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Measuring Employee Job Satisfaction During Workplace Downsizing

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Measuring Employee Job Satisfaction During Workplace Downsizing

by
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Statement of Original Work

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Abstract

Measuring Employee Job Satisfaction During Workplace Downsizing. Trina Sanders, 2019: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: job satisfaction, downsizing, employee gender, employee age

This applied dissertation was designed to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction among men and women and employees of different age groups. Results from an employee survey conducted annually by the organizational site indicated that employees had high stress levels, low employee satisfaction and morale, negative attitudes, and a lack of trust of leadership following employee downsizing at the company. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction to determine any differences by gender or age group.

The study utilized a quantitative, descriptive, comparative methodology using Likert-style items from the Spector Job Satisfaction Survey. An online survey was completed by 128 participants, including demographic questions.

The data were analyzed using analysis of variance and descriptive statistics to test perceptions of job satisfaction, comparing male and female participants as well as participants by age group. The results showed 26.6% of participants were either dissatisfied or slightly dissatisfied with the workplace. In addition, the study found no significant differences in job satisfaction by gender. There was no significant interaction between gender and age groups related to job satisfaction.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The topic. The topic of this study is the effects of workforce downsizing on employee job satisfaction, which is impacted by stress, employee attitudes, and leadership behaviors during times of change management within large corporations. Employees are important to any organization, so leaders should plan to reduce stress in the workplace environment through any change process (George, 2015). Downsizing creates increased levels of stress for the surviving employees by increasing their workloads, often causing longer work days with a decrease in work–life balance (Robbins, DeCenzo, & Wolter, 2019).

The research problem. The company's brand and the employees are the foundation for any organization to remain successful, profitable, and competitive in a global marketplace (George, 2015). Results from an employee survey conducted annually by the organizational site indicated employees at the research site were having high stress levels, low employee satisfaction and morale, negative attitudes, and a lack of trust of leadership because many employees had been downsized from the company. The employee survey reported an 11% decrease in employee engagement, 14% decrease in trusting the leadership team, and 15% decrease in company loyalty. Change remains constant within any flourishing organization; however, the needs of the employees must be met to protect the performance levels of the organization (George, 2015). Employees who are dissatisfied and have high levels of stress or depression will not produce the same quality of work as employees who have lower levels of stress (George, 2015; Saari & Judge, 2004).

Background and justification. The act of corporate downsizing has been an ongoing phenomenon since the late 1980s with the expected outcome of cost reduction along with increased productivity, thus improving bottom line profits (Gandolfi, 2013). However, the effects of corporate downsizing create high levels of stress for the employees and a decrease in trust of the employer (De Meuse & Dai, 2013). Therefore, during these times of change, organizational leaders should understand the need to make their employees feel appreciated and satisfied within the work environment. The employees at the research site reported feeling high levels of stress, low morale, and an overall decrease in job satisfaction, as a result of the organization's recent job elimination efforts.

Deficiencies in the evidence. The research has indicated many debates about the reasons for employee attitudes and job satisfaction. The gaps remaining in the research are (a) cause of employee attitudes, (b) results of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and (c) how to measure or influence the attitudes of employees (Saari & Judge, 2004). In addition, only a small amount of research has measured employee attitudes and satisfaction based on culture or the country of residence (Saari & Judge, 2004). Human resource leaders should scrutinize how an employee's culture or other demographic factors could factor into attitudes and level of satisfaction (Saari & Judge, 2004). Research has shown conflicting results on impact of work environment on employees by gender, suggesting the need for further study (Hwang & Ramadoss, 2017). Further, the effects of downsizing on employees of different genders may differ across cultures and demographics (Snorradóttir, Rafnsdóttir, Tomasson, & Vilhjálmsson, 2014). Therefore, this study used gender and age group as demographics potentially affecting the impact of

downsizing on job satisfaction.

   Audience. Understanding variables that may impact an employee's attitude and job satisfaction through times of change management can improve the performance across many organizations. The audience for this study is corporate human resource managers, training managers, trainers, higher education administrators, and any leaders within a large or small corporation.

Setting of the Study

   The study was conducted at a large financial global corporation, a Fortune 500 company in the southwestern United States. This organization has over 70,000 employees and services millions of customers each year. The downsizing reductions occurred because of unfavorable bottom line profits from the previous year. The organization's recent job elimination efforts resulted in employees at the research site feeling high levels of stress, low morale, and decreased job satisfaction.

Researcher's Role

   The researcher has over 20 years' experience working in adult education for a large financial corporation in the training department as a learning specialist and curriculum developer. She has personal experience with downsizing in a corporate environment.

Purpose of the Study

   The primary goal of this quantitative study is was to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction by (a) gender and (b) age group. As a result of the catastrophic economic collapse in 2008, major downsizing occurred within the financial sector, causing stress and anguish among many employees. Since the early

1980s, companies have implemented a workforce reduction process with the goal of reduction in operational costs and an increase in productivity and profits margins (Gandolfi, 2013). The population for this study was drawn from a large Fortune 500 financial company in the southwestern United States. Due to the high demands of customers and personnel downsizing, organizations have employees with increased stress levels and a decrease in job satisfaction. Downsizing leads to not only higher levels of stress, but also increased workloads for the survivors (Kalimo, Taris, & Schaufeli, 2003).

Definition of Terms

This section delineates the terms used to describe an employee's dissatisfaction during times of workplace downsizing within large corporations.

Downsizing. This term refers to actions to immediately reduce operations and human resources or personnel to increase profits (Gandolfi, 2013). Downsizing was the independent variable of this study.

Employee engagement. An employee is engaged when he or she demonstrates a positive attitude and acceptance of the company and the company's vision (Robertson, Birch, & Cooper, 2012).

Employee satisfaction. This term is used to describe when an employee is motivated, productive, punctual, experiencing physical and mental health, and overall satisfied with life **(**Mujkić, Šehić, Rahimić & Jusić, 2014). Employee satisfaction was the dependent variable in this study.

Leadership. An individual is demonstrating leadership when he or she clearly communicates the ability to recognize an employee's self-worth, reinforcing the person's own belief **(**Covey, 2004).

Stress. Stress is an internal response to a dynamic environment that can cause tension, fatigue, depression, and anxiety **(**George, 2015).

Survivors. In the context of this study, survivors are those employees remaining following a downsizing event (Kalimo et al., 2003).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature reviewed, including the theoretical framework guiding the development of this study. The literature review comprises various areas of research including (a) the theoretical framework, (b) gender differences in job satisfaction and workplace downsizing, (c) effects of downsizing on survivors, (d) job-related stress, (e) employee satisfaction and morale, and (f) the impact of leadership behaviors on employee satisfaction. The chapter concludes with the research questions guiding the study.

Theoretical Framework

Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs theory can be adapted to provide understanding of employee satisfaction as it relates to their individual needs. Humans seek fulfillment of needs on a hierarchy, beginning with the most basic requirements of food and shelter. The second basic requirement is security, which may be threatened during corporate downsizing. The psychological needs are belongingness and self-esteem. The top level, when all other needs are met, is self-actualization, or fulfilling one's creative potential (Maslow, 1954). This study focused on job satisfaction, including psychological elements of workplace trust (security and belongingness), stress, and self-esteem and accomplishment.

Gender Differences in Job Satisfaction and Workplace Downsizing

Considerable differences among male and female attitudes within the workplace may affect job satisfaction. Studies have shown that women with family obligations are happier when they have job flexibility (Nadler, Voyles, Cocke, & Lowery, 2016). Long or inflexible working hours can interfere with work–life balance for employees, causing

work and family conflict. Therefore, employers offering a flexible working environment likely will see higher employer satisfaction rates and lower turnover rates, especially among female employees (Nadler et al., 2016).

Research also has suggested that women tend to be more nurturing, warm, caring, and forgiving than men (Pudrovska & Karraker, 2014; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013). Because these behaviors are taught at an early age, woman display a higher degree of sensitivity and social skills as compared to men. Conversely, men use their emotions to gain control and status. Walsh and Bartikowski (2013) suggested that because of social norms, women are expected to demonstrate a heightened amount of emotional intelligence by suppressing their emotions at work compared to their male counterparts. Similarly, in the workplace women are more likely to suppress their negative emotions while displaying positivity, whereas men reveal their negative emotions while withholding their sensitive side (Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013). Pudrovska and Karraker (2014) examined the effects of job authority with gender differences and symptoms of depression. The perception was that women lacked confidence and assertiveness, whereas men were thought to be more competent as leaders and more respected by their employees. The study concluded that women in leadership positions exhibit more symptoms of depression than women who are not in these roles. Men in leadership positions have fewer symptoms of depression (Pudrovska & Karraker, 2014). Put simply, men should work harder to create positive emotions within the workplace during challenging times.

Employment rates for females are steadily rising, as the cost of living demands multiple incomes to maintain household expenses (Hwang & Ramadoss, 2017; Walsh &

Bartikowski, 2013). However, studies have shown involuntary workplace downsizing rates are significantly lower for women as compared to men. Surprisingly, research is limited in this area, even though data have shown that men are involuntarily dismissed at a rate 45% higher than women (Wilkins & Wooden, 2013). Wilkens and Wooden (2013) noted controlling for job type accounted for the difference, which reflected differences in the types of jobs men and women choose. Many studies have shown conflicting findings regarding how different work environments affect employments across different genders, suggesting more research is needed in this area (Hwang & Ramadoss, 2017). Employees could experience satisfaction with many aspects of the job. Women often value flexibility and benefits, whereas men may value salary and promotions (Hwang & Ramadoss, 2017; Nadler et al., 2016). Further, the effects that downsizing has on employees by gender may differ across different cultures and demographics (Snorradóttir et al., 2014). For instance, Walsh and Bartikowski (2013) considered age group as well as gender in a study of employee quitting intentions. Halkos and Bousinakis (2010) also considered gender and age as potential factors affecting employee satisfaction.

Effects of Downsizing on Survivors

Downsizing is a violation of a contract and a stable environment between the employees and the employer. Layoffs can create increased workloads for survivors, causing increasing demands requiring the survivors to increase productivity (Boyd, Tuckey, & Winefield, 2014). In most cases, after a downsizing has occurred, the survivors are left trying to understand the aftermath in an environment that no longer feels safe. Unfortunately, for many organizations, the survivors are no longer engaged and experience a decrease in job satisfaction (Lahner, Hayslip, Mckelvy, & Caballero,

2014). The remaining employees are normally left to endure more responsibilities with no additional pay (Boyd et al., 2014).

Studies have shown that due to a competitive economical global climate, organizational leaders often downsize their workforce to reduce costs and increase profit margins. According to Florah, Nyagol, and Oluoch (2013), the survivors often have mixed emotions about their organization after downsizing occurs. Downsizing is still the most adopted leadership solution to restructuring an organization and reducing operating costs. Downsizing increases or declines productivity depending on the following outcomes: (a) employees starting entrepreneur endeavors, (b) lower overhead costs, (c) increased productivity, and (d) increased profits. Downsizing not only leads to higher levels of stress, but also could lead to an increased workload for the survivors (Kalimo et al., 2003).

Job-Related Stress

Stress is a major component for workplace burnout. However, research has indicated inconsistencies regarding gender and workplace stress or satisfaction. Workplace stress occurs when employees' responsibilities and demand increase and employees lack coping abilities or strategies (Lewinski et al., 2014). Researchers have suggested that employee engagement is a cure for workplace stress. Workplace engagement includes (a) feeling positive energy, (b) being involved, and (c) demonstrating a professional attitude (Lewinski et al., 2014).

Halkos and Bousinakis (2010) conducted an empirical analysis qualitative study of 425 random employees in private and public sectors to investigate the effects of job-related stress on employee satisfaction. Changes within an organization are a major

stressor for leaders and their employees. Organizational changes affect employees by increasing workloads and changing roles for other employees, thus creating a sense of insecurity that impacts the employees' job satisfaction (Lawrence & Callan, 2011). Two main problems exist within the workplace: stress and employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction tends to relate to increased employee productivity (Halkos & Bousinakis, 2010). Further, employees tend to make mistakes and wrong decisions when under pressure in the workplace (Halkos & Bousinakis, 2010). Halkos and Bousinakis found a direct, inverse correlation between an employee's need to leave an organization and employee satisfaction. This study was conducted with an interview process over 1 month, analyzing variables such as age, sex, income, and marital status.

Research has shown that workplace downsizing creates higher levels of stress for the survivors (Eilam-Shamir & Yaakobi, 2014). Researchers have determined that before the effects of downsizing are felt, the organization should be examining what the financial outcome will be and what the attitudes of surviving employees will be (Zatzick, Deery, & Iverson, 2015). The focus for the employees would be how to avoid being laid off; for the organization, the focus is how to retain the best talent (Zatzick et al., 2015).

Employee Satisfaction and Morale

Many organizational leaders understand the importance of employee satisfaction and trust, especially during climate changes within organizations (Gupta & Singla, 2016). Gupta and Singla (2016) studied the relationship among three factors within an organization: (a) organizational change, (b) job satisfaction, and (c) organizational trust. Data were collected from 150 information technology professionals using standardized questionnaires. The results showed a positive relationship between organizational trust

and job satisfaction, suggesting during times of organization change, mutual trust and respect are needed between leadership and employees (Gupta & Singla, 2016). The culture of an organization has been associated with employee retention and job satisfaction (Azanza, Moriano, & Molero, 2013). The decision for an organization to downsize normally means that some employees will lose their jobs, which can create high levels of stress for both the employees and the leaders of the organization. The attitudes of employees within an organization (i.e., job dissatisfaction) could lead to rebellious behavior patterns, such as strikes, frequent absences, or resignations from the organization (Robbins et al., 2019).

Leadership and Employee Satisfaction

A vast amount of research has been conducted to analyze effective leadership. Many researchers have maintained that the best leaders are also subject-matter experts, although others posited that leaders should follow the right process to be more effective (Sanduleac & Căpățînă, 2016). Rai and Prakash (2012) argued that employee knowledge-sharing ability depends on leadership within the organization. Regardless, leaders are challenged with maintaining employee morale when employees are insecure about their job status (Robbins et al., 2019).

Mujkić et al. (2014) determined that a transformational leadership style resulted in higher levels of employee satisfaction. The study consisted of 399 participants from companies in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Germany. The researchers found it challenging to locate studies that compared transformational leadership styles to others as related to employee satisfaction (Mujkić et al., 2014). The researchers noted that leaders who practice transformational leadership styles are able to motivate their subordinates to

produce more than they imagined they were capable of producing. Leaders who practice a transformational leadership style tend to have the most motivated employees who trust their leader to shape their future endeavors. Overall, the study did not find literature to prove that other leadership styles, such as transactional or more charismatic styles, do not also contribute to higher levels of employee satisfaction; more research should be conducted on this topic (Mujkić et al., 2014).

Often leaders join a new team or a new organization with hopes of motivating their team to perform at the highest level possible. Alghamdi, Topp, and AlYami (2018) conducted a study to compare job satisfaction among nurses and gender differences centered around transformational leadership. Out of 600 Saudi nurses who were solicited, 308 nurses (51.3%) participated in the survey that measured their level of job satisfaction and their perceptions of the transformation leadership style. The key findings of the study indicated that gender type played a significant role in job satisfaction and leadership style. The Saudi nurses in the study, regardless of gender, gave higher regards when their leader was male, compared to working under the leadership of a female (Alghamdi et al., 2018).

Servant leadership. According to Kashyap and Rangnekar (2014), due to competitive pressures to retain and keep employees satisfied, extraordinary measures must be taken to build trust and provide leadership support to employees. Kashyap and Rangnekar studied an Indian organization and explored the employees' perceptions of their company's brand, concerning the relationship between servant leadership and employee retention rates. The outcomes of the study indicated employees' brand perception and having a leader who displays the characteristics of a servant leader

increased employee retention (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2014). Overall, the researchers discovered for organizations to build and retain the best talent, the leadership team should adopt behaviors mirroring being a servant leader and omit behaviors that are authoritative or controlling (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2014).

Goh and Low (2014) studied 177 participants to measure the role of trust in leaders as a mediator between the servant leadership style and organizational commitment. The outcome suggested leaders should practice servant leadership to raise trust within the organization. Additionally, the researchers implied that leaders should refrain from practicing the traditional top-down approach to break down any barriers that exist and increase followership and trust levels (Goh & Low, 2014).

The servant leadership phenomenon was introduced in the 1970s with an essay by Robert Greenleaf sharing the philosophy of great leaders serving others. Greenleaf (2003) shared that great leadership attributes come from serving others through long-term relationships. Many organizations are adopting this leadership model, which involves others in the decision-making process. With this leadership style, the main goal is to serve others and to be an inspiration for others to follow (Goh & Low, 2014). The 10 characteristics for being a great servant leader, according to Greenleaf, are

- actively listening;
- empathy, as servant leaders listen to and empathize with their followers;
- healing;
- awareness, which allows for followers to be aware of development that is needed from a holistic point of view;
- persuasion, as opposed to using authority for compliance;

- conceptualization, allowing the servant leader to look ahead to the long-term goals of the organization, rather than focusing on the day-to-day tasks;

- foresight, being intuitive and learning valuable lessons from past life experiences;

- stewardship, being committed to serving others, being open, and persuasive;

- commitment to nurturing the personal and professional growth of followers; and

- community building.

Servant leaders are often untrained formally yet evolve over time, guided by experience, self-image, and intrinsic motivators (Greenleaf, 2003). Servant leadership emphasizes the followers developing and strengthening their growth and creativity. In addition, servant leaders operate with a service mindset, fostering caring relationships, and not from a position of power (Rai & Prakash, 2012).

Leadership traits and behaviors. Active listening is a valuable leadership trait, involving a leader being extremely patient while listening to the needs of employees (Greenleaf, 2003; Rai & Prakash, 2012). If this goal is achieved and the employees' perspective is acknowledged, then employees will be motivated to follow the leader's views (Rai & Prakash, 2012). Organizational leaders in today's workforce must adjust their leadership styles from the traditional hierarchical, authority-based structures to a more dynamic leadership style. Listening, collaboration, and knowledge sharing are significant skills needed by leaders to improve employee job satisfaction (Kaigh, Driscoll, Tucker, & Lam, 2014).

A key factor to every relationship is trust and having integrity, which also is the

foundation to every successful organization (Covey, 2004). According to Robbins et al. (2019), studies have shown that the most admired leaders earn the trust of their employees. Taking this into account, leaders must be competent as well as approachable in order to maintain employee engagement. Speechley (2005) stated good leaders should have a (a) clear vision and mission, (b) follow leaders that others look up to, and (c) develop strategies to influence a culture of leadership. According to Pierro, Raven, Amato, and Bélanger (2013), employees committed to their organization are one of the keys to success for an organization to thrive. Employee commitment helps to reduce attrition and increases performance. Moreover, transformational leadership styles increase employees' willingness to comply with leaders who have a softer demeanor as opposed to more direct, harsher characteristics (Pierro et al., 2013).

Leadership style plays a pivotal role in employees' behavior within the workplace. The days are gone where a leader can just sit in a cubicle all day barking orders to employees. Leaders not only should go above and beyond for their employees, but also should satisfy their employees' objectives and future endeavors (Rauf, 2014). Rauf (2014) noted that key leadership styles revolve around autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Former Apple chief executive officer (CEO) Steve Jobs used these styles. The company flourished with his leadership style, which mirrored all three styles of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership. However, once the new CEO, Tim Cook, took over, a spike in resignations was observed, arguably due to his autocratic and conventional leadership style (Rauf, 2014). Northhouse (2012) suggested that leaders of organizations should adopt a participative leadership style establishing the type of climate that invites the sharing of diverse opinions from

employees.

Carter, Armenakis, Feild, and Mossholder (2013) noted the importance of transformational leadership during organizational change. Although there are several leadership perspectives, the transformational leadership style relates to employees feeling empowered and having growth potential and confidence (Carter et al., 2013). Of particular importance are the relationships between leaders and employees.

Men and Stacks (2013) conducted a quantitative online study to examine the organizational impact of leadership styles on employee empowerment and the employee's perception of the organization. The researchers randomly selected 700 employees from diverse work units of a Fortune 500 company. The findings suggested that employees' perception of the organization were positively influenced by transformational leadership, whereas transactional leadership had a negative effect on employees' perceptions. Additionally, the findings suggested the employees' opinions of the organization were determined by how the employees were treated and whether or not they were empowered to make decisions (Men & Stacks, 2013). Transformational leadership style has been linked to the following behaviors:

- superior work performance,
- job satisfaction,
- positive emotions,
- motivated employees, and
- good relationships.

The literature has suggested that leadership theories are normally divided into two styles—transformational and transactional. Transformational leaders motivate their

employees and care about the well-being of the employees. Equally important, they are typically more charismatic and foster a climate of trust and confidence (Men & Stacks, 2013). Transactional leadership is based on a more authoritative leadership style to maintain control and reinforce employee performance. This leadership style is also known to use reward tactics for good performance or strict punishment for poor employee performance. A good leader should have the skills necessary to understand when to use the best style depending on the situation.

Research Questions

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction by (a) gender and (b) age group. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions of job satisfaction in the workplace?

2. To what extent is there a difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction?

3. To what extent is there a difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups?

4. To what extent is there an interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction?

Chapter 3: Methodology

The focus of this quantitative, descriptive, comparative study was to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction by (a) gender and (b) age group. As the researcher navigated through various procedures of this study, the data were acquired and analyzed to answer one descriptive research question and four remaining comparative research questions guiding the study. In this chapter, the researcher first describes the population and the participants chosen for the study. Afterwards, the data collection instrument, research design, and data collection and analysis procedures of the study are described.

For organizations to thrive, leaders and their employees must adapt to change to remain competitive in this global economy. Although the literature revealed that the act of downsizing or laying off employees aids in removing immediate financial strain, downsizing could hurt the overall financial structure of the organization (Carriger, 2016). To reduce operating costs and eliminate a declining bottom line, organizations have increased the amount of employee downsizing. Datta, Guthrie, Basil, and Pandey (2010) described downsizing during the 2008 recession as "ubiquitous" (p. 281). As a result of workplace downsizing, leaders of organizations expect to see an increase in employee performance. This increased workload increases stress on downsizing survivors and reduces employee morale and performance (Davis, Trevor, & Feng, 2015). The literature has suggested that managing this change through clear communication and authentic leadership can comfort survivors and reduce their stress and anxiety (Datta et al., 2010).

The literature identified impacts on the survivors after the downsizing occurs. Employees who survive a downsizing occurrence may display signs of withdrawal,

reduced trust, a decline in work performance, and voluntary turnover (Datta et al., 2010; Davis et al., 2015). Equally important, the literature suggested that some of the psychological impacts of downsizing carry over into the downsized and reemployed employees' new workplace (Davis et al., 2015). The aim of this study was to uncover the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction by (a) gender and (b) age group. This chapter provides the methodology for this study.

Participants

The population for this study was drawn from a large Fortune 500 company in the southwestern United States. The concept of sampling comes from selecting a specific number of participants from a larger population (Kumar, 2011). This data collection method allows for the selection of nonrandom willing participants who can assist with the survey process (Terrell, 2016). The researcher explored the use of convenience sampling, selecting to invite participants who were available and eager to participate in the study (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). Because the researcher had access to the participants, the survey was sent to their individual e-mails and not to an organization; therefore, a formal letter of permission was not needed from the organization. Permission was required from the participants before completing the survey. The researcher has over 25 years of experience working for large corporations in the training profession and has personal experience with company downsizing. The survey participants selected to take part in this study worked for a large corporation with a history of downsizing. In addition, the participants were adults of various ethnicities, educational backgrounds, age groups, and

occupations. Research by Locke, Silverman and Spirduso (2010) supported the most common participants' characteristics in a study include (a) number, (b) age, (c) gender, (d) training and experience, (e) special abilities, (f) health, and (g) physical characteristics. Most survey samples represent a small population of the larger population (Fowler, 2009).

The researcher ensured the confidentiality of the research participants' identities before administering the online survey. The researcher emailed the participants containing the following: (a) description of the study, (b) purpose of the study, (c) instructions for completing the survey, (d) short description of procedures to track the survey results, and (e) short demographic questionnaire. The data obtained from the survey were exported into SPSS and examined further.

Instrument

The Job Satisfaction Survey. A composite score for job satisfaction was measured by the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985, 1994). The Job Satisfaction Survey includes 36 items to evaluate nine factors of job satisfaction: (a) satisfaction with pay, (b) fringe benefits, (c) contingent rewards, (d) supervision, (e) nature of work, (f) communication, (g) promotional opportunities, (h) operational procedures, and (i) coworkers (Spector, 1985). The survey is scored using a 6-point Likert rating scale ranging from 1 (*disagree very much)* to 6 *(agree very much)*.

Validity and reliability. The Job Satisfaction Survey instrument is a well-established tool that has been used to measure nine dimensions of job satisfaction related to employees. The instrument has been investigated for reliability and validity based on a sample of 3,067 individuals (Spector, 1985). An overall average of .70 for internal

consistency was obtained from the sample. Equally important, the reliability was tested for 43 workers over an 18-month period, yielding internal consistency statistics of .37 to 0.74 (Spector, 1985).

Procedures

Research design and conceptual framework. The quantitative study utilized a nonexperimental descriptive survey approach with a cross-sectional design. In nonexperimental research, the researcher has limited control over the independent variables in the study, other than through statistical procedures, such as surveys (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). Through the use of the survey methods, the researcher interacted with the participants by collecting information surveys. This descriptive study investigated participants through analyzing at least one variable (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). The cross-sectional design is very common, because it allows the researcher to collect data from a specific time (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). The purpose of quantitative research is to quantify extent of variation within a phenomenon or problem (Kumar, 2014). A quantitative study was conducted using a survey format sent to each participant's personal e-mail.

The specific types of research designs are not always mutually exclusive. The study is quantitative, for instance. One research question is descriptive and the remaining four research questions are comparative. Demographic characteristics were compared relative to the dependent variable of job satisfaction, and as such, the independent variables were preexisting. No random assignment of participants was utilized in the study. Therefore, the study design can be described as descriptive and comparative. The independent and dependent variables should be clearly defined to conduct a quantitative

analysis. The research gauged the participants' job satisfaction at a company following downsizing.

      Independent variable. Downsizing is the desire to have an immediate reduction in operations and a reduction in human resourcing in order to increase profits (Gandolfi, 2013). This research focused on the effects of downsizing on employee job satisfaction, which can be impacted by variables of stress, employee attitudes, and leadership behaviors during times of change management.

      Dependent variable. The dependent variable was employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction describes when an employee is motivated, productive, punctual, having great physical and mental health, and overall satisfied with life (Mujkić et al., 2014).

      Data collection. Surveys are the most used data collection method among researchers. Survey research consist of seeking out information consisting of facts, opinions, and behaviors of the research participants (Dane, 2018). Data were collected by the use of a confidential survey distributed to the participants through their personal e-mails. The researcher's survey participants completed a confidential survey generated through SurveyMonkey. The participants were asked to complete confidential demographic information consisting of their gender and age.

      The e-mail distributed to the participants included the online link to SurveyMonkey. Fowler (2009) affirmed that sending an e-mail is the most common method of getting participants to complete an Internet-based survey. This allowed the researcher to expand the sample size by seeking participants who were outside of the geographic location of the researcher and residing throughout the southwestern United

States. The demographic questionnaire was given to all participants via e-mail. Participants were encouraged to participate in this voluntary survey and ensured that responses would remain confidential.

Data analysis. The data gathered for this research from the sample of participants were checked for accuracy and coded for analysis. The following hypotheses were tested to measure employee job satisfaction and morale during workplace downsizing.

R1: What are the perceptions of job satisfaction in the workplace?

R2: To what extent is there a difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction?

H1$_0$: There is no significant difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction.

H1$_A$: There is a significant difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction.

R3: To what extent is there a difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups?

H2$_0$: There is no significant difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups.

H2$_A$: There is a significant difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups.

R4: To what extent is there an interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction?

H3$_0$: There is no significant interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction.

H3_A: There is a significant interaction between gender and age relative to job

satisfaction.

Statistical tests. The first research question was answered with descriptive

statistics. A composite score for job satisfaction, as measured by the Job Satisfaction

Survey (Spector, 1985, 1994), was computed using a 6-item Likert rating scale ranging

from 1 (*disagree very much)* to *6 (agree very much)*. Nineteen of the 36 items were

reverse scored. For instance, Item 1, "I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I

do," was scored regularly. Item 2, "There is really too little chance for promotion on my

job," would be scored in reverse, as agreement would indicate less job satisfaction. The

mean and standard deviation for job satisfaction were computed and reported, and a new

categorical variable was computed. The categories corresponded to the Likert categories

on the Job Satisfaction Survey. *Strongly disagree* became *strongly dissatisfied*, *agree*

became *satisfied,* and so on. Computed values were rounded to the nearest whole number

and categorized accordingly for descriptive purposes (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). For

instance, values ranging from 1–1.49 were rounded to 1 and labeled *strongly dissatisfied*.

Similarly, values ranging from 1.50–2.49 were rounded to 2 and labeled *dissatisfied*. This

facilitated the reporting of job satisfaction in the workplace with the use of a frequency

distribution. Descriptive research questions require no hypotheses.

Research Questions 2–4 and related Hypotheses 1–3 were tested with one two-

way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA is the appropriate statistical test to use

when trying to determine whether significant differences exist between two or more

groups based on a dependent variable that is on an interval scale of measurement or

higher (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). For Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 1, the

independent variable was gender (male, female). The dependent variable was job

satisfaction as measured by the Job Satisfaction Survey. The ANOVA tested for a main

effect of gender. For Research Question 3, Hypothesis 2 tested with the same two-way

ANOVA. The independent variable was age group. Age was grouped into categories

depending on the distribution of the data. The ANOVA also tested for a main effect of

age. For Research Question 4, Hypothesis 3 tested the interaction between gender and

age group to determine whether job satisfaction depended on different age groups and

gender. See Table 1.

Table 1

Research Questions, Variables of Interest, and Scales of Measurement

Research question	Independent variable/scale of measurement	Dependent variable/scale of measurement	Statistical test
1. What are the perceptions of job satisfaction in the workplace?	N/A	N/A	Descriptive Statistics
2. To what extent is there a difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction?	Gender/ nominal	Job satisfaction/ interval	Two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)
3. To what extent is there a difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups?	Age group/ nominal	Job satisfaction/ interval	Two-way ANOVA
4. To what extent is there an interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction?	Gender/nominal Age group/ nominal	Job satisfaction/ interval	Two-way ANOVA

Alpha level. The alpha level in a study is the value at which the null hypothesis

will be rejected, assuming that the alternate hypothesis is true. In social sciences, the

alpha level is typically $p < .05$ (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2013).

Power analysis. An a-priori power analysis was conducted with G*Power 3.1

(Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). For a two-way ANOVA with a medium effect

size ($f = .25$), an alpha level of .05, and a power level of .80, a sample size of 128 was

required. Statistical power increases as the sample size increases, as illustrated in Figure
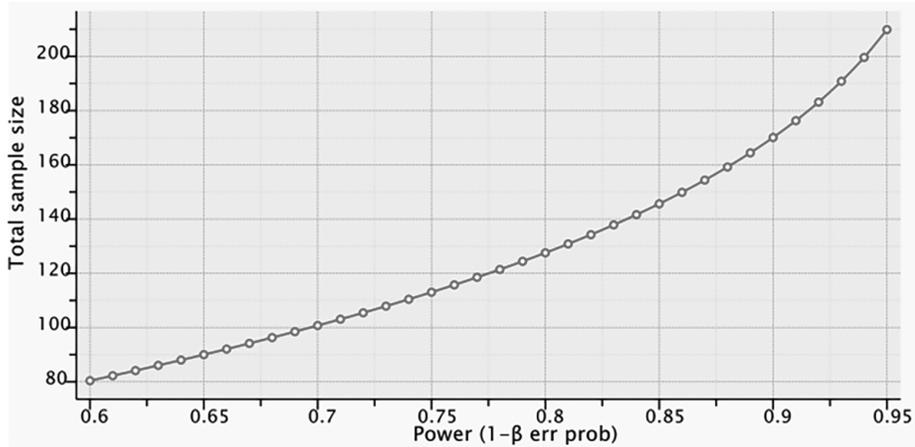
1.

Figure 1. Required sample size and statistical power. *F* tests – ANOVA: fixed effects, special, main effects, and interactions. Numerator *df* = 1, number of groups = 4, alpha error probability = .05, effect size *f* = .25.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive, comparative study was to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction by (a) gender and (b) age group. The act of corporate downsizing has been an ongoing phenomenon since the late 1980s with the expected outcome of cost reduction along with increased productivity, thus improving bottom line profits (Gandolfi, 2013). Corporate downsizing creates high levels of stress for employees and a decrease in trust in the employer (De Meuse & Dai, 2013). This study was expected to help organizational leaders understand factors in the effects of downsizing on employee job satisfaction.

The population for this study was extracted from a large financial Fortune 500 company in the southwestern United States. This organization has over 70,000 employees and services millions of customers each year. Due to the high demands of the customers and the attrition rates, this organization had employees with increased stress levels and a decrease in job satisfaction.

Data were collected using an anonymous survey distributed to the participants' personal e-mails. The researcher's survey participants completed an anonymous survey generated through SurveyMonkey. The participants were asked to provide confidential demographic information, which included their age range, gender, employment status, and most recent occupation. The survey instrument utilized during this study was the Job Satisfaction Survey, which includes a 6-item Likert rating scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* (Spector, 1985, 1994). The Job Satisfaction Survey includes 36 items that evaluate nine factors of job satisfaction: (a) satisfaction with pay, (b) fringe benefits, (c) contingent rewards, (d) supervision, (e) nature of work, (f) communication,

(g) promotional opportunities, (h) operational procedures, and (i) coworkers (Spector, 1985).

Chapter 4 provides a reporting of the demographic characteristics, description of the data and data analysis, results by research question, and a summary of the results. The data were analyzed with SPSS 23 for Windows. The following provides a discussion of the demographic characteristics.

Demographic Characteristics

The initial sample consisted of 140 participants who entered the survey. Twelve participants did not complete the survey and were subsequently excluded from the analyses. This left a final sample of 128 participants who ranged in age from 25 to 76 (M = 42, SD = 9.11), as shown in Table 2. Female respondents (72.7%, n = 93) outnumbered male participants (27.3%, n = 35).

Table 2

Employment Status

Employment status	n	$\%$
Employed full time	108	84.4
Self-employed	9	7.0
Employed part time	5	3.9
Unemployed/seeking employment	5	3.9
Retired	1	0.8

Note. N = 128.

Slightly more than half of the participants (55.5%, n = 71) reportedly never had been the victim of employee downsizing (i.e., layoff or termination not due to employee conduct), whereas 44.5% (n = 57) had experienced downsizing. Regarding employment status, most participants (84.4%, n = 108) were employed full time, 7% (n = 9) were self-

employed, and 3.9% (*n* = 5) were employed part-time. Employment status is provided in Table 2.

Respondents were asked, "Which of the following describes your current or most recent occupation?" As shown in Table 3, most participants (59.4%, *n* = 76) selected education, training, and library occupations, followed by management occupations (7.8%, *n* = 10).

Table 3

Current or Most Recent Occupation

Occupation	*n*	*%*
Education, training, & library occupations	76	59.4
Management	10	7.8
Business & financial operations	8	6.3
Health care support	5	3.9
Health care practitioners & technical	4	3.1
Computer and mathematical	4	3.1
Office & administrative support	4	3.1
Sales & related	3	2.3
Life, physical, & social science	2	1.6
Architecture & engineering	1	0.8
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, media	1	0.8
Community & social service	1	0.8
Farming, fishing, & forestry	1	0.8
Other		
Compliance manager	1	0.8
Corporate wellness program manager	1	0.8
Customer service	1	0.8
Education in health care profession	1	0.8
Instructional design	1	0.8
R&D scientist	1	0.8
Telecommunications	1	0.8
Vocational consultant (insurance)	1	0.8

Note. N = 128.

Ten respondents were employed in health care in some regard (combining health care practitioners and technical occupations, health care support, and health care education). Eight (6.3%) reported business and financial operations occupations. Less frequent occupations are listed in Table 3. Eight participants opined that the list given did not accurately describe their current or most recent occupations and added their occupation under the "Other" category, as shown in Table 3.

Participants were asked to rank the nine factors of job satisfaction measured by the survey: (a) satisfaction with pay, (b) fringe benefits, (c) contingent rewards, (d) supervision, (e) nature of work, (f) communication, (g) promotional opportunities, (h) operational procedures, and (i) coworkers in order of importance. Means and standard deviations were computed for each of the nine factors and arranged in the order of descending means. Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Factors of Job Satisfaction Ranked by Order of Importance

Factors	*M*	*SD*
Satisfaction with pay	2.87	2.25
Nature of work	3.11	2.35
Fringe benefits (i.e., health insurance, paid time off, etc.)	4.20	2.40
Communication	5.10	2.02
Supervision	5.56	2.12
Promotional opportunities	5.61	2.37
Contingent rewards (i.e., positive reinforcement)	5.80	2.14
Coworkers	6.17	2.62
Operational procedures	6.58	2.13

Note. $N = 128$. All items showed a minimum ranking of 1 and a maximum of 9.

The highest endorsed factors of job satisfaction were satisfaction with pay (M = 2.87, SD = 2.25), nature of work (M = 3.11, SD = 2.35), and fringe benefits (M = 4.20, SD = 2.40). The least important factors were operational procedures (M = 6.58, SD = 2.13), coworkers (M = 6.17, SD = 2.62), and contingent rewards or positive reinforcement (M = 5.80, SD = 2.14). Most important factors of job satisfaction are ranked in Table 4. To emphasize this hierarchy of importance, responses were also illustrated in a bar graph in Figure 2.
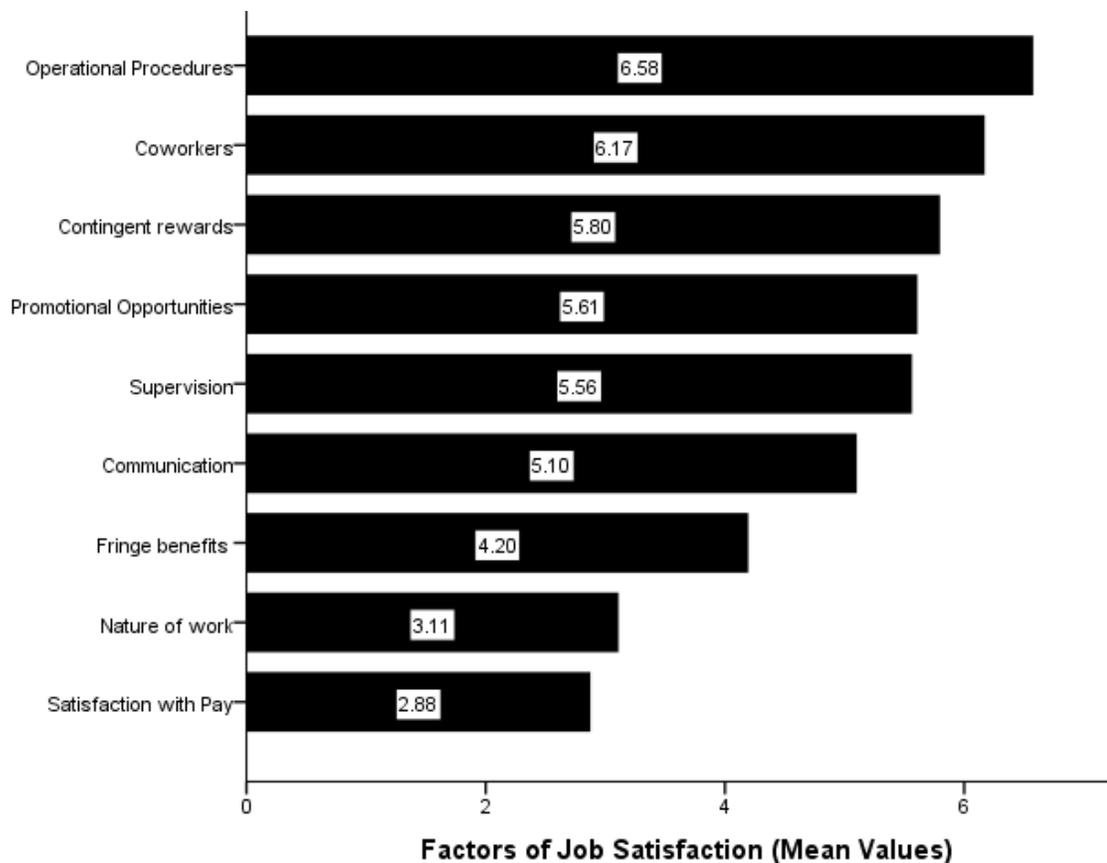

Figure 2. Factors of job satisfaction ranked by order of importance. Lower mean values indicate higher importance.

Data Analysis

Instrument reliability for sample. Instrument reliability of the Job Satisfaction Survey for the sample of 128 participants was tested with Cronbach's alpha. Initially, the

reliability of the 36 items was .54, which is considered poor, based on generally accepted criteria (DeVellis, 2012). The wording of the survey items was reviewed, and a determination was made that 19 items were negatively worded. The specific items were Survey Items 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 36. These items were subsequently reverse-coded so that a higher score on the Job Satisfaction Survey meant a higher degree of job satisfaction. Reliability for the 36 items was computed again. After reverse-coding the items in question, the revised reliability was excellent ($\alpha = .93$).

Descriptive statistics and data screening. Scores for job satisfaction ranged from 1.58 to 5.58 ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.77$). The data were screened for normality with skewness and kurtosis statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, and visual examination of a histogram. In SPSS, distributions are normal if the absolute values of their skewness and kurtosis coefficients are less than twice their standard errors. Based on these criteria, the distribution for job satisfaction was within normal limits. Skewness and kurtosis coefficients for job satisfaction are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Skewness and Kurtosis Coefficients for Variable of Job Satisfaction

Test	Statistic	*SE*
Skewness	-.298	.214
Kurtosis	-.074	.425

The distribution for job satisfaction was further examined with the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, with results of .985, $p = .166$. A distribution is normal when the significance level is greater than .05. Results showed no significant difference between

the distribution of scores for job satisfaction and a theoretical normal distribution.

The skewness for the distribution of scores for job satisfaction was 1.39 times the standard error. The kurtosis was 0.17 times the standard error. The normal histogram of job satisfaction is illustrated in Figure 3.
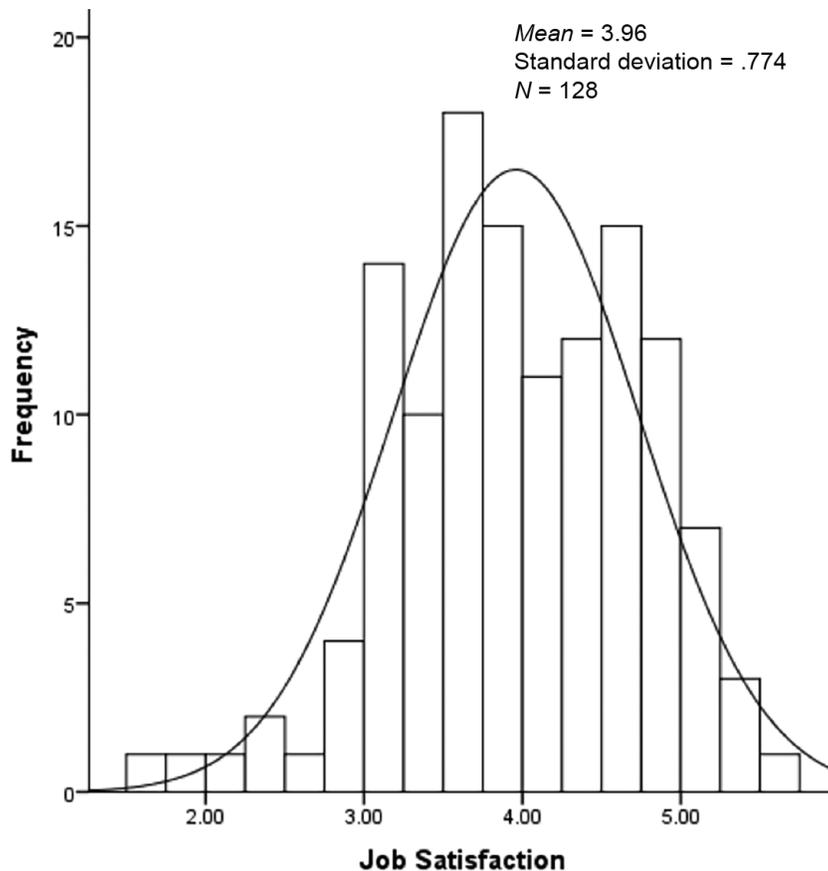
Figure 3. Histogram of job satisfaction.

The distribution of scores for job satisfaction was further evaluated for statistical outliers with a box and whisker plot. A statistical outlier is indicated when the value falls above the lower or upper end of the whisker. Computationally, a statistical outlier is identified by falling below the value obtained when multiplying the interquartile range by 1.5 from the first quartile. In addition, an outlier is identified by exceeding the value

determined by adding 1.5 x interquartile range to the third quartile. A box and whisker

plot confirmed the presence of one outlier. A stem and leaf plot indicated specifically that

the value was ≤ 1.6. The median was 3.92. See Figure 4. The number "17" on the boxplot

represents the 17th case in the SPSS data set. It is a case identification number.
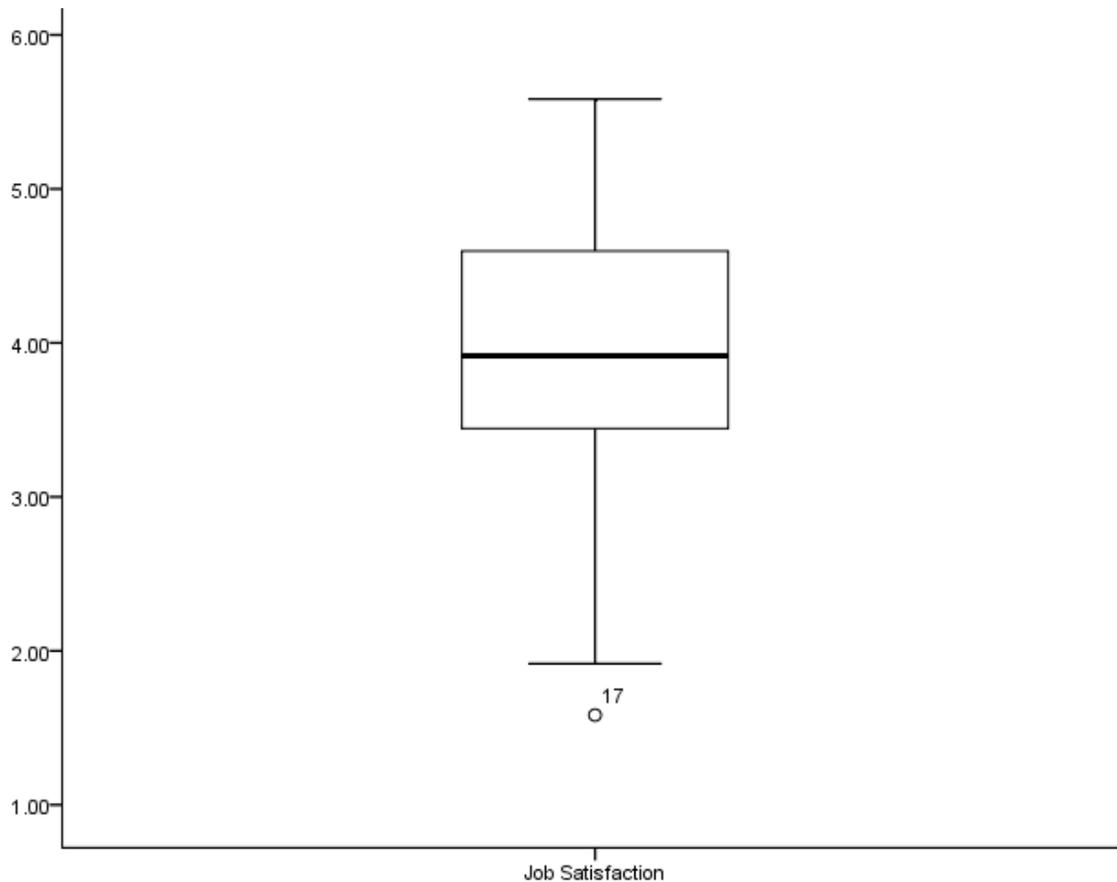
Figure 4. Box and whisker plot for job satisfaction. Y-axis represents scores on the Job Satisfaction Survey.

Possible causes of the statistical outlier were considered. Outliers can be caused

by human error, such as errors in data collection, recording, or data entry (Osborne &

Overbay, 2004). Data entry errors were not likely due to the data recording and data entry

process. Participants completed online surveys, and the results were exported directly

from SurveyMonkey to Microsoft Excel and then imported into SPSS for analysis.

Outliers also can be legitimate cases sampled from the correct population through random

chance. Since the distribution was normal, the statistical analyses proceeded without excluding the outlier and without conducting any data transformations.

Research Question 1. What are the perceptions of job satisfaction in the workplace? The first research question was answered with descriptive statistics. A composite score for job satisfaction, as measured by the Job Satisfaction Survey, was computed. The Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985, 1994) includes a 6-item Likert rating scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to *6 (strongly agree)*. The mean and standard deviation for job satisfaction were computed. Scores for job satisfaction ranged from 1.58 to 5.58 (*M* = 3.96, *SD* = 0.77). A new categorical variable was computed. The categories corresponded to the Likert categories on the Job Satisfaction Survey. *Strongly disagree* became *strongly dissatisfied*. *Disagree* became *dissatisfied*. *Slightly disagree* became *slightly dissatisfied*. *Agree* became *satisfied*, and *strongly agree* became *strongly satisfied*. Computed values were rounded to the nearest whole number and categorized accordingly for descriptive purposes (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). For instance, values ranging from 1–1.49 were rounded to 1 and labeled *strongly dissatisfied*. Similarly, values ranging from 1.50–2.49 were rounded to 2 and labeled *dissatisfied*.

An overall mean of 3.96 for job satisfaction corresponds to an overall interpretation of slightly satisfied for the sample. Moreover, this process facilitated the reporting of job satisfaction in the workplace with the use of a frequency distribution. For instance, 3.9% (*n* = 5) were dissatisfied in the workplace and 22.7% (*n* = 29) were slightly dissatisfied. However, 43.8% (*n* = 56) were slightly satisfied, 28.9% (*n* = 37) were satisfied, and 0.8% (*n* = 1) were strongly satisfied. Perceptions of job satisfaction in the workplace are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Perceptions of Job Satisfaction in the Workplace

Category	*n*	*%*
Strongly dissatisfied	0	0.0
Dissatisfied	5	3.9
Slightly dissatisfied	29	22.7
Slightly satisfied	56	43.8
Satisfied	37	28.9
Strongly satisfied	1	0.8

Note. N = 128.

To summarize, approximately one quarter of respondents (26.6%, *n* = 34) were either dissatisfied or slightly dissatisfied with the workplace. However, approximately three quarters of respondents (73.4%, *n* = 94) were either slightly satisfied, satisfied, or strongly satisfied. Therefore, the number of participants who were dissatisfied in the workplace were in the minority, whereas the number of participants who were satisfied in the workplace were in the majority.

Research Question 2. Research Questions 2–4 and related Hypotheses 1–3 were tested with one two-way ANOVA. The ANOVA is the appropriate statistical test to use when trying to determine if significant differences exist between two or more groups based on a dependent variable that is on an interval scale of measurement or higher. Group means for job satisfaction by gender and age group are presented in Table 7. The ANOVA summary table for Research Questions 2–4 and related Hypotheses 1–3 is presented in Table 8.

Research Question 2. To what extent is there a difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job

satisfaction? The null hypothesis ($H1_0$) was there would be no significant difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction. For Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 1, the independent variable was gender (male, female). The dependent variable was job satisfaction as measured by the Job Satisfaction Survey.

Table 7

Job Satisfaction by Gender and Age Group

Gender	Age group	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Female	25-41	3.95	0.85	48
	42-76	3.99	0.73	45
	Total	3.97	0.79	93
Male	25-41	3.82	0.76	14
	42-76	4.00	0.74	21
	Total	3.93	0.74	35
Total	25-41	3.92	0.82	62
	42-76	4.00	0.73	66
	Total	3.96	0.77	128

Table 8

Analysis of Variance Summary Table for Job Satisfaction by Gender and Age Group

Source	*df*	*F*	*p*	Partial η^2	Observed power
Gender	1	0.14	.705	.00	.07
Age Group	1	0.53	.468	.00	.11
Gender * Age Group	1	0.20	.658	.00	.07
Error	124	(0.61)			
Total	127				

Note. Dependent variable = job satisfaction. Value in parentheses represents mean square error.

Table 7 presents descriptive statistics. The ANOVA tested for a main effect of gender. No main effect was found for gender, $F(1, 124) = 0.53$, $p = .705$, partial $\eta^2 = 0$, observed power $= .07$ (see Table 8). Male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.74$) did not significantly differ from female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.79$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Research Question 3. To what extent is there a difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups? The null hypothesis ($H2_0$) was there would be no significant difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups. For Research Question 3, Hypothesis 2 was tested with a two-way ANOVA. The independent variable was age group. Age was grouped into categories (25–41 vs. 42–76). Table 7 presents descriptive statistics. The ANOVA tested for a main effect of age. There was no main effect for age group, $F(1, 124) = 0.14$, $p = .468$, partial $\eta^2 = 0$, observed power $= .11$ (see Table 8). Employees who were 25–41 years of age did not significantly differ in their perceptions of job satisfaction ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.82$) from employees who were 42–76 years of age ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.73$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Research Question 4. To what extent is there an interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction? The null hypothesis ($H3_0$) was there would be no significant interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction. For Research Question 4, Hypothesis 3 tested the interaction between gender and age group to determine whether job satisfaction depended on different age groups and gender. Table 7 presents descriptive statistics. No significant interaction was found between gender and age group, $F(1, 124) = 0.20$, $p = .658$, partial $\eta^2 = 0$, observed power $= .07$, as shown in

Table 8. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Although results were not statistically significant, a line graph was generated to determine if any trends were observed (see Figure 4). Job satisfaction trended lower for the 25–41 age group than for the 42–76 age group. Job satisfaction trended lower for males 25–41 years of age than for males 42–76 years of age. Job satisfaction also trended lower for females 25–41 years of age than for females 42–76 years of age.
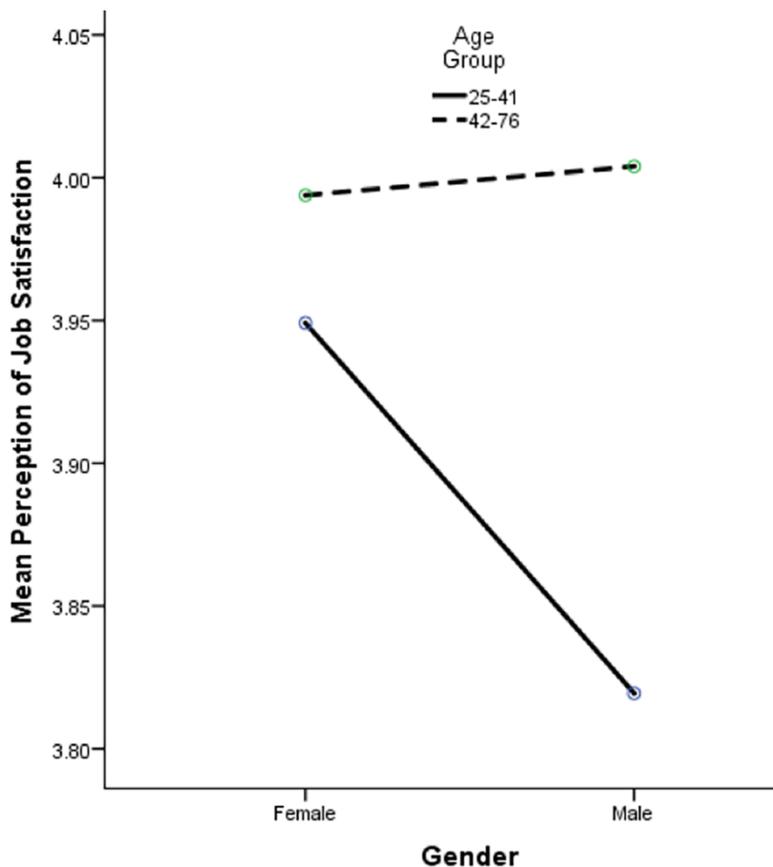

Figure 4. Perception of job satisfaction by gender and age group.

Another line graph was generated from the same ANOVA to show trends relative to gender (see Figure 5). Job satisfaction trended lower for males 25–41 years of age than for females 25–41 years of age. However, no large differences were seen in job satisfaction between males or females 42–76 years of age.
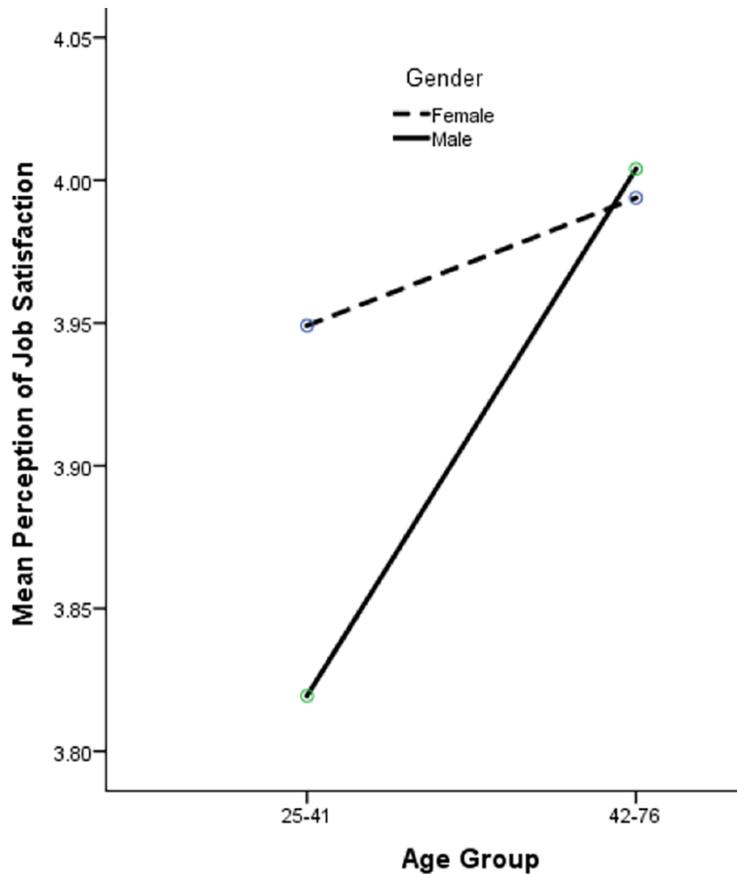
Figure 5. Perception of job satisfaction by age group and gender.

Summary

Results are summarized in Table 9. Four research questions and three related hypotheses were formulated for investigation. Approximately 25% of respondents were either dissatisfied or slightly dissatisfied with the workplace. However, approximately 75% of respondents were slightly satisfied, satisfied, or strongly satisfied. Male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction did not significantly differ from female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction. Employees 25–41 years of age did not significantly differ in their perceptions of job satisfaction from employees who were 42–76 years of age. No significant interaction was found between gender and age group relative to job satisfaction.

Table 9

Summary of Results

Research question	Significance	Outcome
1. What are the perceptions of job satisfaction in the workplace?	N/A	27% of participants were not satisfied and 73% were satisfied.
2. To what extent is there a difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction?	$p = .705$	Null not rejected
3. To what extent is there a difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups?	$p = .468$	Null not rejected
4. To what extent is there an interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction?	$p = .658$	Null not rejected

Although no significance was observed, job satisfaction trended lower for the 25–41 age group than for the 42–76 age group. Job satisfaction trended lower for males and females 25-41 years of age than for males and females 42-76 years of age. Job satisfaction trended lower for males 25–41 years of age than for females 25–41 years of age. However, little difference was found in job satisfaction between males and females 42–76 years of age. Recommendations and implications are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the Dissertation

As discussed in previous chapters, corporate downsizing has been an ongoing phenomenon since the late 1980s, causing high levels of stress for employees and decrease in trust of employers (De Meuse & Dai, 2013; Gandolfi, 2013). This study was expected to help organizational leaders understand the need to create a sense of urgency in making their employees feel appreciated and satisfied within their work environment. The study examined the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction in male and female employees and among employees in various age groups. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of job satisfaction in the workplace?

2. To what extent is there a difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction?

3. To what extent is there a difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups?

4. To what extent is there an interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction?

The sample consisted of 128 participants, ages 25–76. Individuals participated in a voluntary survey that was open for 2 weeks. The researcher sent an e-mail to the participants containing the following: (a) description of the study, (b) purpose of the study, (c) instructions for completing the survey, (d) short description of procedures to track the survey results, and (e) a short demographic questionnaire. Participants received a reminder for each week. All survey communication was conducted online and through

e-mail, and the survey was hosted online using a reputable, secure survey company. The results of the study were analyzed using the ANOVA test and descriptive statistics to test perceptions of job satisfaction comparing male and female participants and participants by age group. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the study, discussion of results, interpretations of the findings, context of findings, implications of findings, limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Results

This study examined the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction in male and female employees in various age groups. The instrument in this study was the Job Satisfaction Survey. Initially, participants ranked the order of importance of nine dimensions of job satisfaction: (a) satisfaction with pay, (b) fringe benefits, (c) contingent rewards, (d) supervision, (e) nature of work, (f) communication, (g) promotional opportunities, (h) operational procedures, and (i) coworkers. Means and standard deviations were computed for each of the nine factors, and data were arranged in the order of descending means. The highest endorsed factors of job satisfaction were satisfaction with pay ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 2.25$), nature of work ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 2.35$), and fringe benefits ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 2.40$).

Research Question 1 asked the perceptions of job satisfaction in the workplace. Results showed 26.6% of participants were dissatisfied or slightly dissatisfied with the workplace, whereas 73.4% of participants were slightly satisfied, satisfied, or strongly satisfied. Therefore, participants who were dissatisfied in the workplace were in the minority. Research Question 2 asked about differences between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction.

Male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.74$, $n = 35$) did not significantly differ from female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.79$, $n = 93$). There were no observable differences by gender in job satisfaction.

Research Question 3 asked to what extent there was a difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups. Employees 25–41 years of age did not significantly differ in their perceptions of job satisfaction ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.82$) from employees 42–76 years of age ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.73$). There were no main differences in job satisfaction by age group in this study.

The final research question asked to what extent there was an interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction. No statistically significant interaction was found. Although the results were not statistically significant, job satisfaction trended lower for the 25–41 age group than for the 42–76 age group. Job satisfaction trended lower for males 25–41 years of age than for males 42–76 years of age. Job satisfaction also trended lower for females 25–41 years of age than for females 42–76 years of age. The data from this study could be an indication that management should revisit ways to captivate younger employees of the millennial generation and ways to retain them. The findings as it related to job satisfaction indicated no significant differences between male and female perceptions.

Interpretation of Findings

The present study was designed to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction in (a) male and female employees and (b) among employees in various age groups. The researcher used the Job Satisfaction Survey, a well-established tool to measure nine dimensions of employee job satisfaction. Using a 6-item Likert

rating scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* (Spector, 1994), the Job Satisfaction Survey includes 36 items to evaluate the nine factors of job satisfaction. The researcher anticipated job satisfaction would differ by gender and various age groups. However, the research results indicated no significant differences or interaction between gender and age group relative to job satisfaction.

Research Question 1. What are the perceptions of job satisfaction in the workplace? The first research question was answered with descriptive statistics. To summarize, approximately one quarter (26.6%) of respondents were dissatisfied or slightly dissatisfied with the workplace. The remainder of respondents were slightly satisfied, satisfied, or strongly satisfied. The literature has suggested employers who offer flexible work schedules tend to have more satisfied employees. Flexible work schedules allow for less family–work conflict and improved work–life balance, which employees tend to appreciate more become more committed to their organization (Nadler et al., 2016).

Research Question 2. To what extent is there a difference between male employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and female employees' perceptions of job satisfaction? Findings showed no significant differences in Job Satisfaction Survey score by gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. A succinct review of literature on gender differences in job satisfaction and the factors that impact it uncovered different justifications. For instance, women tend to have significantly higher job satisfaction levels than males, even though they are normally at a disadvantage with regards to receiving lower salaries than male (Bönte & Krabel, 2014; Mumford & Smith, 2015). Those previous findings conflict with the findings in the current study. A basic

assumption pertinent to the study of gender comparisons in regards to job satisfaction is that men are extrinsically motivated, valuing factors such as salary and status, whereas women are more intrinsically motivated, finding more satisfaction in job flexibility and benefits. Therefore, if certain aspects of job satisfaction are more important to the different genders, then job satisfaction would have different outcomes (Nadler et al., 2016). Findings in this study were compared from a total score rather than based on each aspect of job satisfaction. Further, the sample of female respondents ($n = 93$) was larger than the sample of male respondents ($n = 35$).

Research Question 3. To what extent is there a difference in employee perceptions of job satisfaction relative to age groups? No statistically significant differences were found between the two age groups compared. However, job satisfaction trended lower for the 25–41 age group than for the 42–76 age group. Job satisfaction trended lower for males 25–41 years of age than for males 42–76 years of age. Job satisfaction also trended lower for females 25–41 years of age than for females 42–76 years of age. Several studies have pointed out that women at an early age are taught to display a warmer and more forgiving nature while demonstrating certain levels of emotional intelligence, whereas men typically use their emotions for a certain status or control (Pudrovska & Karraker, 2014; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013).

Research Question 4. To what extent is there an interaction between gender and age relative to job satisfaction? No significant interaction was found between gender and age group. However, previous research has indicated individuals who share similar demographics such as sex, age, and race often share similar beliefs and common experiences, which lead to similar ideas and attitudes about job satisfaction (Grissom,

Nicholson-Crotty, & Keiser, 2012). With that in mind, supervisors may be in favor of these like individuals being promoted quicker than others. As a result, these individuals likely will be more satisfied with the job and have a longer tenure. A review of literature suggested that supervisors who have the same gender as their employees tend to have similar interests, expectations, and trust levels, thus causing job satisfaction to increase for these individuals (Grissom et al., 2012). However, the results of this study contradict those previous findings.

The following interpretations of findings were extracted through the study results. The current study could be used to (a) help leaders of an organization to have authentic conversations with employees, when a sudden downsizing decision has been made by the leaders of the organization; (b) assist leaders to improve downsizing decisions and create alternative solutions; and (c) create programs to empower downsizing survivors to be a part of the decision-making when prioritizing work assignments, to alleviate additional workplace stress and anxiety. After a downsizing event, the survivors may feel violated by their employer for not offering job security, therefore diminishing their level of engagement and commitment (Arshad & Sparrow, 2010).

Context of Findings

The present study was designed to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction in (a) male and female employees and (b) employees in two age groups. An employee who is dissatisfied with the employer is more likely to leave the organization than an employee who is relatively satisfied (Kara, Uysal, & Magnini, 2012). Results of this study found no significant differences by age or gender, contradicting some previous research.

Despite a significant wage gap between salaries of men and women salaries in Britain, job satisfaction results are still typically higher for women than men (Mumford & Smith, 2015). Men are more extrinsically motivated, and Mumford and Smith (2015) reported men with lower than average wages compared to other men reported lower job satisfaction. Women were less influenced by wage comparison (Mumford & Smith, 2015). The research has indicated that a woman promoted to a management position within the organization might not receive pay equal to her male counterpart in the same organization (Kara et al., 2012).

Employee productivity is a huge factor that determines the success of the organization. As a result, employees need to be motivated to reach or exceed their goals on the job. Employers should have in place a plan of action to keep the employees excited to come to work and to achieve their goals. This excitement and engagement will increase employee effectiveness (Oncioiu, Petrescu, Duică, & Croitoru, 2018).

Implications of Findings

This study was designed to examine the effects of workplace downsizing on employee job satisfaction by gender and age group. For the current study, participants were asked to rank by importance nine factors of job satisfaction: (a) satisfaction with pay, (b) fringe benefits, (c) contingent rewards, (d) supervision, (e) nature of work, (f) communication, (g) promotional opportunities, (h) operational procedures, and (i) coworkers. This study revealed that the most important factor of job satisfaction among employees following downsizing was pay, followed by the nature of the work and fringe benefits.

In designing this research study, the researcher anticipated finding significant

differences in job satisfaction between males and females, based on the literature review. The results showed otherwise. The literature suggested that due to female role stereotypes, women are often seen as powerless when trying to compete with their male counterparts in the workplace. These perceived barriers include stereotyping or motherhood and other traditional role assumptions (Kara et al., 2012). Women promoted into management still may face a gender pay gap in comparison to their male counterparts, which could cause stress for female employees.

Limitations of the Study

While conducting the current study, some limitations were discovered that could help future researchers. A convenience sample sized was used, thus placing limitations on the range of survey responses that a larger sample or entire population could produce. The researcher opted to invite participants who were available and eager to participate in the study (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). The participation rate of the participants was also a limitation. Twelve participants did not complete the survey and were subsequently excluded from the analyses because they did not complete the survey questions. The lack of diversity was also a limitation in this study. Further, although age groups were created to be equivalent in size, women ($n = 93$) outnumbered men ($n = 35$) in the sample. Although age and gender were taken into account for this study, race and ethnicity could have been considered to understand the perceptions of individuals of different backgrounds. Additionally, total score was measured on the Job Satisfaction Survey, whereas analysis of each of the nine dimensions might have revealed differences by age or gender for specific dimensions of job satisfaction.

Future Research Directions

Results of the current study and existing research found in the literature review could be used as a foundation for future research. Limitations of the study could be addressed in future research, to include a larger sample. Specific factors of job satisfaction may be different by gender or age. Researchers could replicate the study to include the ethnicities of the participants. Research should be conducted on strategies to create a more flexible work environment, which could reduce the number of employees included in the downsizing process (Eilam-Shamir & Yaakobi, 2014). Research studies could include understanding the leadership styles of the front-line leadership team to ensure they have the skills needed to access and improve employee satisfaction within the workplace. Future studies should seek to compare employee satisfaction within the United States as compared to international employees. The inclusion of more diverse samples to include industries in the corporate sector, higher education, kindergarten through Grade 12 education, and or the medical field could help identify trends. Researchers could replicate the study comparing millennials to other generational groups to compare job satisfaction while adding in a qualitative approach to gather in-depth information on trends.

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