	Initial Codes	Level 2 Codes	Description / Code Definition	Raw Data
• Themes	Level 1 Codes	Description / Code Definition	Raw Data				

The data analysis was built on several components. Tab 1 focuses on the work history of the participants as well as how many years a participant had been at their organization. This provides a foundation to build upon. This historical information led to the possibility that the participants had witnessed or experienced downsizing, which might have led to personal setbacks or terminations. A sample of this data showed P1 was at their organization for 9.5 years. P5 had spent 39.5 years at the same organization and then retired. Categorizing the number of questions and beginning to code the data was the next step in breaking down the information and understanding the data collected via the interviews. A sample following broke down coding based on P2 data collection.

Potential coding P2

Data encompassed loyalty

Experience in downsizing

Trust

Improving belief and faith

The effects of downsizing on organizations

Descriptive coding and themes categorized the data, ensuring P2's responses were

carefully analyzed and presented to support or negate the research question. Data were

broken down under deductive coding for each participant. According to Medelyan (n.d.),

deductive coding refers to the event where codes have been predefined in the early stages

of the analysis. Those codes are then assigned to the qualitative data collected. As an

example, P7's coding was based on the data collected per the interview questions about

these key phrases:

- Downsizing

- The effects of downsizing on organizations

- Improving loyalty and trust

- Personal experience with downsizing

- Deductive Coding

- The culture within a workplace during downsizing

- The experience during downsizing

- Enhancing confidence and loyalty

- Long and short-term effects of downsizing

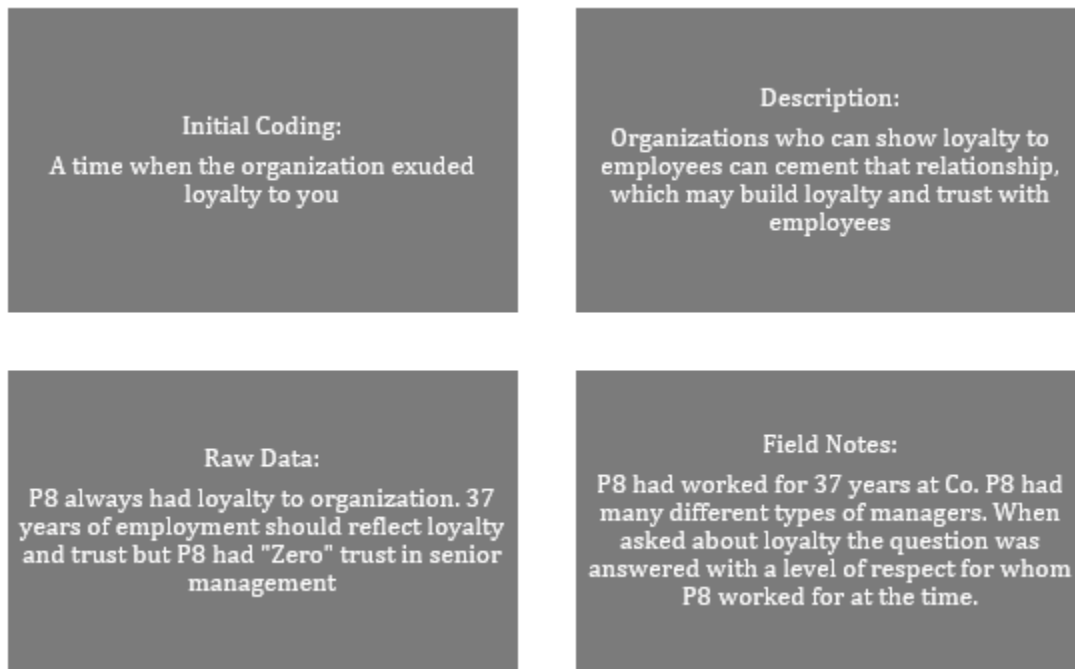- Trust between employees and companies

Emerging Codes- Raw Data

Table 2 highlighted coding data at a Level 1 status. According to Gibbs (2007),

defining data provided coding as identifying concepts and finding a correlation among

the data collected by all participants. The data analysis could determine whether the

participants supported the research by identifying ideas, similarities, and differences as

the coding began. Most participants agreed downsizing was a deterrent regarding trust

and loyalty in an organization. There were a smaller number of participants who felt

downsizing presented new opportunities. Gibbs reflected on researchers usually

identifying several passages from data collected, sharing the same coding. That was the

case with several participants based on data collected. A sample showed P3 and P8 with

similar experiences. Highlighting the similarities are reflected in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 2

Analysis Breakdown P3

Initial Coding:	Description:
During the time of the resource action there a sense of loyalty to management/leadership	Knowing employees worked hard and stayed committed to the job, would eventually lose their own job; yet this person still continued to exude a level of loyalty.

Raw Data:	Field Notes:
When asked about a time when real loyalty was felt toward the organization P3 felt a great sense of loyalty towards the company. This commitment came from management providing workers with the tools to continue working safely and remotely while maintaining the level of productivity these workers were used to, during the pandemic.	P3 had shared with me there was a great sense of loyalty to the organization that was reflected in the sense of loyalty to P3's current manager.

*Figure 3

Analysis Breakdown P8

Initial Coding: A time when the organization exuded loyalty to you	**Description:** Organizations who can show loyalty to employees can cement that relationship, which may build loyalty and trust with employees
Raw Data: P8 always had loyalty to organization. 37 years of employment should reflect loyalty and trust but P8 had "Zero" trust in senior management	**Field Notes:** P8 had worked for 37 years at Co. P8 had many different types of managers. When asked about loyalty the question was answered with a level of respect for whom P8 worked for at the time.

P3 and P8 had similar thoughts, reflections, and human experiences. Reviewing the initial coding for both participants, the similarities focused on exuding loyalty either during a tough time as seen in P3's data or a more ambiguous code for P8, highlighting any time when the company had shown loyalty toward management or leadership. When viewing descriptions of the coding for both participants, P3 shared that although knowing the possibility of losing their job was on the line, loyalty never wavered. P8 shared thoughts that organizations showing loyalty and trust to employees would promote loyalty and trust. The similarities shown in the experiences of each participant, when faced with the idea of downsizing, according to each participant's human experience, was

a glimmer of positivity with the focus on maintaining morale among peers and coworkers according to the data shared within the data collection.

The raw data from P3 reflected a solid loyalty to the organization with many examples but based on the most recent support by leadership to allow their workers to work effectively and safely during the pandemic. P8 reflected on the level of loyalty shown in the commitment of 37 years of employment, but regarding senior management, the belief within that division was lacking.

P3 and P8 highlight their loyalty to the organization, but P8 has less dedication when broken down into categories for those in senior positions. When interviewing, observations were recorded based on the verbal and non-verbal communication and perceptions of each participant through the lens of the researcher and the experience throughout the interview. P3 shared human affairs based on loyalty and trust within the organization. Despite the downsizing the participant had experienced, dedication to the participant's organization remained strong. P8 had a commitment toward their organization based on the length of employment. There were non-verbal behaviors based on the tone of the voice higher, lower, and at times a slim level of annoyance when answering questions, where loyalty was in question regarding the participant's current feelings on their organization. When addressing questions specifically regarding senior management, that loyalty was distant and non-existent. Throughout the analysis, similarities and differences depended on each participant's lived experience.

The analysis reflected themes and then transitioned into Level 2 coding. The importance of coding data and including themes in the equation was to show a broader

meaning of the coding, according to Bazeley (2009). Themes could be used as an inclusive category or comprehensive coding description. This could allow for the coding to be broken down into categories. Coding could be grouped into a thematic structure, as a reoccurrence of thoughts or ideas was collected, highlighting common themes between participants. Bowen (2006) highlighted the importance of themes, defining them as data that emerges from the analysis, emphasizing the meaning or experience from specific or multiple situations. The themes capture memorable moments when participants were responding to interview questions. Those unique or meaningful statements derive into themes, which could be defined as the thematic analysis, which is in place, according to Morse and Field (1995), to identify common themes visible throughout an interview or repeated in multiple interviews.

Themes could be ambiguous and hard to locate. Reviewing the data and coding to appropriately create applicable themes involved going in-depth within the data collected to understand the data and the conceptual meaning of what was shared in each interview. As themes were derived from data rather than their direct experiences, applying themes is similar to identifying an abstract entity. When determining themes, use an abstract entity or a general concept extracted from the data collected by looking at the commonality of the situation and finding the phenomenon. Themes can become a significant part of the analysis as those themes link to the interview and coded data.

The common elements in the interviews contrived the themes identified in the research. Themes and subthemes came to light after reviewing the similarities in the responses. From the themes created, subthemes were applied to drill down further to

highlight the interpretations on a more granular level reflecting the meaning of the lived experiences shared by the participants.

Figure 4
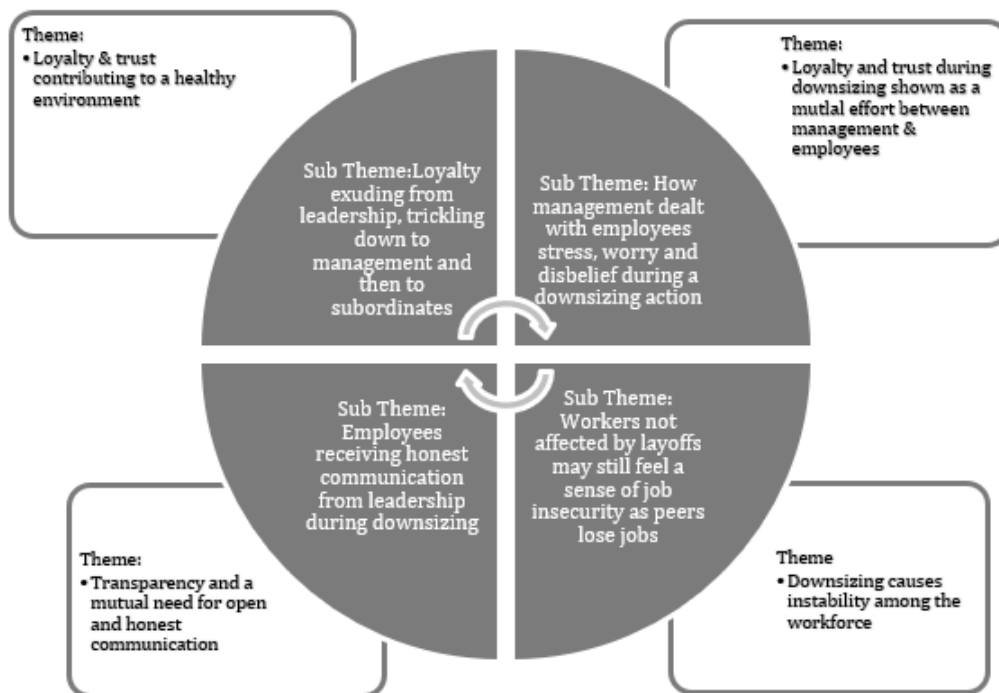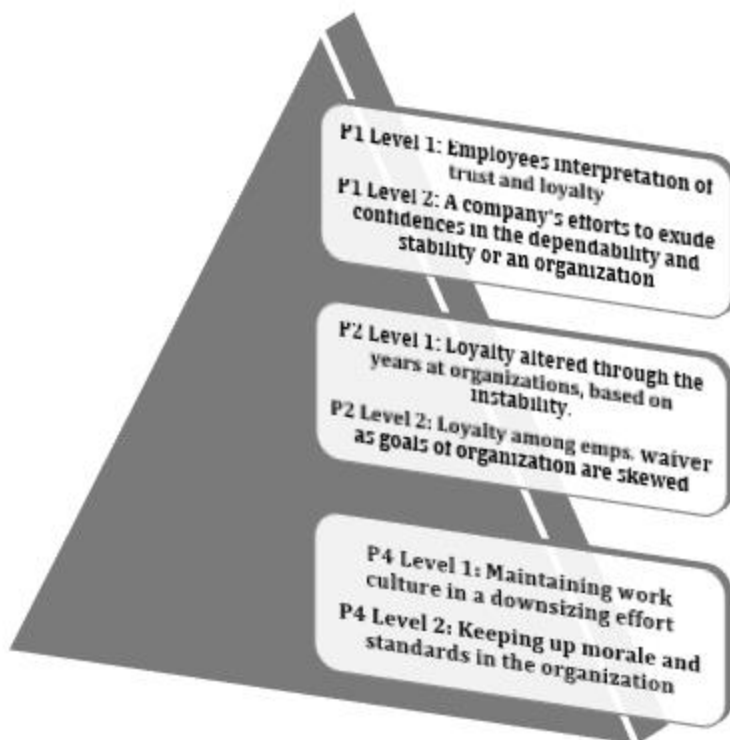
Themes and Sub Themes

Figure 6 reflects the correlation between themes and sub-themes. The themes were created from the coding to clarify the concepts and topics of the research. The subthemes are in place to drill down and provide a more specific lens into the concepts derived from the data collected. The difference between subthemes and themes is reflected in how the theme captures the reoccurring pattern. The themes set the tone.

The themes and subthemes highlighted in Figure 6 reflect a design that shows participants who agreed that maintaining loyalty, trust, and open communication during a downsizing effort are actionable items that should be upheld within organizations. Other

themes and subthemes that had a reoccurring pattern included identifying the uncertainty with a company's future based on restructuring efforts. The subtheme morphed into employees who feel unstable about working in their particular organization. This was a commonality as participants shared lived experiences with each organization they worked for and how the instability of not knowing if employment would be long-term after downsizing was a significant concern.

Identifying themes and subthemes was essential to capture the commonalities and similarities in the data collection. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), themes are representations of the research question. When themes were created, careful evaluation to ensure themes represented a pattern based on the data collection was positively identified. The ability to substantiate the similarities and recurrences in the data was carefully weighted to ensure the data backed up the theme and subtheme, which was essential for the analysis.

Level 2 coding was applied within the analysis as well. Themes and subthemes were created based on the similarities and repetitiveness of the data in the collection. Level 1 coding was used as a comparative tool to examine the possibility of creating Level 2 coding, which would provide more depth into the data with a more descriptive analysis. According to Kan (2007), Level 2 coding is sifting through sand to identify data granules that pointedly represent each participant's experience and views. Where Level 1 coding identifies the data, which addressed the research question, Level 2 narrowed down the focus to drill down to the specifics. Sampling is reflected in Figure 7.

Figure 5

Level 1 and 2 Coding

Initial Coding; Sub Themes Data

The analysis reflected themes and transitioning from Level 1 and 2 coding. The

importance of coding data is to break down and understand and categorize the

information collected so the data can be reviewed and analyzed. Drilling down from

Level 1 to 2 coding provided more accuracy and clarity for themes to be morphed based

on Level 1 and 2 coding's. The description had to be clear and concise. Once it was

completed, themes were able to evolve, and sub-themes would then be derived. Bowen

(2006) highlighted the importance of themes, defining them as data that emerges from the

analysis, emphasizing the meaning or experience from a specific or multiple situations.

Themes based on coding served to capture memorable moments when participants responded to interview questions. Those unique or meaningful statements are derived into themes, which could be defined as the thematic analysis, which is in place, according to Morse and Field (1995), to identify common themes visible throughout an interview or repeated in multiple interviews. Themes could be ambiguous and hard to locate. Reviewing the data and coding to create applicable themes appropriately involved going in-depth within the data collected to understand the data and the conceptual meaning of what was shared in each interview.

Themes were derived from data identified in the coding process. Determining themes was accomplished by reviewing conceptual words or phrases extracted from the data collected, looking at similar experiences, and finding the phenomenon. Articles would become a significant part of the analysis as those themes linked the interview and data. The common elements in the discussions assisted in creating the pieces identified in the research.

Figure 7 highlights the correlation between the Level 1 and 2 coding's. Once the coding drills down to a more microscopic focus, themes would be derived from reviewing both levels of coding. The subthemes were in place to drill down and provide a more specific lens into the concepts derived from the data collected. The difference between subthemes and themes was reflected in how the theme captured the reoccurring pattern. The themes and subthemes reflected a design that guided participants who agreed that maintaining loyalty, trust, and open communication during a downsizing effort are actionable items that should be upheld within organizations. Other themes and subthemes

that had a reoccurring pattern included themes such as uncertainty about a company's future based on restructuring efforts. The subtheme which followed up on the theme was focused on employees who felt unstable about their employment in their particular organization, which was a commonality as participants shared lived experiences with each of the organizations they worked at and how the instability of not knowing if employment would be a long-term after the downsizing was a significant concern. Identifying themes and subthemes was essential to capture the similarities and differences in the data collection.

Data Analysis

The data analysis served as a vessel to the house. It inspected the data collected, representing eight participants lived experiences in companies that have been a part of a downsizing that had affected trust and loyalty on different levels. The data presented were categorized and broken down into two levels of coding themes and subthemes. The data presented highlighted the experiences that affected each participant professionally and personally. The goal of the analysis was to determine if the data collected could substantiate this research and prove the problem statement to be valid.

The analysis was positioned like a road map to start and reach a destination. This equation was part of capturing ideas, thoughts, and experiences, which may shape a reader's understanding and perception of each participant and their own experience with downsizing. As the participants shared their experiences regarding downsizing, loyalty, and trust, capturing the essence of the information communicated through questions was the main focus. The interpretation was vital in relating to the data shared from the first-

person point of view. The participant answered interview questions from a one-sided perspective, whereas stepping back to examine each perspective to interpret the data correctly was imperative for a researcher. Processing the data collected, categorized under two levels of coding, themes, sub-themes, defined and supported by raw data, needed to be interpreted by both perspectives.

According to Tavallaei and Talib (2010), interpreting data from a particular perspective, the data provided can be judged by several variables. These include the statement's credibility, how dependable the data seems, if the information can be confirmed and whether the data meets ethical standards. Tavallaei and Talib pointed out that researchers approach the data flexibly. Categorizing coding, subthemes, definitions, and raw data while providing an in-depth analysis of the similarities and differences based on each participant may change the original interpretation when the information is broken down and thoroughly analyzed.

Emergent subthemes, coding, descriptions, and raw data from each participant are a reflective glimpse into each participant's lived experience. The data collected from the eight participants seemed to show a straightforward narrative supporting or negating the research question focused on the lived experience of management and employees maintaining loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing. Based on the eight participants' there is a sample to follow of data for each participant, broken down into a sub-theme, coding and presenting the raw data from the interview.

P1

Sub Theme: Loyalty

Level 1 Coding: What loyalty means to you

Raw Data: P1 shared that they worked for a person who. "Did nothing to engage loyalty" (P1, 2021, Tab 4). P1 thought loyalty should start at the top of an organization and have a domino effect throughout the organization. P1 elaborated on the question of when loyalty was exuded to P1. P1 shared an example "When P1 comes into a company that bought out the division of a previous organization, still under manager from the previous organization, the entire team, according to P1 remained loyal to that person, the loyalty is reciprocated" (P1, 2021 Tab 4). P1

P2

Sub Theme: Experience in Downsizing

Level 1 Coding: Personal experience in a downsizing situation

Raw Data: From the researcher's perspective- reiterating to P2, were thoughts focused on wanting P2 to share with me the lived experience P2 encountered which led to the shock of downsizing. P2 responded with a personal life experience based on 40 years at the same organization, "The atmosphere was surprised and devastated. The lived experiences of the resource action created uncertainty, bad feelings, and a need for empathy as friends/coworkers were going through the same experience" (P2, 2021, Tab 4). P2 (2021) highlighted the fact that there were concerns about finding another job. P2 also referred to the biggest problem of employees as the breadwinners of the family and unable to keep a family afloat without being employed. P2 described a personal feeling of sadness and, at times, felt overwhelmed by the sadness. P2 wrapped up the experience as

"The overall feeling was heartbreak after spending 40 years at the organization to end the experience like this" (P2, 2022, Tab 4).

    P3

Sub Theme: Improving Loyalty and Trust

Level 1 Coding: Personal description of trust and what can occur when faith is not reciprocated.

Raw Data: When P3 was asked what could improve loyalty and trust, P3 shared an experience where a particular boss did not possess these attributes. According to P3, "You had worked with this person for a year. You would not categorize him as trustworthy or loyal. You worked in a group of 4 that reported to him. This manager, per your reflection, seemed to be threatened by his employees taking over his job" (P3, 2021). P3 shared that the four workers under the manager were well educated. P3 discussed that the manager's degree was gained at an international school unfamiliar to P3, not a recognizable school. P3 alluded to the fact that this could be an insecurity. P3 shared that the manager commented on employees regarding those the manager felt wanted this person's job. The researcher re-asked a question regarding the manager's statement and whether this behavior promoted loyalty and trust.

P4

Sub Theme: Loyalty and Experiencing Downsizing

Level 1 Coding: Effects on you and your employees when learning your department would be downsized

Raw Data: When P4 was posed with the question regarding loyalty and trust during downsizing, the thought was expressed that the responsibility of P4 was to prepare for those chosen to be eliminated as a manager. "You were requested to rank and rate your team" (P4, 2021). Once this was done, your rankings were compared to other team members from other individual managers carrying out the same task P4 had shared. This led to communicating back to P4, reiterating the stressfulness of the situation.

P5

Sub Theme: Loyalty and Trust

Level 1 Coding: Sense of loyalty toward employees, peers, or leadership

Raw Data: When P5 has posed the question regarding loyalty over the past couple of years and shared a lived experience that stands out, where an employee or management showed dedication to P5, the example provided involved P5's director. P5 shared, "During the most recent round of downsizing, the director shared with me that I could have many offers regarding another role. My director highlighted that my experience of the last 20 years added value toward finding a different job and possibly a different type of role" (P5, 2021). P5 felt with the loyalty and support of the director and the director's ability to flush out the fact that P5's experience should always be valued. Reiterating back, P5 had a better understanding of their worth based on lived experiences, and in the end, P5 was able to obtain another job.

P6

Sub Theme: Loyalty

Level 1 Coding: Personal experience when loyalty was shown to coworkers or management

Raw Data: I had asked if there was a time you felt absolute loyalty to an organization. You had shared with me that, "Loyalty to you was reflected when you would be woken early in the morning by a worker that was in the office early or an alert on your phone that a server was down or someone needed technical assistance asap, and you were consistently there to help," (P6, 2021). "Your goal was to ensure that any technical mishap was repaired and working to full capacity by the time employees started their day at the office" (P6, 2021). P6 shared that those actions reflected the loyalty P6 had to the organization. Also, the question was posed to P6 regarding when P6 felt great loyalty to peers. P6 shared with me that coworkers, who had received P5's help with technical work or other issues unrelated to work, which P6 was happy to do, were like family to this participant. I reiterated that to ensure the meaning of the experience was captured, P6 helped the employees because P6 cared.

P7

Sub Theme: Improving Loyalty and Trust

Level 1 Coding: Feeling of loyalty and trust from management and peers

Raw Data: When P7 was asked when a sense of loyalty was felt or when loyalty was put to the test, P7 described the most recent role when you were there. "You felt you had shown loyalty to the organization but did not feel that same courtesy from leadership. You had shared that the company was going through re-organizations every couple of months and management was continuously changing" (P7. 2021). When asked about the

organization's culture during the downsizing process, P7 stated, "You can only control what you can control. You were advised to keep your head down and do the best job. You felt that was good advice, as the tension and stress were prevalent among employees" (P7, 2021).

P8

Sub Theme: Loyalty

Level 1 Coding: A time when the organization displayed loyalty to you

Raw Data: "When an organization displays loyalty, employees' perception may reflect a sense of value tied to this action. A misconception of loyalty is that employees who have been at organizations for years might be perceived as 100% loyal to the company. Why would an employee stay several years if they were not" (P8, 2021)? P8 shared, "Employees have different reasons for staying at organizations, but if the right offer comes to them, they might be used to changing jobs" (P8, 2021. P8 (2021) shared thoughts of concern that if new opportunities with more security and stability are offered to those who might be facing downsizing, this could cost the company money to lose a person with advanced skills and someone with longevity at the company, as someone else would need to be trained to take over that person's job. That training could prove to be costly.

Similarities and Differences

The data results reflected diversity in each participant's experience. The data below from the eight participants reflected a human perspective on each of the questions

asked. There were similarities and differences in the data collected for this qualitative phenomenological study.

According to Starks and Trinidad (2007), researchers delve into identifying barriers and what constitutes a successful data collection. The research aims to educate and provide plausible solutions for issues plaguing our society. There are usually those who support the study and fault the analysis or have dual opinions regarding the researcher's topic. Hanel et al. (2019) pointed out that the lack of recognition that similarities are essential, as well as differences, should be highlighted. When participants are brought together with a specific variable, such as a study, many factors are considered. Demographics, sex, gender, age, education, and culture would define those differences, even if the same shared experiences had occurred. Samples are shown below from the data collected. Similarities and differences are reflected in these samples.

Sample Interview Questions

RQ: What are the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing situations?

Interview Question 1: Can you share a time when you felt loyalty to your organization?

Similarities: Participants agreed that downsizing could be detrimental to the morale of an organization. There was a consensus regarding the instability of downsizing and the loyalty and trust that could be shaken or destroyed when companies lay off workers. Those who remain are expected to carry the workload of those who lost jobs.

Differences: A participant shared a healthy understanding of the need for downsizing and supported management in making those decisions. The participant felt this process weeded those not committed and retained those most valuable to the organization.

Interview Question 2: I would like to return to when your department was downsized. Can you tell me what the experience was like, personally and professionally?

Similarities: The consensus shared by participants was that of shock, sadness, disappointment loss, and a diminishing effect regarding trust and loyalty toward management and leadership.

Differences: One participant shared their thoughts on the experience and suggested this action was a level of relief. Although the resource action was unsettling, the participants felt the company would be more robust when the organization emerged from this process.

Interview Question 3: What do you think are the effects of downsizing on an organization, and how does this affect employees?

Similarities: Participants agreed that the effects of downsizing could be catastrophic or allow a company to emerge stronger. The aftermath of downsizing can be very hard on those losing jobs and those remaining. Leadership's goal for restructuring also may not come to fruition as far as gaining strength financially, as shared by some participants.

Differences: Some participants shared that downsizing can ruin an organization. Downsizing can wipe out the loyalty employees have. Employees who provide excellent

value to the company will leave and take their skills and talents to another organization. This can permanently hurt an organization with no recovery in sight.

Interview Question 4: Can you think of creative strategies your leadership could have applied to improve the experience during downsizing, especially if having to support the same amount or more work with fewer people?

Similarities: This question was not addressed by every participant. Those participants who were able to answer this question shared their lived experiences by sharing that leadership needs to have a process in place where responsibilities can be reshuffled, packages for those who wish to retire early, and outside resources to help those who are losing jobs, to provide as much support and help to find new employment.

Differences: Some participants felt there were no strategies to apply to this situation. Downsizing meant jobs were cut, and employees lost their way to support themselves and their families.

Summary

The results from the qualitative responses aligned with the conceptual framework, focusing on hermeneutic phenomenology. The data provided by the eight participants addressed the research question; What are the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining loyalty and trust in a corporate downsizing? The data broken down into categories based on the questions and responses successfully provided lived experiences describing loyalty and trust or lack of in organizations where downsizing occurred. The data described the culture of organizations living through downsizing and the effects of the organizational culture. According to Schein (2010),

culture sets the tone for how employees interact and navigate their behavior in the workplace setting. As Schein had communicated in the research publications, there were three levels of culture. Schein highlighted the early stages in a company, midlife, and maturity, as employees seek to wind down their careers. These variables may be relevant in some organizations, but these levels may or may not be irrelevant for those companies going through resource actions. The commonality throughout the shared experiences was the hope of stability in collecting data.

According to Schein (2010), going through these stages would have been the consensus of the participants. This idea of being at an organization throughout a person's career without facing layoffs would be ideal for those participants of this study. Lived experiences in this study revealed employees had emotions ranging from betrayal, distrust, and a level of abandonment to those who understood the reason behind downsizing, but the empathy for those affected was present in participants who kept their jobs while witnessing their peers losing theirs. According to Market Business News (n.d.), the human casualties can be numerous when management acts on conducting an organizational downsizing to cut operating costs and reduce organization size.

The eight participants interviewed shared that even though companies are taking action to improve efficiency and productivity and maintain their competitive edge, maintaining trust and loyalty toward leadership is still a constant struggle. The commitment to a company has decreased. Victims who lose their jobs without any consent or say in the matter and survivors who watch these occurrences are expected to pick up the slack without increased pay or proper training are not feeling an abundance of

loyalty to the organization. These events can shake up employee loyalty and commitment. Data also revealed that if creating strategies were developed by leadership when downsizing occurred, this action would reflect a level of compassion and empathy from leadership.

According to most participants, Downsizing was not met with participants willing to remain loyal or committed. Suppose leadership can re-evaluate the need to cut jobs and creatively move around employees to departments who are not needed in their current roles or find temporary positions for them until they can be placed permanently as an alternative solution to sustain jobs. In that case, those actions may go a long way in the eyes of employees worried about losing their jobs in a resource action. Downsizing is not ideal in a world where employees seek stability, such as those who participated in this study. Still, if downsizing occurs, applying creative strategies to maintain jobs would be a step in the right direction. Chapter 5 will delve into the findings and how the data is interpreted. The limitations will also be addressed, allowing future studies to continue.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This qualitative phenomenological study highlighted the importance of employees' loyalty and trust in organizational leadership and management. The study served as a tool to reflect the lived experiences of those who have been through a downsizing effort and how creative strategies may preserve the commitment employees may have for their employer if other options were presented other than human casualties. "Based on statistics collected by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), extended mass layoffs have affected on average 1.3 million employees in the period 1996 through 2003—at higher rates during the recessionary period that began in 2000, at lower levels in the booming 1990s" (U.S. Department of Labor, 2006, p. 1).

The study revealed challenges employees faced when going through a downsizing event. As P8 clarified in the data shared, loyalty is reflected in how long an employee stays with an organization. P8 shared no confidence in P8's personal opinion when asked about trust. P1 felt that loyalty started at the top of an organization and had a domino effect in a perfect corporate world. The participants identified their personal and professional experiences and feelings about downsizing. The data and outcome revealed different perspectives on how downsizing occurred and whether there is a right or wrong way to do this. The cohesiveness in the data came in the middle of the interview when asked about the effects of downsizing on organizations and employees. The responses were similar. There was fear, anxiety, and, for some employees, devastation set in. These events created anger and resentment for most participants as those who remained watched peers and friends lose their livelihood.

According to Blau et al. (2012), a study involving a survey examined the impact of variables regarding downsizing and the effects on employees. The survey dove into topics that touched on each participant's experience with organizational layoffs. Blau et al. (2012) examined the willingness of employees affected by downsizing to recommend the current employer to other prospective employees or to be able to speak highly of the company. Blau et al. reflected on findings that highlighted those employees angry about being laid off were less likely to recommend the organization, as the bitterness was present in their attitude and mindset. Those laid off but in great need of being employed were more willing to speak well of the organization and reapply for a job from a company that had just let them go. According to Sucher and Gupta (2018), two components contribute to this trend in downsizing, automation, and fierce global competition. Organizations have had to rethink their strategies regarding workforce and economically surviving. Restructuring and continually laying off employees is disruptive to the environment, lowers morale, and long term, in the opinion of Sucher and Gupta (2018), can hurt productivity and damage company profitability.

This research study focused on presenting lived experiences of employees touched by downsizing. Whether management and subordinates were affected, data revealed anxiety, anger, and confusion regarding each participant's occurrence when involved in a downsizing effort. Raw data showed that participants did not understand companies' downsizing decisions versus other cost-saving methods. According to Sucher and Gupta (2018), layoffs have become the default when the economic future becomes uncertain. In the US, the Bureau of Labor Statics reported that 880,000 to 1.5 million

employees had lost jobs between 2000-2008 and 2010-2013. Jobs were lost, even when

the US and global markets rebounded economically. When COVID-19 surfaced, the US

faced another blow to employment. According to Richter (2021), COVID-19 resulted in

114 million employees losing jobs in 2020. According to the International Labour

Organization (2021), the massive impact of labor markets had a devasting loss of

employment during 2020. Current figures account for the ILO, showing that 8.8% of

global working hours were lost last year. The ILO highlighted that this staggering percent

was equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs. Bordia et al. (2011) spoke on the history of

organizational change management, which revealed data reflecting how attitudes and

behaviors were shaped in the image of stability or instability of regime and experiencing

downsizing. The event which caused the drastic change, such as downsizing or possible

layoffs, may spark a reflection in employees' attitudes. Variables such as trust, loyalty,

job satisfaction, turnover rates, and flexibility may have altered the point of view of an

employee if there is fluctuation. This phenomenological qualitative study focused on

those participants who have gone through the beginning phases to the end of a

downsizing effort, no matter the reason, whether catastrophic such as COVID-19 or

simply reducing overhead to increase profits. Participants shared their experiences and

described firsthand how employees, through their perception, had viewed management

and leadership during the downsizing effort. Participants discussed leadership and

management's attitudes when peers lost jobs, and those who remained had their workload

doubled or tripled to pick up the slack. The data showed a similar lack of concern for

those participants left behind in some cases for those employees who were losing their jobs.

Sucher and Gupta (2018) touched upon creative strategies in the wake of downsizing. The researchers shared that companies are searching for new methods to handle workforce changes when needed. A large US telecommunications company had decided in 2013 that as the times were changing in this advanced technological world, 100,000 out of 240,000 employees were in jobs that would eventually be obsolete. Instead of letting go of valuable talent, the company decided that retraining the employees was a more viable option.

This study aimed to reflect on downsizing experiences by analyzing the data and imagery shared by participants to truly understand the effects of downsizing and the importance of creative strategies put in place to maintain jobs. Applying shorter weeks or willingness to take less vacation as an organization to save jobs may be valuable strategies. Initiatives s such as this may lead to fewer casualties over time from companies. This study should share data with leadership to promote a creative approach highlighting the benefits, which may save jobs and maintain valuable employees while still reaching corporate goals if cutting back and realignment is needed. These strategies would help to restore loyalty and trust in organizations that made an effort to take these steps in preserving employment.

Interpretation of Findings

Interpretations of findings were based on the central question:

What are the lived experiences of managers and employees regarding maintaining

loyalty and trust in corporate downsizing situations?

The data collected per the interview questions revealed a diversity of lived experiences.

Participants described their loyalty and faith and how downsizing affected these

variables. The data collected were an in-depth personal experience from each participant

sharing their lived experiences and how downsizing had affected them. The data

collected from each participant are below in Figure 11. This is an example of the lived

experiences shared in the interview process. Themes and subthemes were also identified

based on the data collected. Refining those two components was the next step in drilling

down to the simplest form to determine the meaning of the data. Applying the conceptual

framework, which encompassed researching employees, managers, and the correlation to

loyalty and trust in the lived experiences of employees experiencing downsizing, was

reflected in the data collected and brought to light through the human experience—

applying the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, along with the conceptual

framework assisted in structuring a solid foundation to build on. The framework assisted

in creating themes and subthemes to correctly display the data in the truest of meanings.

The first theory applied to the data focused on dispositional theory. This theory

supports this theory by exploring the human personality based on habitual patterns of

behavior, revealing thoughts and emotions when faced with downsizing, and the behavior

associated with those turn of events. Examples of themes that highlight the critical

components in which employees focus on instability in the workplace also support the

dispositional theory. The raw data reflected the employee's perspective. Two managers

shared their lived experiences. Those two participants had to either choose existing

employees who would be laid off or let their team know those newly working under this

new manager would lose their jobs.

Figure 6

Themes and Data Representing Dispositional Theory
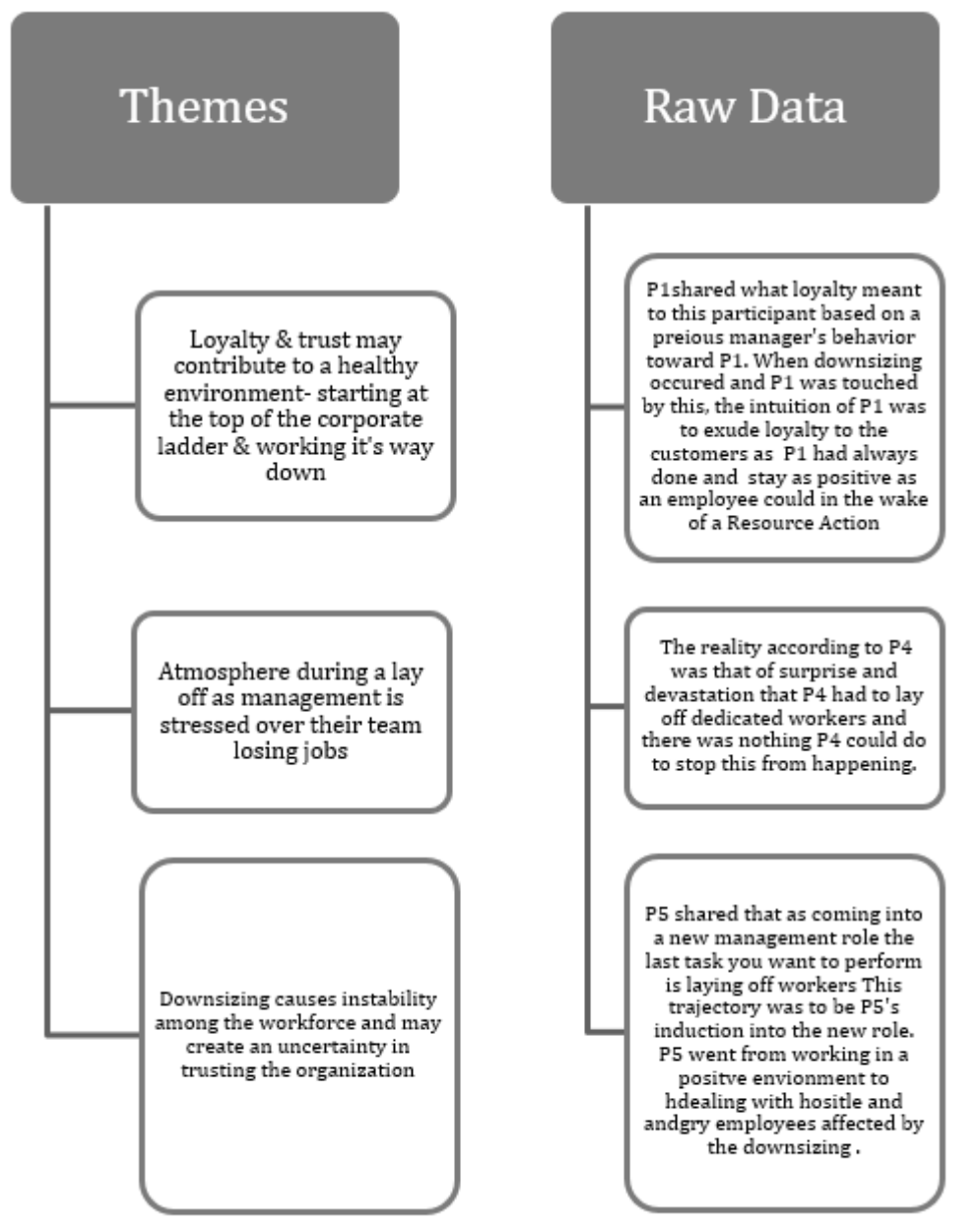
Dispositional theory dives into the human personality to understand traits, behavioral patterns, and how to correlate those components with action and reaction to events in a lived experience such as downsizing, as shown in Figure 8. According to Gerhart (2005), approaching attitudes towards jobs is essential when looking at organizational behavior. Gerhart speaks to observing personal and situational factors when attempting to determine attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. When considering the personal and professional strain when downsizing occurs, understanding the human element of employees and preparing for reactions indifferent to right or wrong may help management shine a light on the downsizing effort and show both sides to create a level of understanding from employees. This may support maintaining trust and loyalty.

As seen in the data presented in Figure 8, the first theme listed is loyalty and trust contributing to a healthy work environment. Understanding the rationale of employees with reactions, feelings, and appropriate or inappropriate behavior when changes such as restructuring or downsizing occur is an element that should be studied and analyzed. Results may reflect properly communicating such changes to employees while maintaining loyalty and trust. These steps may spotlight leaders' value and respect for their employees, regardless of the situation or outcome.

Downsizing can cause an unstable work environment. According to the raw data from the participants reflected in Figure 8, under the theme highlighting instability among workers, there is a chance of behavioral changes affected by the news of downsizing. Gerhart (2005) reviewed literature, which revealed that within a person's

consistency, meaning the behavioral makeup, there is a possibility there can be level changes in attitudes and behaviors when dealing with changes in the workplace. These changes may reflect situations such as downsizing when workers fear losing jobs.

In Figure 8, raw data are revealed by P5. The lived experience shared was that of being new in a management position and abruptly thrown into the fires of a downsizing effort. The data revealed that P5 was new and had minimal training to handle a situation. The environment was fraught with hostility and anger toward P5 for a decision above this manager's level. According to Smith et al. (2018), dispositional theory does not exclude what is valued by human beings; this research would apply to job security. The feeling, need and desire to want stability on the employee's side apply when a downsizing effort occurs. When leadership decides to restructure to cut costs to increase the bottom line, those who lose jobs and become human casualties may have a total reset in their behavior. The environment might remain more stable if creative strategies were applied to minimize the human element losing employment.

The second theory applied was the affective event theory (2013), which focuses on the view that emotions are central to how employees handle positive and negative workplace situations. P2 shared a personal work experience to reflect an example of commitment. P2 was hired into the company and had worked at this organization since P2 was 18 years old. P2 thought they would stay at the company for two years and move on. Forty years later, P2 had given loyalty to the company, shown in many ways; an essential aspect is that P2 stayed with the organization through good and bad times for approximately 40 years. P2 said they were hired at such a young age, getting good

managers, benefiting from the organization, and working with good people along the way defined loyalty to P2 (P2, 2021). The dedication was based on factual components, including job, benefits, and an emotional level. The company made sense of security and commitment to P2, so in an unwritten contract, P2 made that passionate commitment to the organization. After all those years, P2 was finally affected by layoffs, and the devastation was tremendous.

P8 shared lived experience based on an interview question regarding employees ' perception of downsizing and whom it would affect. The response from P8 reflected a range of emotions. P8 shared those employees are scared to death to be let go without a job, benefits, or paycheck. It was shared that if an employee can withstand the downsizing effort and remain employed, many emotions are felt by those left behind.

The emotions run the gamut depending on the employee and what that person did at the organization. Another emotional high and low were shown by those who remained employed. After the euphoria of knowing you have kept your job, reality takes over, and there may be fear the next time when those survivors may eventually lose their jobs.

Affective Events Theory (2013) helps to identify how emotions and behaviors connect with job performance and happiness on the job. Understanding how employees' feelings tie into the workplace may be critical in determining how workers may handle difficult situations in a work environment. Another ideology shared spoke about the relationship between internal influencers, such as emotions and reactions, which could occur when incidents happen during a workday. When employees learn that downsizing could occur, understanding how that news would affect a person and affect job

performance, commitment, and long-term job satisfaction if they retain their job needs to be considered before announcing this type of effort.

According to P8, when asked about personal feelings on creative ways downsizing efforts could be made with minimal casualties, P8 responded that offering more support to employees would be helpful. P8 added that treating employees with dignity and respect for the work given to the organization would be appreciated. P8 feels as though companies are forcing employees out the door because irresponsible financial decisions are made, forcing the company to make cuts at employees' expense.

According to P8, forcing layoffs on those older employees close to retirement age is not the correct answer to save money. If the employee chooses not to take the package and wants to continue to work, that employee may take the chance of being laid off and will receive nothing. P8 felts that this choice showed no loyalty to the employee and did not provide an incentive to promote commitment toward the organization. These behaviors were driven by emotion. If employees were worried about the organization's instability and having a job, it could affect their mental health and job performance. Psychologists Weiss and Cropanzano devolved affective AET (2013). According to psychologists, the focus highlighted that any small or large task, comment, or simply offering could affect employees emotionally. Positive and negative situations at work, such as merely a bad day or finding out a resource action may be occurring, can cause mental anguish. This type of communication may hurt a company in the long term. Taking employees' emotions seriously and weighing this variable when making decisions on reorganizing may take some thought outside the box.

However, implementing creative strategies may save the organization capital and a loss of employees' trust and loyalty in the long run. Leadership should consider the emotional well-being of employees when strategizing on how to cut costs and increase profit. If downsizing is the only option, it is essential to remember those employees remaining after the layoffs may still feel instability and nervousness. Leadership needs to consider this when cutting back. Companies that take this action are looking to increase value and competitiveness in the market. The assumption is that management does not want to cause irreparable damage to employees, clients, or the brand, which may not be easy to recover from. Downsizing may not reap the rewarding leadership is hoping for with this type of action. According to Beer and Nohria (2000), despite some companies' success in change, initiatives such as downsizing, new infrastructure, or adjusting the corporate culture, according to the researchers, have a low percentage of success. When there is a rush to change, whether it is pressure from outside influencers or internal pressure, the more rushed leadership is to make sudden monumental changes without taking the time to think through the pros and cons, the more the decision can become overwhelming and lose the original purpose for why the changes were occurring in the first place.

Limitations of the Study

This research study has limitations. The first limitation was a smaller sample size than expected. Reaching saturation with eight participants was unexpected. If time permitted, questions could have been expanded to cover downsizing and the numerous benefits creative strategies may have in assisting in maintaining jobs. There could have

been a deeper dive into the subject area. According to Clancy (2019), examining the external and internal validity of the study is key to knowing whether the participants who took part were enough to provide a conclusion to the study. The sample size would need to show diversity in the data collected. Although the participants worked at a variety of organizations and shared the experience of going through downsizing, a more in-depth look would have added substantial data supporting or negating the need for downsizing and if creative strategies would prove to have a positive or negative effect on companies attempting to right-size while decreasing overhead and working to increase profit.

Another limitation was the limited focus of this study. Downsizing can take many different forms. In this study, the focus was on employees losing jobs based on downsizing efforts. Pursuing this study to take a deeper dive into those employees who chose to leave by taking early retirement or finding another job outside the company would provide a broader spectrum to this study. Examining employees who feel pressure to take buyouts would give a greater understanding of needing strategies so employees can make informed decisions on their futures in their perspective companies. Employees should be able to make financially and psychologically beneficial decisions for themselves and the organization. Companies that reduce headcounts without taking the time to research all the alternatives available rarely achieve the long-term success they inspire to gain.

In contrast, stable employers do everything they can to retain their employees. More than 3 million Americans lost their jobs in 2008. However, 81% of the top 100 companies in Fortune's 2009 list of "Best Employers to Work For had no layoffs that

year" (Cascio & Wynn, 2009, p.12). Continuing studies may focus on creative strategies and the realism of incorporating those strategies into our corporate society. Other limitations included other employees associated with the participants, who would have been valuable to speak with if available. The study could have taken a deeper dive into downsizing to expose whether employees who remained could be more efficient and productive with less staff or if the pendulum swung the other way, with businesses suffering from losing valuable employees. These are variables that can be pursued with further research.

Recommendations

The findings in this study reflect the evidence that layoffs and downsizing have long-lasting effects on employees and shake the foundation companies work so hard to build to create strong loyalty and trust in organizations. Suggestions or recommendations, such as leadership providing transparency and implementing creative strategies where employees have options other than losing jobs if companies hit hard times, would be a start in maintaining employee loyalty and trust even when companies are going through tough times. Another recommendation would suggest the continuation of a research study such as this. Examining the human experience of downsizing through the lens of employees and management who have experienced this type of action first-hand and witnessed the effects of these actions may be able to provide best practices. These employees may be able to enlighten management and leadership about offerings beneficial to employees who find themselves in a place where their job is being eliminated.

Recommendations, when leadership has justified layoffs, would include a need for open communication between leadership and the workforce. Implementing a line of communication rolled out when downsizing is announced may provide confidence and security to employees who may be affected by this action. According to Chisolm-Noel (2022), when layoffs occur at an organization, communicating five key points is recommended when discussing affected employees. Sharing the reasoning behind the downsizing effort provides a level of justification to the involved employee that cutting jobs is not personal but a business decision. Communicating timelines is essential so employees can plan and mentally prepare themselves for upcoming events. Communicating benefits and any outside companies offering job assistance, resume-building skills, or training may reflect the level of commitment leadership has to its employees even though layoffs occur. Explaining the following steps and answering questions are crucial to maintaining trust and loyalty when these two components are fragile, and employees' emotions run high. These steps in the communication process can go a long way for affected employees. These steps may help to minimize anxiety and fear.

Recommendations include leadership talking with other companies to inquire how layoffs are handled and communicating with headhunters and other organizations who might be short-staffed or willing to take on those employees with skills that would fit into a position somewhere else current organization is realigning themselves. Job swapping may be an alternative to employees losing their jobs. A company that is hiring can take on an employee losing their job, if they are willing to pay their salary and cover their cost

for their existing benefits at their full-time employer, the employee would have a job and maintain that job until their original employer can place them in another position at their original place of employment. According to Doyle (2020), layoffs are not the only choice companies must make to reduce costs. Employees can become part of a temporary worker program that enables a company to cut costs while allowing workers to maintain employment. This is an example of creative strategies being applied to work to maintain loyalty and trust by showing the commitment of leadership to its workforce.

Preparing employees for other roles in a company in case jobs are eliminated is an essential recommendation regarding caring for employees and ensuring other opportunities are a viable option. Mailepors (2015) suggested that the need for an increase in training and development is vital in times of downsizing and rightsizing. Training is beneficial to the organization and can be helpful to employees. This type of investment in employees reflects loyalty and trust shown by management to their workers. The feeling can be reciprocated by increasing the commitment employees have to their employees.

A final recommendation made focuses on the survivors of downsizing. Management should remember those employees who lost jobs and those who remain employed, as they have watched peers, management, leadership, and friends lose jobs. When organizations downsize after the event, companies are left with "Layoff Survivors" (Heathfield, 2020, p.1). Heathfield highlights that while downsizing may positively affect a business's bottom line, the goals must be redirected to investing and bolstering those workers who remain in their roles. Boosting morale is essential to increase productivity

and rebuild trust between leadership and the existing workforce. This step could rebuild relationships and reassure those employees who have remained that the organization values them. Veing upfront and answering questions about why workers were let go and any further resource actions is a meaningful discussion. This honesty can work to reassure and rebuild trust with the survivors.

Recommendations to minimize human causalities, as mentioned above, may help to solidify trust and loyalty, and improve leadership's relationship with workers. Other suggestions, according to Gandolfi (2008) through the research of Vernon (2003) and George (2004), are included below in Figure 9.

Figure 7

A Framework of Cost Reduction Stages
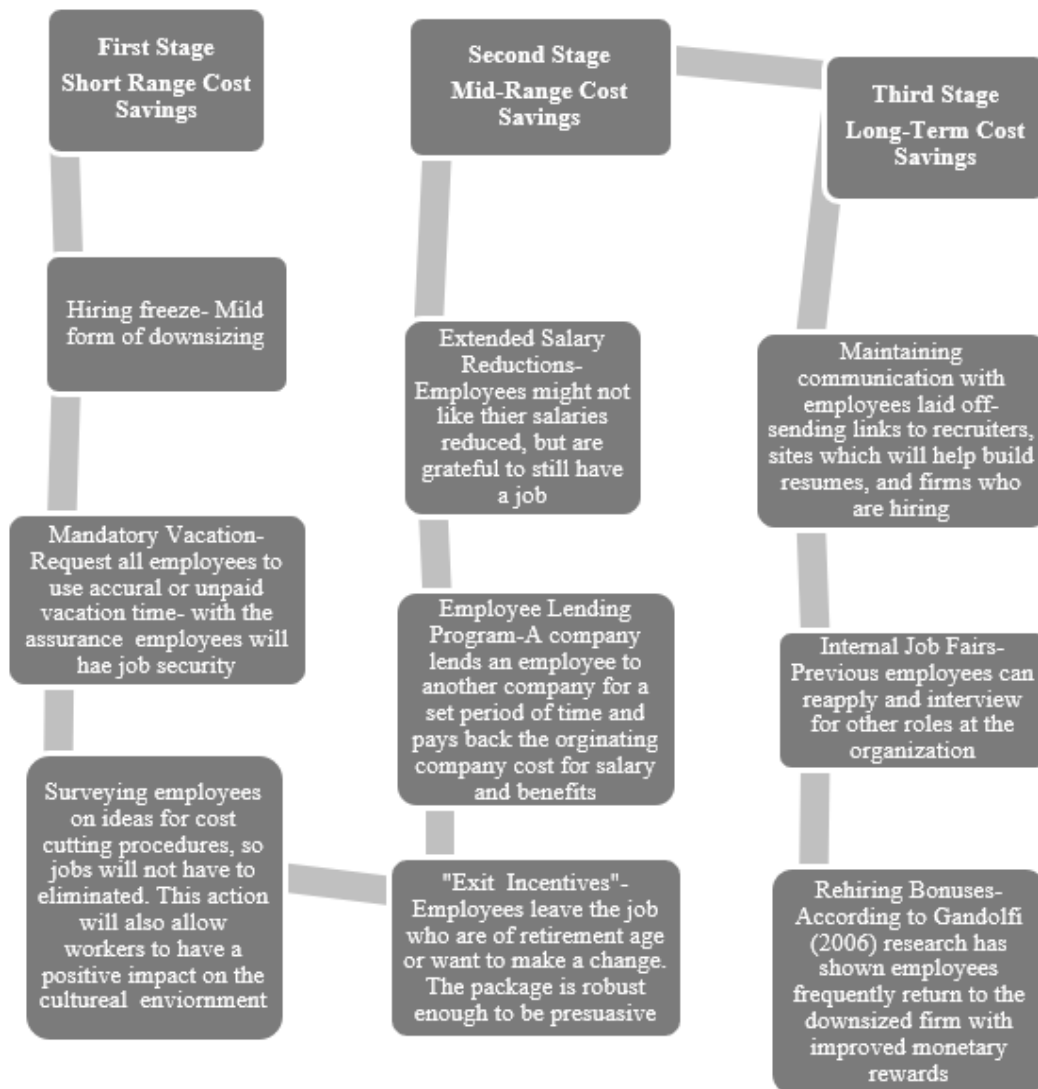
These recommendations from Vernon (2003) and George (2004) are reflections of the scholarly community wanting to make a difference by presenting feasible alternatives to laying off employees and, as with the current research, applying creative strategies such as working with employees to inquire about their suggestions on how to cut costs without cutting jobs can help to minimize job loss.

Implications

Several factors from this study highlighted the implications of downsizing. The negative perception employees have toward leadership and management concerning downsizing, trust, and loyalty was visible in 8 out of the 9 participants. The majority of the participants felt they were not being seen by management. The participants expressed concern and disappointment about not feeling valued as workers and loyal employees. Themes applied to the data were meant to reveal implications such as participants feeling if certain behaviors from leadership had occurred, the culture could have been more positive and stable.

Applying themes such as a solid commitment to loyalty, which participants felt leadership fell short on, was a letdown for most participants. Participants shared lived experiences, such as when jobs were lost, the commitment the employees had, which was once unwavering, dwindled by those losing their livelihoods. According to Stroh and Reilly (1997), employers' attitudes represent money first, and employees are lower on the list. Employees are not the first concern anymore, according to the researchers. The researchers suggested that employees have been like free agents for ten to twenty years. Trust is low, and anxiety is high. Loyalty toward organizations has faltered.

Other themes describing participant's experiences and the implications of the events and outcome during downsizing are represented by loyalty contributing to a healthy work environment, a solid commitment to a culture built on transparency, open communication, and leadership while creating a stable environment where workers are not constantly worried about their jobs. Not taking the data in studies such as this seriously can lead to low productivity, increase the cost to companies to continually train new employees, increase turnover, and decrease loyalty and trust in organizations and their leadership and management. According to Kriz et al. (2021), who spoke on coping with organizational layoffs, management actively listening to employees concerned about job insecurity is vital to the wellbeing of an organization. Kriz et al. argued that an increase in communication facilitated by management focused on talking to workers about any instability they felt from going through layoffs suggests an overall value that may decrease the anxiety of losing jobs and decrease job insecurity, ultimately strengthening trust and loyalty.

Applying the phenomenological hermeneutic methodology provided the eight participants a platform to share lived experiences. Participants provided a sense of what each participant went through when there was fear of losing jobs or watching peers who had worked for years at an organization lose their job. Participants' perceptions of being forced to stand by and witness these actions were an unwavering loyalty to those affected. There were similarities reflecting employees losing faith and trust in a company willing to lay off employees who had spent most of their career at an organization.

Transparency was also discussed, and how downsizing affected the culture at companies going through these resource actions.

The importance of this study can make a difference, as employees' perceptions can have a ripple effect on an organization's negative or positive culture. Employees going through downsizing can feel threatened by their environment, which would invoke coping mechanisms to survive. This can be perceived as aggressive or harmful behavior when just the worker attempts to find their footing in an unfortunate situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Empowering employees with clarity and constant communication during a downsizing may enable workers to maintain loyalty and trust. Management's actions could be perceived as a valiant effort to show support and appreciation for their workers, even if decisions such as rightsizing are inevitable.

The implications of the data are essential to understand and possibly do further research. Senses such as diminishing loyalty and trust can affect companies long-term and become a deterrent for workers to either want to stay at a company where morale is low or recommend their company to anyone else as a possible place of employment. According to Berry et al. (2021), the benefit of employees being loyal is two-fold. The researchers pointed out loyalty can have a binding effect (Berry et al., 2021, p. 1). The bonds that form is interpreted as a psychological bond between employee and employer and a form of a shared goal of a successful organization. Loyalty can also affect how well a person performs at their job, manages stress, and possibly opens new company opportunities. The researchers shared their philosophy which encompassed showing loyalty to an organization means employees are showing their trustworthiness. The

researchers also pointed out that trust and commitment can be scarce without belief among workers and management.

Implications for Social Change

Based on the research and data in this study, implications for social change depend on identifying creative strategies organizations can apply when faced with downsizing within an organization. This research has shown options for companies to make cuts in the organization to reach their financial goals while streamlining the workforce. Lessoning human causalities is a social change that would impact our society globally. When companies talk about terminating employees, this is usually not a favorable decision made by leadership that will reflect well on employees who lose their job. People work to support their families, themselves, and their lifestyles. People are dependent on their jobs, and those jobs most likely are tied to security, social status, stability, and mental health. When there is job loss, this affects our society. The rate of depression can cause mental health issues and personal tribulation with family, children, and spouses. Money problems can cause stress, leading to heart attacks or other health issues. A person who might have been a thriving part of the community and supported that community financially and socially may now become a recluse with a whole new set of problems.

Downsizing can affect the world globally. According to Andreeva et al. (2017), several psychological health illnesses may be related to downsizing, including anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. In a study conducted by these researchers, there was an observation of psychological ill-health in the case of strategic downsizing. There

was a clear association between losing jobs and having mental health issues. When something like this occurs, it affects not only the person or their families but our society as a whole.

Taking steps toward working to retain jobs, no matter how creative or out-of-the-box thinking needs to be done, can benefit society. Taking steps to apply innovative strategies such as minimizing hours for employees, being willing to give up vacation time, and looking to other companies who may need the help within their organizations may be a place to start. Employees depend on job security, stability, and being able to support their families. Our global economy depends on people working, making a living, and supporting their communities, which supports the world. Social change means human interaction and relationships are consistently built upon culture, commonalities, and being an active community member. Being an active member of society means being mentally stable, having a purpose, providing for yourself and your family, and giving yourself to your community and those in need. Being able to carry out these tasks depends on having stability in life, including financial stability. For most, this means having a stable job.

Stakeholders, leadership, and management must rethink downsizing, rightsizing, and restructuring. Maintaining loyal employees who consistently give back to the organizations is vital for our society and economic growth. If layoffs are unavoidable, applying creative strategies, so employees do not have to lose jobs will benefit employees and make a healthy choice for our society's mental health and well-being of our community and on a global level.

Conclusions

This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological research study highlighted employees' lived experiences based on personal experiences with downsizing. The interview questions served as an instrument to collect data to support or negate this study. The question dove into the personal and professional experiences of each of the eight participants, their peers, and their leadership. The research captured common themes and reflected on differences when discussing the justification of downsizing and the opportunity to introduce creative strategies as a part of the downsizing plan to minimize human casualties. The study revealed there were mixed emotions about the way leadership handled downsizing. Some participants thought the communication was severely lacking, and there was little transparency. Other participants understood why the administration decided to downsize. Still, as peers and large groups of employees lost jobs, guilt and resentment for some of the remaining participants were apparent. Participants felt they lacked loyalty and trust in the organization as management let go of workers. Five of the sample size were employed at their respective organizations for 18 years. Being laid off caused grave worry about finding another job and, in some employees, sheer devastation.

The study reflected commonalities and differences as organizations have changed dramatically over the past decade. Participants' perspectives were similar in that leadership believes that downsizing was the only option when times were terrible. According to the Harvard Review, "Most of their initiatives—installing new technology,

downsizing, restructuring, or changing corporate culture— had low success rates. The brutal fact is that about 70% of all change initiatives fail" (Beer & Nohria, 2000, p. 1).

Perceptions were also skewed in this process. Some participants perceived leadership was laying off employees whose salaries were higher and rehiring new employees to serve as replacements offering them a lesser financial package to save money. Participants also perceived the communication between leadership and employees to be lacking. According to SHRM (2022), managing communications is a significant part of transitioning to a post-downsizing environment. As the eight participants shared, communication from leadership was critical when companies downsized. Transparency was essential as well. Those losing their jobs did not want to feel in the dark.

Seven out of eight participants in this sample size felt that leadership needed to communicate with those employees about to be laid off. Sharing valuable information such as how to maintain benefits, the date of the last check, exit interviews, and if outplacement services would be available were all essential aspects of feeling as if the company was taking steps to support those employees affected. There were also various feelings when employees learned they were laid off. Most of the participants did feel stressed and saddened, but one person felt relieved. The person worked at the same company for 18 years and has watched peers lose jobs yearly for approximately ten years. The participant was tired of worrying about when they would be next. It was a relief to that participant when it finally occurred.

When creative strategies were discussed, participants doubted leadership would entertain other options than laying off employees. Participants thought different approaches should be introduced into any restructuring process. Retirement packages were probably the most popular answer when the question was asked. It was brought up about cross-training employees so that those employees would be more valuable to the company. Employees felt their morale and ability to trust the organization diminished when peers were let go. Those who remained at the organization felt overwhelmed and, on some level, disenchanted by leadership, knowing this could happen to them at any time. Studies have shown that companies are making strides to apply strategies where workers do not have to lose their jobs, as companies need to change with the times.

As the eight participants shared in-depth experiences regarding downsizing and how this action affected organizations, the question of how creative strategies taken by management to preserve jobs might increase loyalty and trust. Participants in this study, who had shown to be long-standing employees, were willing to stand by the administration even through tough times, as long as leadership stood by them. Creating opportunities such as job sharing and employee swaps would be a step in the right direction to reflect a feeling of loyalty and appreciation from management to their employees. Cross-training employees or robust retirement packages would be another way to minimize human casualties.

Leaders need to be bold and step outside the box to investigate how to reduce costs without putting employees out of a job. If layoffs are not done with a great deal of thought, according to Sucher and Gupta (2018), research has shown that ill-planned

releases rarely help leaders reach their goals. Well-thought-out downsizing initiatives with the integration of creative strategies to maintain employment for workforces who believe and trust their organizations may be more beneficial than laying off loyal employees who provide value to organizations. Careful consideration in the hiring processes to ensure a leaner approach may help eliminate the need to cut jobs consistently. Leadership should take stock in valuing employees committed to the organization. Employees will feel more appreciated and stable in their careers if this is done. This course of action would be a tremendous relief to those employees who want to ensure their legacy at their job shows they are committed to a long-term psychological contract that they intend to fulfill.

References

Abend, G. (2008). The meaning of 'theory.' *Sociological Theory, 26*(2), 173–199.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2008.00324.x.

Adams, J. S. (1963). Towards an understanding of inequity. *The Journal of Abnormal*

    and Social Psychology, *67*(5), 422–436. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0040968.

Adom, D., Hussein, E., & Joe, A. A. (2018). Theoretical and conceptual framework:

    Mandatory ingredients of a quality research. *International Journal of Scientific*

    Research. 7. 438-441. https://doi.org/10.36106/IJSR.

Adosi, C. M. (2020). Qualitative data collection instruments: The most challenging and

    easiest to use. The University of Cape Coast. Retrieved from

    https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344251614_QUALITATIVE_DATA_C

    OLLECTION_INSTRUMENTS_THE_MOST_CHALLENGING_AND_EASIE

    ST_TO_USE.

Affective Events Theory. (2013). Retrieved from

    https://study.com/academy/lesson/affective-events-theory-aet-definition-

    applications.html.

Aguinis, H., Joo, H., & Gottfredson, R. K. (2011). *Human performance. Why we hate*

    performance management——And why we should love it. Retrieved from

    http://www.hermanaguinis.com/BH2011.pdf.

Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good

    qualitative research approach. International Journal of Education & Literacy

    Studies, 5, 9-19. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.5n.2p.9.

Allan, L. (2020). *Employee resistance to change.* Business Performance Pty Ltd.

Retrieved from https://www.leslieallan.com/change-management/resistance-to-change/#:~:text=Employees%20resist%20change%20for%20a,initiative%20is%20a%20temporary%20fad.

Allen, T. D., Freeman, D. M., Russell, J. E., Reizenstein, R. C., & Rentz, J. O. (2001). Survivor reactions to organizational downsizing: Does time ease the pain? *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology,74,* 145–164. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317901167299

Alshrif Al-Hammali, M., Mihlar Abdul Muthaliff, M., & Habtoor, N. (2017). Determining the impact of forced downsizing strategies on employees' job satisfaction in Libyan education sector. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, *6*(2). Retrieved from https://www.jesoc.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/KC6_62.pdf.

Alton, L. (2017). *Why corporate culture is becoming even more important.* Forbes Media, LLC. https://www.forbes.com/sites/larryalton/2017/02/17/why-corporate-culture-is-becoming-even-more-important/?sh=140eb39b69da.

Amabile, T. M., & Conti, R. (1999). Changes in the work environment for creativity during downsizing. *Academy of Management Journal*, *42*(6), 630-640 https://doi.org/10.5465/256984.

Amadeo, K. (2019). *The great recession of 2008 explained with dates.* https://www.thebalance.com/the-great-recession-of-2008-explanation-with-dates-4056832.

Amundson, N. E., Borgen, W. A., Jordan, S., & Erlebach, A. C. (2004). Survivors of downsizing: Helpful and hindering experiences. *Career Development Quarterly*, *52*(3), 256–271. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2004.tb00647.x.

Andreeva, T., Vanhala, M., Sergeeva, A., Ritala, P., & Kianto, A. (2017). When the fit between HR practices backfires: Exploring the interaction effects between rewards for and appraisal of knowledge behaviors on innovation. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *27*(2), 209–227. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12133

Andrews, P. H. (2013). *What exactly is a non-essential employee?* Retrieved from https://cascadebusnews.com/news-pages/editorial/4463-what-exactly-is-a-non-essential-employee.

Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of qualitative research findings: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies 5*(2), 272-28. Retrieved from https://docplayer.net/52099744-Ensuring-the-quality-of-the-findings-of-qualitative-research-looking-at-trustworthiness-criteria-author-vicent-naano-anney-1.html.

Apergis, N., & Georgellis, Y. (2017). *Regional unemployment and employee loyalty: evidence from 12 UK regions.* Regional Studies, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2017.1363882.

Appelbaum, S. H. (1991). How to slim successfully and ethically: Two cases of downsizing. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, *12*(2), 11-16. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437739110143187.

Appelbaum, S. H., Everard, A., & Hung, L. T. S. (1999). Strategic downsizing: Critical success factors. *Management Decision, 37*(7), 535552. https://doi.org/10.1108/00251749910285674.

Armenakis, A. A., & Bedeian, A. G. (1999). Organizational change: A review of theory and research in the 1990s. *Journal of Management, 25*(3), 293– 315. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639902500303.

Armstrong-Stassen, M. (1994). Coping with transition: A study of layoff survivors. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *15*(7), 597–621. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030150705.

Arshard, F., Zaeema Asrar Mohiuddin, Z. A., Farooq Ahmed, F., & Zaidi, Z. S. S. (2017). *Psychological Contracts and Employment Relationships* (A Review Paper). https://doi.org/10.14738/abr.510.3741.

Avey, J. B., Wernsing, T. S., & Luthans, F. (2008). Can positive employees help positive organizational change? Impact of psychological capital and emotions on relevant attitudes and behaviors". *Management Department Faculty Publications. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science 44(1),* pp. 48–70; https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886307311470.

Babbie, E. R. (2010). *The practice of social research.* Wadsworth Cengage.

Baily, M. N., Bartelsman, E. J., & Halliwanger, J. (1996). Downsizing and Productivity Growth: Myth or Reality? *Small Business Economics*, *8*(4), 259–278. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00393276.

Bain & Company. (2013). *Downsizing.* Retrieved from

https://www.bain.com/insights/management-tools-downsizing.

Barns, E. S. (2003). *No-Layoff Policy.* Workforce Management. Retrieved from

https://definitions.uslegal.com/l/layoffs-downsizing-and-outsourcing.

Barton, G. (2002). *Iterative Searching.* Retrieved from

http://www.compbio.dundee.ac.uk/manuals/scanps2/scanps_manual/node18.html.

Baumol, W. J., Blinder, A., & Wolff, E. N. (2003). *Downsizing in America: Reality,*

causes, and consequences. Russell Sage Foundation.

Bazeley, P. (2009). Analyzing qualitative data: More than 'identifying themes.'

Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research. 2. Retrieved from

http://www.researchsupport.com.au/Bazeley_MJQR_2009.pdf.

Beal, D. J., Weiss, H. M., Barros, E., & MacDermid, S. M. (2005). An Episodic Process

Model of Affective Influences on Performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*,

90(6), 1054–1068. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.6.1054.

Beer, M., & Nohria, N. (2000). Cracking the Code of Change. *Harvard Business Review*,

78(3), 133–141.

Begley, C. M. (1996). *Triangulation of communication skills in qualitative research*

instruments. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1996.02446.x.

Bekker, S., & Clark, A. M. (2018). *Improving qualitative research finding*

Presentations: Insights from genre theory.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918786335.

Bergström, O., & Arman, R. (2017). Increasing commitment after downsizing: the role of

involvement and voluntary redundancies. *Journal of Change Management, 17(4),*

297–320. https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2016.1252784.

Berry, Z., Lewis, N., Jr., & Sowden, W. (2021). Are you too loyal to your organization? Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2021/09/are-you-too-loyal-to-your-organization.

Bersin, J., Geller, J., Wakefield, N., & Walsh, B. (2016). *Global human capital trends 2016. The new organization: different by design*, Deloitte University Press, https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends/2016.html.

Biro, M. M. (2014). *Happy employees= Hefty profits.* Forbes.com. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/meghanbiro/2014/01/19/happy-employees-hefty-profits/#739cda98221a.

Blau, G., Petrucci, T., & McClendon, J. (2012). Effects of layoff victims' justice reactions and emotional responses on attitudes toward their previous employer. Career Development International, 17, 500-517. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431211280105.

Boddy, C. R. (2016). Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research*, *19*(4), 426-432. https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-06-2016-0053.

Boone, J. (2000). Technological Progress, downsizing, and unemployment. *The Economic Journal, Volume 110 (465).*

Bordia, P., Restubog, S. L. D., Jimmieson, N. L., & Irmer, B. E. (2011). Haunted by the past: Effects of poor change management history on employee attitudes and turnover. *Group & Organization Management*, *36*(2), 191–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601110392990.

Bowen, G. A. (2006). Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *5*(3), 12–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500304.

Boyd, C. M., Tuckey, M. R., & Winefield, A. H. (2013). Perceived effects of organizational downsizing and staff cuts on the stress experience: The role of resources. *Stress and Health*, *30*(1), 53–64. https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2495.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology*. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brenner, M. H., Andreeva, E., Theorell, T., Goldberg, M., Westerlund, H., Leineweber, C., Hanson, L. L. M., Imbernon, E., & Bonnaud, S. (2014). Organizational downsizing and depressive symptoms in the European recession: The experience of workers in France, Hungary, Sweden and the United Kingdom. *PLoS ONE*, *9*(5). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0097063.

Brockner, J. (1998). The effects of work layoffs on survivors: Research, theory, and Practice. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior (Vol. 10,* pp. 213-255*).* JAI Press.

Brockner, J., Spreitzer, G., Mishra, A., Hochwarter, W., Pepper, L., & Weinberg, J. (2004). Perceived Control as an Antidote to the Negative Effects of Layoffs on Survivors' Organizational Commitment and Job Performance. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *49*(1), 76–100.

Brookman, J. T., Chang, S., & Rennie, C. G. (2007). CEO equity portfolio incentive and

layoff decisions. *Journal of Financial Research*, *30(2),* 259–281.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6803.2007.00213.x.

Budros, A. (1999). *A conceptual framework for understanding why organizations downsize.* Retrieved from

https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/abs/10.1287/orsc.10.1.69.

Bultin. (2019). *Company Culture.* Retrieved from https://builtin.com/company-culture.

BusinessKnowledgeSource. (2020). *The long-term effects of downsizing.* Retrieved from

http://businessknowledgesource.com/blog/the_longterm_effects_of_downsizing_
030545.html.

Cameron, K. S. (1994). *Strategies for successful organizational downsizing*. Human Resources Management. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.3930330204.

Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (2011). Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass

Carrington, L. (2016). *A qualitative phenomenological study of employee perceptions of the impact of layoffs* (Order No. 10180869). Available from Dissertations & Theses @ Walden University. (1835091785). Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/qualitative-phenomenological-study-employee/docview/1835091785/se-2.

Cascio, W. F. (1993). Downsizing: What do we know? What have we learned? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 7(1), 95–104. https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.1993.9409142062.

Cascio, W. F. (2009). *Employment downsizing and its alternatives: Strategies for long-term success.* Retrieved https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/special-reports-and-expert-views/Documents/Employment-Downsizing.pdf.

Cascio, W. F., & Wynn, P. (2004). Managing a downsizing process. *Human Resource Management Journal, 43(4)*, 425-436. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20034.

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for Interview Research: The Interview Protocol Refinement Framework. *Qualitative Report*, *21*(5), 811–831. Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/preparing-interview-research-protocol-refinement/docview/1806967398/se-2.

Cavanaugh, M. A., Boswell, W. R., Roehling, M. V., & Boudreau, J. W. (2000). An empirical examination of self-reported work stress among U.S. managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *85*(1), 65–74.

Charmaz, K. (2001). *Grounded Theory*. In: Emerson, R.M., Ed., Contemporary Field Research, Waveland Press, Inc., 335-352.

Charmaz, K. (2008). *Constructionism and the grounded theory*. In Holstein JA, & Gubrium JF (Eds pp. 397-412). Handbook of constructionist research. The Gilford Press.

Chaudhry, N. I., Shah, I., Mahesar, H., & Tariq, U. (2015). Impact of Downsizing on Employee Commitment and turnover intentions in Public and Private Sector: Moderating Role of Social Support. *Journal of Independent Studies and Research-Management, Social Sciences and Economics* JISR-MSSE. 13. 35-47.

https://jisrmsse.szabist.edu.pk/Location/Impact_of_Downsizing_on_Employee_C
ommitment.pdf.

Chemers, M. M. (2000). *Leadership research and theory: A functional integration. Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice,* 4*(1),* 27–43. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2699.4.1.27.

Child, J. (2015). *Organization contemporary and practices*. Wiley and Sons LTD.

Chisolm-Noel, A. (2022). 3 Strategies for Communicating Layoffs to Employees during Reduction in Force. Retrieved from https://impactgrouphr.com/businesspost/communicating-layoffs-to-employees-reduction-in-force/.

Clancy, L. (2019). Discuss your study's limitations. International Science Editing. Retrieved from Discussing your study's limitations - International Science Editing examples

Cohee, G. L. (2019). Corporate downsizing: Getting our policy right. *Organizational Dynamics*, *48(1),* 38–43. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2018.01.004.

Cohen, A. (2001). *Review of literature: Responses to 'empirical and hermeneutic approaches to phenomenological research in psychology, a comparison. Gestalt, 5*(2). Retrieved from http://www.g-gej.org/5-2/reviewlit.html July 2014.

Cohen, L., Coval, J., & Malloy, C. (2017). Reply: Do powerful politicians really cause corporate downsizing?" *Journal of Political Economy*, *125(6),* 2232–2237. https://doi.org/10.1086/694203.

Collins, T. (2019). *6 reasons corporations should care about employee loyalty. Viktor.*

Retrieved from https://www.viktorwithak.com/employee-loyalty-and-why-it-matters/.

Connelly, C. E., Gallagher, D. G., & Webster, J. (2011). Predicting temporary agency workers behaviors: Justice, volition, and spillover. *Career Development International*, *16*(2), 178–194. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431111115622.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). Basics of qualitative research (3rd ed.): Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory. *Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory Basics of Qualitative Research*, 1. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452230153.

Correa, M. (2014). *What they felt: Exploring lived experiences of downsized leaders* (Order No. 3668406). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1648174928). Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/what-they-felt-exploring-lived-experiences/docview/1648174928/se-2.

Cutcliffe, J. R., & McKenna, H. P. (2004). *Expert qualitative researchers and the use of audit trails.* University of Northern British Columbia https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2003.02874.x.

Datta, D. K., & Basuil, D. A. (2012). *Does employee downsizing work?* Human Resource Management Practices: Assessing Added Value. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-08186-1_12.

Davidsen, A. S. (2013). *Phenomenological approaches in psychology and health sciences.* Qual Res Psychol. 2013 Jul; 10(3): 318–339. PMCID: PMC3627202 https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2011.608466.

Davies, S. (2017). *Why cultivating employee loyalty is so important. Business 2 Community.* Retrieved from https://www.business2community.com/human-resources/cultivating-employee-loyalty-important-01898343.

Davis, C. (1998). *Downsizing becomes normal.* History departments at Ohio State University; Miami University. Retrieved from https://origins.osu.edu/history-news/downsizing-becomes-normal.

De Meuse, K. P., Bergmann, T. J., Vanderheiden, P. A., & Roraff, C. E. (2004). New evidence regarding organizational downsizing and a firm's financial performance: A long-term analysis. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, *16*(2), 155–177.

Denning, S. (2011). *How do you change organizational culture?* Forbes.com. https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2011/07/23/how-do-you-change-an-organizational-culture/#30844f6839dc.

Dennis, B. K. (2014). *Understanding Participant Experiences: Reflections of a Novice Research Participan*t**. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691401300121.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2000). *The discipline and practice of qualitative research.* In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., Eds., Handbook of Qualitative Research, Sage, 1-32.

Denzin, N. K. (1978). *Sociological Methods*. McGraw-Hill.

Devine, K., Reay, T., Stainton, L., & Collins-Nakai, R. (2003). *The stress of downsizing: Comparing survivors and victims.* Human Resource Management. 42, 109–124.

Devitt, R., Giapponi, C., & Houston, D. M. (2013). Organizational downsizing during

an economic crisis: Survivors' and victims' perspectives. *Organization*

Management Journal,*10:4*, 227- 239,

https://doi.org/10.1080/15416518.2013.859057.

Dial, J., & Murphy, K. (1995). Incentives, downsizing, and value creation at general

dynamics. Retrieved from

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/0304405X94008039.

Doyle, A. (2020). What is downsizing? Retrieved from

https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-happens-when-a-company-downsizes-

2061972.

Drzensky, F., & Heinz, M. (2014). The hidden costs of downsizing. The Economic

Journal. https://doi.org/10.1111/ecoj.12216

Egan, M. (2014). 2008: *Worse than the great depression?* CNN.com. Retrieved from

https://money.cnn.com/2014/08/27/news/economy/ben-bernanke-great-

depression/index.html.

Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis.

Retrieved from https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss11/14/.

Embree, L. (1997). What is phenomenology? In L. Embree, E. A. Behnke, E. A., Carr,

D., Evans, C. J., Huertas-Jourda, J., Kockelmans, J. J., McKenna, W. R.,

Mickunas, A., Mohanty, J. N., Seebohm, T. M. & Zaner, R. M. (Eds.).

Encyclopedia of Phenomenology. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-8881-2.

Faltermayer, E. (1992). *Is this layoff necessary*? Fortune June Issue,

p.71. Retrieved from

https://archive.fortune.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/1992/06/01/76481/
index.htm.

Ferraz, J. A. C., & Hamaguchi, N. (2002). *Introduction: M and A and privatization in developing countries- changing ownership structure and its impact on economic performance.* https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1746-1049.2002.tb00920.x.

Finlay, L. (2009). Debating phenomenological research methods. *Phenomenology & Practice*, *3*(1). https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr19818.

Fiordelis, F., Renneboog, L., Ricci, O., & Lopes, S. S. (2019). Creative corporate culture and innovation. *Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions, and Money. Volume 63,* November 2019, 101137. Elsevier B.V. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intfin.2019.101137.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist, 56*(3), 218–226. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218.

Freeman, M. (2011). Validity in Dialogic Encounters with Hermeneutic Truths. *QUALITATIVE INQUIRY*, *17*(6), 543–551. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800411409887.

Freeman, S. J., & Cameron, K. (1993). Organizational downsizing: A convergence and reorientation framework. *Organizational Science, 4(1),* 10-29. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.4.1.10.

Friebel, G., & Heinz, M. (2014). Media slant against foreign owners:

Downsizing. *Journal of Public Economics*, *120*, (C), 97-106. Retrieved from
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047272714001947.

Friebel, G., Heinz, M., & Zubanov, N. (2016). The effect of announced downsizing on
workplace performance: Evidence from a retail chain guide. University Frankfurt
and IZA Discussion Paper. Retrieved from https://repec.iza.org/dp9739.pdf

Fritz, K. (2008). *Ethical issues in qualitative research.* John Hopkins University.

Frost, S. (n.d.). The disadvantages of corporate downsizing. Small business- Chron.com
Retrieved from http://smallbusiness.chron.com/disadvantages-corporate-
downsizing-20390.html.

Gadamer, H. G., & Linge, D. E. (1976). *Philosophical hermeneutics.* Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1976. Retrieved from
www.worldcat.org/title/philosophical-hermeneutics/oclc/2226635.

Gandolfi, F. (2008). HR strategies that can take the sting out of downsizing-related
layoffs. *Ivey Business Journal Reprints*, 1.

Gandolfi, F. (2013). Workforce downsizing. Strategies, archetypes, approaches, and
tactics. *Journal of Management Research*. *Volume 13. Issue 2*. (Pp 67-76).
Retrieved from https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Workforce-
Downsizing%3A-Strategies%2C-Archetypes%2C-and-
Gandolfi/556f5bdfae94d66258dfe822d0c7bc76f0f421aa.

Gandolfi, F., & Hansson, M. (2015). Causes and consequences of downsizing: Towards
an integrative framework. *Journal of Management & Organization*, *17*(4), 498–
521. https://doi.org/10.5172/jmo.2011.17.4.498.

Gandolfi, F., & Littler, C. R. (2015). Downsizing is dead; long live the downsizing phenomenon: Conceptualizing the phases of cost-cutting. *Journal of Management and Organization*, *18(3),* 334–345. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1833367200000833.

Gearing, R. E. (2004). *Bracketing in research:* A typology. Volume: 14 issue: 10, page(s): 1429-1452. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732304270394.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures.* New York: Basic Books.

Geller, J. (2011). *Principal Global U.S. Human Resources (HR) Transformation Leader* Deloitte Consulting LLP. Retrieved from https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/profiles/jgeller.html.

George, J. (2004). Cutting costs: should personnel be the first to go? *Employment Practices Solution*. http://www.epspros.com/news-resources/white-papers/2014-prior/should-professionals-be-first-to-go.html.

Gerhart, B. (2005). The (Affective) dispositional approach to job satisfaction: Sorting out the policy implications. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *26*(1), 79–97. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4093848.

Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analyzing qualitative data.* Sage Publications Ltd https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208574.

Giorgi, A. (2011). IPA and science: a response to Jonathan Smith. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, *42*(2), 195. https://doi.org/10.1163/156916211X599762.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine Publishing Company.

Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). *Understanding. Selecting and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your "House."* New Mexico State University; https://doi.org/10.5929/2014.4.2.9.

Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2009). *Qualitative methods for health research* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Paulist Press, New York.

Gross, R. (2015). Organizational downsizing: The past and present organizational strategy–a review. *International Journal of Research in Business Management, 3(1),* 23-30. Retrieved from https://paper.researchbib.com/view/paper/33252.

Guthrie, J. P., & Datta, D. K. (2008). Dumb and Dumber: The Impact of Downsizing on Firm Performance as Moderated by Industry Conditions. *Organization Science*, *19*(1), 108–123. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0298.

Hanel, P. H. P., Maio, G. R., & Manstead, A. S. R. (2019). A new way to look at the data: Similarities between groups of people are large and important. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 116*(4), 541–562. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000154.

Harney, B., Fu, N., & Freeney, Y. (2018). Balancing tensions: Buffering the impact of organizational restructuring and downsizing on employee well-being. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 28(2), 235–254. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12175.

Heathfield, S. M. (2020). Motivating employees who remain after layoffs.

Retrieved from https://www.thebalancecareers.com/motivating-downsizing-survivors-1918593.

Hebenstreit, C. L., & DePrince, A. P. (2012). Perceptions of Participating in Longitudinal Trauma Research among Women Exposed to Intimate Partner Abuse. *JOURNAL OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS*, *7*(2), 60–69. https://doi.org/10.1525/jer.2012.7.2.60.

Hesselbein, F. (2010). *Strategy and society: The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. How did Peter Drucker see corporate responsibility?* Harvard Business Review. https://doi.org/10.1108/sd.2007.05623ead.006.

Holloway, I., & Wheeler, S. (2002). *Qualitative research in nursing*. Blackwell Science, Oxford.1993 pp. 135–157.

Homburg, C., Klarmann, M., & Staritz, S. (2012). *Customer Uncertainty following Downsizing: The Effects of Extent of Downsizing and Open Communication* https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.09.0486.

Hycner, R. H. (1985). Some Guidelines for the Phenomenological Analysis of Interview Data. *Human Studies*, *8*(3), 279–303. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00142995.

International Labour Organization. (2021). ILO: Uncertain and uneven recovery expected following unprecedented labor market crisis. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_766949/lang--en/index.htm.

Iqbal, N., Ahmad, M., & Allen, M. M. C. (2019). Unveiling the relationship between e-

HRM, impersonal trust and employee productivity. *Management Research Review*, *42*(7), 879–899. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-02-2018-0094.

Iverson, R. D., & Zatzick, C. D. (2011). The effects of downsizing on labor productivity: The value of showing consideration for employees' morale and welfare in high-performance work systems. *Human Resource Management*, *50*(1), 29–44. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20407.

Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, S. P. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 17(42),* 1-10. Retrieved from https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol17/iss42/3.

Jenkins. (2019). *We have a business and social imperative to transform equity, inclusion, and social justice*. CEO, AARP. World Economic Forum. Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/we-have-a-business-and-social-imperative-to-transform-equity-inclusion-and-social-justice/.

Jivan, M. (2012). An empirical study on effects of downsizing on private firms. Management Science Letters, 2, 1695-1700. Doi: 10.5267/j.msl.2012.04.019

Johnson, N. J. (2013). *Primary care physicians' perceptions of caring for the uninsured* (Order No. 3550359). Available from Dissertations & Theses @ Walden University. (1285530597). Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/primary-care-physicians-perceptions-caring/docview/1285530597/se-2.

Jones, G. R., & George, J. M. (2002). *Understanding and Managing Organizational*

Behavior. Pearson Education.

Judge, T. A., & Larsen, R. (2001). Dispositional affect and job satisfaction: A review and theoretical extension. Retrieved from https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2001-18848-003.

Kan, I. (2007). *Science is organized knowledge*. Wisdom is organized life. Sage Publishing.

Keen, E. (1975). *A primer in phenomenological psychology*. Reinhart and Winston, Inc.

Keiningham, T., Mellahi, K., & Wilkinson, A. (2010). Slash and burn or nip and tuck? Downsizing, innovation, and human resources. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 21*:13, 2291-2305. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2010.516584.

King, J. (2002). Jobs for life. *Computerworld*. Retrieved from https://www.computerworld.com/article/2585835/jobs-for-life.amp.html.

Kiraly, D. (2000). A social constructivist approach to translator education: Empowerment from theory to practice. St. Jerome. https://doi.org/10.7202/008733ar.

Klarner, P., & Raisch, S. (2013). Move to the beat rhythms of change and firm performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 56*(1), 160–184. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23414349.

Koch, T. (1996). Implementing a hermeneutic inquiry in nursing: Philosophy, rigor, and representation. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *24,* 174-184. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1996.17224.x.

Kordnaeij, A., Danaeefard, H., Zali, M., & Vasheghani, S. (2012). The role of

organizational culture in customer satisfaction. European Journal of Economics, Finance & Administrative Sciences, (51), 146-157. Retrieved from 212 http://www.europeanjournalofeconomicsfinanceandadministrativesciences.com

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice, 24*(1), 120-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092.

Kowske, B., Lundby, K., & Rash, R. (2010). Turning "survive" into "thrive": Managing survivor engagement in a downsized organization. *IEEE Engineering Management Review, Engineering Management Review, IEEE, IEEE Eng. Manag. Rev*, *38*(4), 79–90. https://doi.org/10.1109/EMR.2010.5645759.

Kraft, J. (1980). *The downsizing decision.* New Yorker Magazine. Retrieved from https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1980/05/05/the-downsizing-decision.

Kriz, T. D., Jolly, P. M., & Shoss, M. K. (2021). Coping with organizational layoffs: Managers increased active listening reduces job insecurity via perceived situational control. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *26*(5), 448–458. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000295.

Kuhn, T. S. (1977). *The essential tension: Selected studies in scientific tradition and change.* University of Chicago Press.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research.* Sage.

Lakshman, C., Linh, C. V., Ladha, R. S., & Gok, K. (2019). Consequences of paying CEOs for Downsizing: A Four-Country Study of the Impacts on Survivors vs. Victims. *M@n@gement*, *22*(2), 250–272. https://doi.org/10.3917/mana.222.0250.

LaMarsh, J. (2009). How companies reduce the downside of downsizing. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence 29(1),* p7-16. 10p. https://doi.org/10.1002/joe.20294.

Langdridge, D. (2007). *Phenomenological Psychology: Theory, Research and Method.* Pearson Education.

Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *2(3).* Article 3. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690300200303.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping.* Springer.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1987). Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping. *European Journal of Personality*, *1,* 141–169. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2410010304.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2010). *Practical research: Planning and design*. (9th Edition). Pearson.

Levinson, H., Price, C. R., Munden, K. J., Mandl, H. J., & Solley, C. M. (1962). *Men, Management and Mental Health*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674424746.

Lewin, J. E. (2001). The effects of downsizing on organizational buying behavior: An empirical investigation. *J. of the Acad. Mark. Sci. 29,* 151–164. https://doi.org/10.1177/03079459994524.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry.* Sage Publications.

Linneberg, M., & Korsgaard, S. (2019). Coding qualitative data: a synthesis guiding the novice. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *19*(3), 259–270. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-12-2018-0012.

Lopez, K. A., & Willis, D. G. (2004). Descriptive Versus Interpretive Phenomenology: Their Contributions to Nursing Knowledge Louisiana State University Health Science Center, New Orleans. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732304263638.

Louisnord, N. (2016). *On and offboarding employees: Getting to a smooth process.* Retrieved from https://www.business2community.com/human-resources/off-boarding-employees-getting-smooth-process-01723122.

Love, G. E., & Nohria, N. (2005). Reducing slack: The performance consequences of downsizing by large industrial firms, 1977–93. *Strategic Management Journal 26(12)*:1087 – 1108. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and Harvard University. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.487.

Luthan, B. C., & Sommer, S. M. (1999). *The Impact of Downsizing on Workplace Attitudes: Differing Reactions of Managers and Staff in a Health Care Organization*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601199241004.

Lynham, S. A., & Chermack, T. J. (2006). Responsible leadership for performance: a theoretical model and hypotheses. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, *12*(4), 73.

Maertz, C. P., Jr., Wiley, J. W., LeRouge, C., & Campion, M. A. (2010). Downsizing effects on survivors: Layoffs, offshoring, and outsourcing. *Industrial Relations, 49(2),* 275-285. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-232X.2009.00599.x.

Mailepors, K. (2015). The Dilemma of Training your Workforce in an Economic

Downturn. Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/dilemma-training-

your-workforce-economic-downturn-kris-mailepors-mba

Malterud, K., Siersman, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2015). Sample Size in Qualitative

Interview

Guide. Sage Journals/ https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444.

Market Business News. (n.d.). *What is organizational change.* Retrieved from

https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/organizational-change-

definition-meaning/.

Mason, M. (2010). *Sample size and saturation in Ph. D. studies using qualitative*

interviews. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social

Research. https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-11.3.1428.

Matzler, K., & Renzl, B. (2006). The Relationship between

Interpersonal Trust, Employee Satisfaction, and Employee Loyalty*, Total Quality*

Management and Business Excellence, *17:10*, 1261-

1271, https://doi.org/10.1080/14783360600753653.

McGrath, C., Palmgren, J., & Liljedahl, M. (2019). Twelve tips for

conducting qualitative research interviews, *Medical Teacher, 41:9*, 1002-

1006, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/0142159X.2018.1497149.

Medelyan, A. (n.d.). *Coding qualitative data: How to code qualitative research.*

Retrieved from https://getthematic.com/insights/coding-qualitative-data/.

Mellahi, K., & Wilkinson, A. (2010). A study of the association between downsizing and

innovation determinants. *International Journal of Innovation Management Vol. 12, No. 04*, pp. 677-698. https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919608002163

Mellon, N. (1998). *The art of storytelling.* Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/Art-Storytelling-Nancy-Mellon/dp/1862043469.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, M. A., & Saldana, J. (2019). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Mishra, A., & Mishra, K. (1994). The role of trust in effective downsizing strategies. *Human Resource Management*. *33.* 261 - 279. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.3930330207.

Mishra, A. K., & Spreitzer, G. M. (1998). Explaining how survivors respond to downsizing: The roles of trust, empowerment, justice, and work redesign. *The Academy of Management Review*, *23(3),* 567-588. https://doi.org/10.2307/259295.

Mizra, B. (2008). *Look at alternatives to layoffs.* SHRM. Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/leadership-and-navigation/pages/alternativestolayoffs.aspx.

Morris, J. R., Cascio, W. E., & Young, C. E. (1999). Downsizing after all these years: Questions and answers about who did it, how many did it, and who benefited from it. Organizational Dynamics 27(3), 78-87, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0090-2616(99)90039-6.

Morrison, E. W., & Robinson, S. L. (1997). When employees feel betrayed: A model of how psychological contract violation develops. *The Academy of Management Review*, 22(1), 226. https://doi.org/10.2307/259230.

Morse, J. M., & Field, P. A. (1995). *Qualitative Research Methods for Health Professionals*. SAGE Publications.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. *Sage.* https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658.

Nahapiet, J., & Ghoshal, S. (1998). Social capital, intellectual capital, and the organizational advantage. *The Academy of Management Review***.** https://doi.org/10.2307/259373.

Natanson, M. (1974). Phenomenology, role, and reason. Essays on the coherence and deformation of social reality. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 35 (2)*:277-278 (1974). https://doi.org/10.2307/2106642.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Information technology and the U.S. Workforce: Where are we and where do we go from here?* The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine. Retrieved from https://www.nap.edu/read/24649/chapter/6.

National Research Council. (1997). *Organizational change and redesign. Enhancing Organizational Performance.* The National Academies Press. Washington D.C. https://doi.org/10.17226/5128.

Nègre, E., Verdier, M. A., Cho, C. H., & Patten, D. M. (2017). *Disclosure strategies and investor reactions to downsizing announcements: A legitimacy perspective.* Elsevier, Inc. 0278-4254; https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaccpubpol.2017.03.003.

Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Pearson.

Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P., & Wholey, J. S. (Eds.). (2015). *Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews*. Jossey-Bass Publishing Co. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19.

Nixon, R. D., Hitt, M. A., Lee, H. U., & Jeong, E. (2004). Market reactions to announcements of corporate downsizing actions and implementation strategies. *Strategic Management Journal*, 25(11), 1121–1129. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.423.

Norris, N. (1997). Error, bias, and validity in qualitative research. *Educational Action Research*, *5(1),* 172–176. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650799700200020. Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF QUALITATIVE METHODS*, *16*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847.

Nyberg, A. J., & Trevor, C. O. (2009). After layoffs, help survivors be more effective. *Harvard Business Review*, *87*(6), 15.

Okibo, S. S. (2012). Effect of retrenchment on service delivery of retained civil servants. A study of selected Ministries in Kisii Central District, Kenya. International Journal of Business and Social Science, 3(4), 138-144. Retrieved from https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/EFFECT-OF-RETRENCHMENT-ON-SERVICE-DELIVERY-OF-CIVIL-Okibo/830e200a4b1b1ac6c3912d0f48819f2ce32fc661.

Olsen, M. E. (1992). *Viewing the world Ecologically*. Westview Press.

Olsson, M., & Tåg, J. (2017). Private equity, layoffs, and job polarization. *Journal of Labor Economics*, *35(3),* 697–754. https://doi.org/10.1086/690712.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2007). Sampling Designs in Qualitative Research: Making the Sampling Process More Public. *The Qualitative Report*, *12*(2), 238-254. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2007.1636.

O'Toole, J. (1995). *Leading change: Overcoming the ideology of comfort and the tyranny of custom*. Jossey-Bass.

Palliam, R., & Shalhoub, Z. (2002). *Rationalizing corporate downsizing with long-term profitability- an empirical focus.* Business Management Decision https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740210430425.

Parthasarathy, B. (2008). Technology and Social Change Group, University of Washington. Retrieved from https://tascha.uw.edu/.

Patel, D. (2017). *The pros and cons of outsourcing.* Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/deeppatel/2017/07/17/the-pros-and-cons-of-outsourcing-and-the-effect-on-company-culture/?sh=24ab7d7e562d.

Paterson, J. M., & Cary, J. (2002). *Organizational justice, change anxiety, and acceptance of downsizing: Preliminary tests of an AET-based model. Motivation and Emotion, 26*, 83-103. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1015146225215.

Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, *34*(5p2), 1189.

Pearlstein, E. S. (1994). *Corporate cutbacks are yet to pay off,* Retrieved from

https://www.washingtonpost.com/.

Perry, M. J. (2018). *Yes, the US middle class is shrinking, but it's because Americans are moving up. And no, Americans are not struggling to afford a home.* Retrieved from https://www.aei.org/carpe-diem/yes-the-us-middle-class-is-shrinking-but-its-because-americans-are-moving-up-and-no-americans-are-not-struggling-to-afford-a-home/.

Pfeil, M. P., Setterberg, A. B., & O'Rourke, J. S., IV. (2004). The art of downsizing: Communicating lay-offs to key stakeholders. *Journal of Communication Management ·* http://doi.org/10.1108/13632540410807600.

Pitney, W. A. (2004). Strategies for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Northern University. Volume: 9 Issue: 1* Pages: 26-28. https://doi.org/10.1123/att.9.1.26.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(5), 879–903. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879.

Polkinghorne, D. (1989). *Phenomenological research methods*. In R. Valle and S. Halling (Eds.), Existential phenomenological perspectives in psychology: Exploring the breadth of human experience (pp. 41- 60). *New York: Plenum.* https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4615-6989-3_.

Rauchway, E. (2019). *The 2008 Crash: What happened to all that money?* University of California. Retrieved https://www.history.com/news/2008-financial-crisis-causes.

Reich, R. (1996). *If you are going to downsize. Says U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich, do it gently.* Sales and Marketing Management. Volume 148, pp. 118-123.

Reichers, A. E., Wanous, J. P., & Austin, J. T. (1997). Understanding and managing cynicism about organizational change. *Academy of Management Executive*, *11*(1), 48–59. https://doi.org/10.5465/AME.1997.9707100659.

Richards, L., & Morse, J. M. (2007). *Read me First for a User's Guide to Qualitative Methods*. Sage Publications.

Richter, F. (2021). Where job losses linger 20 months into the pandemic. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/chart/23576/change-in-employment-in-the-us-by-industry/.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis.* Sage Publications.

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Elam, G. (2003). *Qualitative Research Practice*. Sage Publications.

Rousseau, D. M. (1989). *Psychological contracts in organizations: Understanding wrote and unwritten agreements*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Saad, L. (2013). TV is Americans' main source of news. Gallup. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/poll/163412/americans-main-sourcenews.aspx%205%20australianscience.com.au/research/google/37650.pdf

Sadri, G. (1996). Reflections, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *Vol. 11 No. 4*, pp. 56-59. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683949610117634.

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* Sage Publications.

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Salkind, N. J. (2010). Demographics as Variables in Research. Sage

Publications.

Saperstein, T. (2014). The future of print: Newspapers struggle to survive in the age of

technology. Harvard Political Review. Retrieved from https://harvardpolitics.com/future-

print-newspapers-struggle-survive-age-technology/.

Sargeant, J. (2012). Qualitative Research Part II: Participants, Analysis, and Quality

Assurance. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, *4*(1), 1–3.

https://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-11-00307.1.

Savage-Auston, A. R., & Honeycutt, A. (2011). Servant leadership: A phenomenological

study of practices, experiences, organizational effectiveness, and barriers, *Journal*

of Business and Economics Research. https://doi.org/10.19030/jber.v9i1.939 .

Schawbel, D. (2016). *Partner and research director. Future Workplace.*

Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/company/future-

workplace?trk=public_profile_experience-item_profile-section-card_subtitle-

click.

Schein, E. H. (1999). The corporate culture survival guide. Jossey Bass, Inc.

Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (4th ed.).

Jossey-Bass.

Schuemann, K. B. (2014). *A phenomenological study into how students experience and*

understand the university presidency. Retrieved from

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1263&context=disse

rtations.

Schulz, A. C., & Johann, S. (2018). Downsizing and the fragility of corporate reputation: An analysis of the impact of contextual factors. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 34(1),* 40–50. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2017.11.004.

Seglin, J. L. (2001). *The right thing; In a downsizing, loyalty is a two-way street* https://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/15/business/the-right-thing-in-a-downsizing-loyalty-is-a-two-way-street.html.

Shaw, J. B., & Barrett-Power, E. (1997). A conceptual framework for assessing organization, workgroup, and individual effectiveness during and after downsizing. *Human Relations, 50*(2), 109–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679705000201.

Shore, B. (1996). The legacy of Downsizing: Putting the pieces back together. *Business Forum*, *21*(3/4), 5.

SHRM. (2022). Managing Employees in a Downsized Environment. Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/managinginadownsizedenvironment.aspx.

Siddiqa. (2017). *The Impact and alternatives of downsizing, A concise review.* Kaav International Journal of Economics, Commerce, and Business Management. Kaav Publications.

Smith, D. W. (2016). Phenomenology. In: Edward N. Zalta (Ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2016 Edition).

Smith, M., Lewis, D., & Johnston, M. (2018). Dispositional Theories of Value.

Retrieved from https://www.princeton.edu/~msmith/mypapers/Smith-Dispositional-1989.pdf.

Stanley, D. J., Meyer, J. P., & Topolnytsky, L. (2005). Employee Cynicism and Resistance to Organizational Change. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 19*(4), 429–459. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-005-4518-2/

Starks, H., & Trinidad, S. B. (2007). Choose your method: A comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. *Sage Publications.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732307307031.

Staw, B. M., & Barsade, S. G. (1993). Affect and managerial performance: A test of the sadder-but-wiser vs. happier-and-smarter hypotheses. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 38*(2), 304–331. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393415.

Steffes, L. A. (2010). *General education teachers' perceptions of accommodations for students with learning disabilities in inclusive secondary classrooms* (Order No. 3427686). Available from Dissertations & Theses @ Walden University. (815237042). Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/general-education-teachers-perceptions/docview/815237042/se-2.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Stroh, L. K., & Reilly, A. H. (1997). *Loyalty in the age of downsizing.* MIT Sloan Management Review. Retrieved from https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/loyalty-in-the-age-of-downsizing/.

Strom, W. L. (1998). The human realities of corporate downsizing: Resolving the past

and seizing opportunities for the future. Retrieved from

https://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2010/08/the-human-realities-of-corporate-downsizing/.

Sucher, S. J., & Gupta, S. (2018). Layoffs that don't break your company: better

approaches to workforce transitions. *Harvard Business Review*, *96*(3), 122.

Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, and

Management. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, *68(3),* 226–231.

https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456.

Swanson, R. A., & Holton, E. F., III. (2015). *Foundations and methods of inquiry*.

Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc.

Sweeney, M. (2016). *The effects of downsizing on organizational culture in the*

newspaper industry. Walden University. Retrieved from

https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/2275/.

Tassone, B. G. (2017). *The relevance of Husserl's phenomenological exploration of*

interiority to contemporary epistemology. Palgrave Communications 3,

Retrieved from https://www.nature.com/articles/palcomms201766.

Tavallaei, M., & Talib, M. A. (2010). A general perspective on the role of theory in

qualitative research. *Journal of International Social Research, 3*(11). Retrieved

from https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/A-general-perspective-on-role-of-

theory-in-research-Tavallaei-

Talib/78dd4105695caf680b24cdef7c927a821e1445f2.

Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigor within a qualitative

framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *48*(4), 388–396.

Tomasko, R. M. (1992). Restructuring: Reshaping the organization for the future: Eight

   Lessons. Retrieved from

   http://www.roberttomasko.com/Articles.ReshapingLessons.html.

Trahms, C. A., Ndofor, H. A., & Sirmon, D. G. (2013). Organizational decline and

   turnaround a review and agenda for future research *Journal of*

   *Management 39(5):*1277-1307 https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312471390.

Tsai, C. F., & Yen, Y. F. (2018). Moderating effect of employee perception of

   responsible downsizing on job satisfaction and innovation commitment. *The*

   International Journal of Human Resource Management, 1–25.

   https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1424014.

Tuckey, M. R., Searle, B. J., Boyd, C. M., Winefield, A. H., & Winefield, H. R. (2015).

   Hindrances are not threats: advancing the multidimensionality of work

   stress. *Journal of occupational health psychology, 20*(2), 131–147.

   https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038280.

Uchitelle, L. (2006). *The disposable American. Layoffs and their consequences*. Alfred

   Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor of Statistics. (2008). *Mass Layoffs*

   in December 2007 annual totals. Washington D.C. Retrieved from

   https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2008/jan/wk3/art04.htm.

University of South Carolina. (2020). *Literature review: Purpose of a literature review*

   learning to write a systematic review of literature. Retrieved from

   https://uscupstate.libguides.com/Literature_Review.

U.S. Department of Labor. (2006). *Mass layoff statistics.* Available from

    https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2006/jul/wk3/art05.htm.

Van Dick, R., Drzensky, F., & Heinz, M. (2016). Goodbye or Identify: Detrimental

    Effects of Downsizing on Identification and Survivor Performance. *FRONTIERS*

    IN PSYCHOLOGY, *7*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00777.

Van Manen, M. (1997). *From meaning to method*. University of Alberta, Edmonton,

    Alberta, Canada. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973239700700303.

Van Manen, M. (2011). *Phenomenology online: A resource for phenomenological*

    inquiry. Sage Publications.

Varner, M. (2018). *2017 Trends: 7 Biggest changes coming to the workplace.* Retrieved

    from https://www.workfront.com/blog/2017-trends-7-biggest-changes-coming-to-

    the-workplace.

Vernon, L. (2003). The downsizing dilemma; a manager's toolkit for avoiding

    layoffs, *Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)*, White Paper, March

    2003.

Vuontisjärvi, T. (2013). Argumentation and socially questionable business practices: The

    case of employee downsizing in corporate annual reports. *Scandinavian Journal*

    of Management, *29*(3), 292–313. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2013.01.003.

Webb, E. J., Campbell, D. T., Schwartz, R. D., & Sechrest, L. (1966). *Unobtrusive*

    measures: Nonreactive research in the social sciences. Rand Mcnally.

Wells, S. J. (2008). *Layoff aftermath. Learn how to minimize the aftereffects of*

    layoffs. HR Magazine. Retrieved from

https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/Pages/1108wells2.aspx.

Whitley, J. (2014). *Four Actions to Integrate Performance Information with Budget Formulation. Institute for Defense Analyses*. Retrieved from https://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/Management%20Whitley.pdf.

Wiley, C. (1997). What motivates employees according to over 40 years of motivation surveys, *International Journal of Manpower*, *Vol. 18 No. 3*, pp. 263-280. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437729710169373.

Wilkinson, A. (2005). Downsizing, rightsizing or dumbsizing? Quality, human resources and the management of sustainability. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *16*(8/9), 1079–1088. https://doi.org/10.1080/14783360500163326.

Williams, J. (2016). Trends in the Workplace. Retrieved from https://cdn.crtkl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/1/2016/08/2016trendsWorkplace_whitepaper_8.19.16.pdf.

Williams, M., & Moser, T. (2019). *The art of coding and thematic exploration in qualitative research. International Management Review*. *International Management Review, 15* (1) Retrieved From http://www.imrjournal.org/uploads/1/4/2/8/14286482/imr-v15n1art4.pdf.

Wilson, H., & Hutchinson, S. (1991). Triangulation of qualitative methods: Heideggerian hermeneutics and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research, 1*, 263-276. Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973239100100206.

Winchester, C. L., & Salji, M. (2016). *Writing a literature review*. Sage Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1177/2051415816650133.

Wrenn, C. B. (2005). *Naturalistic epistemology.* The internet encyclopedia of philosophy.

Youssef, C. M., & Luthans, F. (2005). Resilience development of organizations, leaders
and employees: multi-level theory building for sustained performance. In:
Gardner, W., Avolio, B., and Walumbwa F. (Eds.). Authentic Leadership Theory
and Practice: Origins, Effects, and Development.

Yujin, K. (2010). The pilot study in qualitative inquiry. Kyungpook National University.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325010362001.

Zickerman, J. (2020). *The Alternative Board.* Retrieved from
https://www.thealternativeboard.com/.

Zorn, M. L., Norman, P., Butler, F. C., & Bhussar, M. (2017). *If you think downsizing
might save your company, think again.* Harvard Business Review. Harvard
Business School Publishing.

Appendix A: Hand Coding

Participant	Initial Codes	Subthemes	Themes	Description Code Definition	Raw Data
P1(R2)	What loyalty means to you	Loyalty	Loyalty may contribute to a healthy environment- starting at the top	Focusing on empowering employees to make decisions traditionally made by management and refocusing on employee engagement, a collaborative environment, and how to allow the human element to find success might heighten the interest of employees to relearn how to trust in their organization.	The current manager supplied that atmosphere. The best example was that of the manager P1 worked for and the peers that reflected loyalty toward the P1
P1 (R4)	Personal definition of trust	Trust	Leadership maintaining a culture built on transparency and taking responsibility for the changes that occur	50-60 years ago, leadership and shareholders made the decisions, and employees delegated their duties without question or hesitation. In current times of empowerment and the need for loyalty and trust, managers should step back and allow for more autonomous relationships, which may create a more solid relationship.	When layoffs occurred, P1 remained employed. Although it was hard for P1 to watch peers lose jobs, the organization offered P1 salary increases and other benefits

					to entice P1 to stay.
P1(R3)	The sense of loyalty toward an organization	Eff ects of Downsizing on Organizations	A solid commitment to loyalty toward an organization unconditionally	Loyalty can be driven by emotion. Employees who have a certain level of attachment to their current employer are less likely to leave their job for something better. To increase employee loyalty, leadership may work to increase positivity while trying to negate negative feelings and behaviors	Dur ing the pandemic, loyalty and empathy were reflected in employees. P1 felt to be a recipient of that loyalty. P1 had shared that the team P1 was a part of had a robust collaborative approach, which reflected the commitment of loyalty.
P2 (R6)	Feelings of loyalty shown to an organization	Lo yalty	Loyalty may contribute to a healthy environment, starting at the top of the corporate ladder & working its way down.	In the last 20 years, there seems to be a shift in the relationship between employees and leadership. There seem to be new definitions of commitment, loyalty, and the ability to maintain stability.	The processes, rules, and loyalty were intact after being at the organization for as long as P2 was there. P2 felt a great sense of

					commitment to the employer. Even when P2 was a part of the downsizing effort, P2 was still loyal to the company and the client
P2 (R8)	Feelings toward management during the resource action	Lo yalty	Leaders hip maintaining a culture built on transparency and taking responsibility for the changes that have occurred	When layoffs occur, the mood of the employee can change. Although leadership's goal may be to eliminate the role and save money, not necessarily the person, that individual is left without a job.	The re were those employees like P2 that had been at the organization for years. Those employees felt a strong sense of abandonment and loss of pride.
P2(R9)	Definitio n of loyalty through the years	Eff ects of Downsizing on Organizations	Leaders hip's mission and goals for the organization- has that been altered in light of the downsizing efforts	Loyalty from those employees who have remained at the organization after layoffs may have a different level of loyalty than before. Those who survive the layoffs may show signs so burnout, their absenteeism may become an issue, their	Acc ording to P2, most peers were loyal to the organization as they had been with the company for so long.

				productivity may decrease, and the level of trust could suffer short or long term.	According to P2, the most vital loyalty was reflected with the client.
P3(R10)	Feeling a sense of intense loyalty to the organization	Lo yalty & Trust	Loyalty & trust may contribute to a healthy environment- starting at the top of the corporate ladder & working its way down.	Loyalty needs to run both ways, not just on the shoulders of the employee. Employees may feel entitled to a mutually respectful relationship between employees and leadership. There may be an unspoken rule, whereas the obligations and responsibility lie on both leadership and the employee to remain loyal to each other.	Acc ording to P3, there were times when P3 worked for management who did not have P3's back. Other times, such as current, the feeling is mutual when P3 feels the manager would do anything for P3. There are advantages to working for someone who you believe in
P3(R11)	Lived experience when downsizing occurred in your organization	Ex periencing Downsizing	Transp arency & an understanding of why this type of action is being taken	Employees who fall victims to forced layoffs lose their livelihoods, on some level, their identity, and at times their ambition to work. The stress can be overwhelming. Employees who have	P3 shared that it was devastating to watch. It also created underlying instability,

				experienced this can feel alone and isolated and suffer depression and anxiety, which may affect obtaining another job.	knowing if P3's job would be there tomorrow.
P3 (R13)	Lived Experience of trust and what can occur when it is not reciprocated	Improving Loyalty and Trust	Loyalty & trust may contribute to a healthy environment- starting at the top of the corporate ladder & working its way down.	Companies may choose to prepare a downsizing team comprised of HR representatives, legal analysts, one or two people who represent leadership and specific employees from management to communicate effectively on the downsizing efforts, answer questions and listen to the employees' point of view as far as how this is affecting them personally and professionally. This may maintain the trust that exists between employees and leadership.	P3 showed me examples of trust that led to P3 during years of employment. P3 has trusted almost all the managers P3 has had. P3 said that the relationship could be more robust when confidence is established, and the foundation to build on can be more solid.
P4(R14)	Lived experience when learning your department would be downsized	Loyalty & Experiencing Downsizing	The atmosphere during a layoff as management is stressed over their team losing jobs	Losing peers and those close to you at an organization may have last effects. The survivors may be distant, disengaged, and disloyal as they may be waiting for the proverbial	The reality, according to P4, was that of surprise and devastation that P4 had to

				other shoe to drop, and they too will not have a job.	lay off dedicated workers, and there was nothing P4 could do to stop this from happening.
P4(R15)	Personal/ Professional feelings in decisions you had to make regarding job loss in your group	Eff ects of Downsizing on Organizations	Transp arency & an understanding of why this type of action is being taken	Laying off those individuals who had served you well as a manager can be daunting. As a manager, keeping the lines of communication open and being as supportive and fair as possible would seem to be the most viable choice if you want to provide those employees affected with a stable foundation.	It was communicated that laying off those who worked under you for so long was a daunting task that was hard to reconcile. P4 shared it was one of the hardest things to be done in his 39-year career.
P4 (R17)	Employe e's perceptions of downsizing and how it will affect the organization	Lo yalty & Trust	Uncerta inty with the future while trying to maintain normalcy for the present	Critical steps put in places such as open communication with employees, transparency with all details that can be shared, and a support system for those who are in need may be critical to	Bei ng honest and transparent was the only way P4 knew to keep calmness and sometime of balance in

				allowing for some balance in the environment, so a level of normalcy can exist and work can still be done.	the employee's work and personal life.
P5 (R18)	Great sense of loyalty toward employees, peers, or leadership	Lo yalty & Trust	The atmosphere during a lay off perceived through management, which may be asked to layoff those most loyal to them	Critical steps put in place for a resource action, such as open communication with employees, transparency with all details that can be shared, and a support system for those who are in need, may be critical to allowing for balance, so a level of normalcy can exist and work can still be done.	P5, through a management lens, see's firsthand what a resource action can do to peers and co-workers and how each employee reacts differently. The bond between P5's workers was non-existent.
P5 (R19)	Feelings toward management and employees during the downsizing process	Tr ust	Downsi zing causes instability among the workforce and may create uncertainty in trusting the organization	Management may decide it is in their best interest to ensure the employee's trust, even if affected by the layoff, is held in the highest regard. Companies may choose to prepare a downsizing team comprised of HR representatives, legal analysts, one or two people who represent leadership,	It was shared that P5 had nasty comments thrown his way. There was quite a bit of negativity and questions P5 could not answer. The climate was a

				and specific employees from management to communicate effectively on the downsizing efforts.	tough one, according to P5.
P5 **(R21)**	Improve loyalty and trust	Im proving Loyalty and Trust between management and subordinates	Transp arency and a mutual need for open and honest communication between leadership and subordinates	There may need to reflect giving and take between the employee and the organization (management). This open communication and collaboration between the two parties may help build a solid professional relationship.	P5 had to rebuild relationships with those who were left after the downsizing. P5 did this by showing trust and loyalty in the relationships P5 was developing and fostering trust and loyalty.
P6 **(R22)**	Lived experience when a strong sense of loyalty was shown to co-workers or management	Lo yalty	Loyalty & trust may contribute to a healthy environment- starting at the top of the corporate ladder & working its way down.	When loyalty can be shaken, and management reaches out to show loyalty to an employee, the perception of the effort can reflect well on the organization. Even if this event occurs during downsizing, the employee may look at it as though it appears to be an olive branch or a way of reassuring the employee the	P6 shared that P6 had worked for an IT company and would come in early to ensure that the executives had their systems up and running before the workday began. When

				company values you and your work.	P6 left and went to another job after being at the previous company for many years, the employees were loyal, but the management did not seem to be. P6 was laid off.
P6 (R23)	Communicating effectively with employees throughout the downsizing process	Experiencing Downsizing	Transparency & an understanding of why this type of action is being taken	It is critical to keep all communication channels with your employees open and transparently discuss all the details you can share about the changing business needs and possible workforce shifts. This would at least make employees aware of the situation and prepare them for any future course of action. Knowing what is ahead of them and how to cope is critical for some level of stability.	P6 did not feel communication was a concern at the company where P6 was laid off. P6 understood the importance of communication and had always had that in previous roles. P6 was always communicative with employees, and those P6 helped with their IT needs.

P6 (R25)	Perceptio n of trust and loyalty within companies in today's corporate environment	Tr ust and Loyalty	Leaders hip supports recognition of employees and how much value they bring to their jobs and the organization	Employees can trust their superiors if they feel the trust, is a two-way street. An employee may exuberate happiness and job satisfaction if faith is there. Bosses who lack confidence in their employees may push them to look for other jobs, reflecting the loyalty this employee has to the organization.	Thi s may exist in some companies. As P6 highlighted, it depends on the manager and employee. It is all subject to the participants of the relationship and the expectations and perceptions each has.
P7 (R26)	The feeling of loyalty and trust from management and peers	Im proving Loyalty and Trust	Loyalty & trust may contribute to a healthy environment- starting at the top of the corporate ladder & working its way down.	Leadership may want to rethink a strategy after a layoff when recreating a safe and stable workplace, if necessary. Focusing on empowering employees to make decisions traditionally made by management and refocusing on employee engagement, a collaborative environment, and how to allow the human element to find success might heighten the interest of employees to relearn how to trust in their	Thi s is important to P7, but P7 is not sure this type of environment exists.

				organization	
P7 (R27)	Feelings toward management when downsizing was occurring	Li ved Experience with Downsizing	Loyalty & trust may contribute to a healthy environment- starting at the top of the corporate ladder & working its way down.	When employees learn that there will be a job loss, the ownness' should be on HR to know the detailed knowledge of each employee's work. Their skills can show the employees that they are working to either place them in another position in the organization or work without an outside placement agency to find them another job.	P7 feels that in the downsizing action that included P7's job, no trust or loyalty was shown toward any employee in the department where P7 was laid off. P7 said that trust and commitment are essential, but it has to be reciprocated to have meaning.
P7 (R28)	What does loyalty mean to you when management or a peer exudes this behavior	Tr ust and Loyalty	Leaders hip reaching out to highlight loyalty toward an employee by acknowledging their accomplishment(s) may provide security.	Some cherish loyalty when it is shown to you or on your behalf. When loyalty is displayed, and you have a schedule of what you can get back in return, there may be a disappointment.	P7's perception of valuing loyalty is essential between employees and the company you work for. But it is also important to feel valued as an employee. If

					employees do not think that value, loyalty may not be present.
P8 (R31)	A time when you felt a strong sense of loyalty toward the organization	Loyalty	Remembering a culture that had promoted trust and loyalty before the times of resource actions and human casualties	When employees start looking for other roles after a layoff, if the layoff process was handled with grace and dignity, they may still have some loyalty toward the organization that laid them off.	P8's experience is respected at the beginning of the job, before the mergers and acquisitions. Still, the company has changed over time, and so did the loyalty toward employees. P8 did not feel as though the work was alluded to or appreciated.
P8 (R32)	Employee's perceptions of downsizing and who it will affect	Short Term/Long Term Effects of Downsizing	Transparency & an understanding of why this type of action is being taken	If the downsizing efforts were widely known and there was enough time, employees may have had time to prepare, but in many cases, downsizing seems to take employees by surprise	P8 has been with the company for so long that P8 was emotionally prepared for anything. P8

				and the prep time appears to be limited to no time.	said going through many downsizing actions over the years made P8 numb to the experience.
P8 **(R33)**	Personal feelings on creative ways downsizing efforts could be done with fewer casualties	Im proving Loyalty and Trust	Leaders hip supports recognition of employees and how much value they bring to their jobs and the organization	When trying to create strategies to implement to reduce job loss, look at options such as reducing hours, offering unpaid leave but with a job to come back to in a certain amount of time, or presenting as robust as possible retirement packages to encourage those to leave so other workers who are not at retirement status can stay.	P8 just responded that when layoffs occur, they give employees the dignity they deserve when they are let go. Pay them what they are worth and treat them with respect.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

I will conduct a 45-60-minute interview

I will also reiterate what was described in the consent form.

Opening: I will ask a few demographic questions

- What position did you hold in your organization?

- Are you coming from the position of a manager or employee?

- How many years did you work in your position?

I will set up a rapport by asking questions to ease the individual. The question is conversational.

Can you share with me a time when you felt absolute loyalty to our organization?

Now I will begin by asking a few questions about your experiences in a downsizing situation. You can stop if you do not want to continue with the interview. I want to reiterate that I will not use your name to maintain your privacy.

Topic Area Loyalty

1. I would like you to return to the time your department was downsized and tell me what it was like and what you experienced yourself?

2. How did you feel about your management or your employees?

3. Can you describe how they maintained the work environment in a downsizing event?

4. How would you describe loyalty?

5. What do you feel when someone is loyal to you?

6. How do you outwardly react to those who exhibit loyalty?

7. Can you share a time when you felt loyalty to your organization and leaders?

Topic area Trust

8. How would you describe trust?

9. What do you feel when someone has been trustworthy to you?

    • How do you outwardly react to those who exhibit trustworthiness? Can you share when you felt a sense of trust for your organization and leaders?

10. What could you do to improve loyalty and trust for those you still work with or are in a leadership position?

11. What do you think are the effects of downsizing on organizational structures and employees?

Topic change creative ways to deal with downsizing

12. Could you think of creative ways your leadership could have improved your experience during the downsizing incident?

13. What kind of downsizing did your organization do? (This will give you it was short-term or long term etc.)

14. What creative ways do you think the leadership could have accomplished their downsizing goals if you felt it was the short term?