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## Subjective well Being and Job Satisfaction Among Survivors of Economic Downturn

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study investigates the effect of well-being and job satisfaction among survivors that is those who have remained in the organization after downsizing. For the purpose of the study a manufacturing industry in Bangalore was selected, the sample consisted of 100 blue collar (50 male and 50 female) and 100 white collar (50 male and 50 female) employees. The tools used for the present study were Subjective well-being Inventory (Nagpal & sell, 1985) and Job satisfaction scale by Sharma & Singh (1971). Two way analyses of variance and Pearson's correlation were used to test various hypotheses of the study. The study revealed that there is no significant difference among blue and white collar, male and female employees on subjective well being. On job satisfaction blue and white collar employees differ significantly; blue collar employees have higher satisfaction when compared to white collar employees. The subjective well being and levels of job satisfaction are related to each other, that is higher the subjective wellbeing higher is the job satisfaction and vice versa.*

**Keywords : downsizing, survivors, wellbeing, job satisfaction**

### INTRODUCTION

Downsizing refers to activities undertaken by management to improve the efficiency, productivity and competitiveness of the organization by reducing the workforce size. Many researchers explain the types of response we can expect from survivors of a corporate downsizing. The possible attitudes and behaviors due to downsizing are of particular interest to managers, because managers will inevitably face a workforce at least partially staffed with survivors of downsizing activities. Downsizing researchers state that survivor reactions aggregate to impact organizational effectiveness. From both a theoretical and practical view point, there exists a need for a more comprehensive understanding of downsizing effects on the individuals who remain, the survivors (West, 2000)

Downsizing includes retrenchment, redundancy, and redeployment. Its use has become a widespread practice in workplace. The employees who remain with the organization after downsizing are known as "survivors" and are responsible for new business performance and ultimately the success of implementation of restructuring (Baker, 2006).

### Downsizing and job satisfaction

Survivors may feel guilt over keeping their jobs when their friends have been laid off, or they may envy their friends who have retired with attractive severance and pension benefits. Their reduced satisfaction with and commitment to the organization may interfere with work performance. (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, Wright, 2008). Survivors were moderately satisfied with their jobs, moderately involved with their jobs, and felt moderately secured in their current position (Chipunza & Berry, 2010).

Downsizing is a very emotional process not only for employees who have to leave the organization, but employees who are allowed to stay that is the survivors, experience feelings of guilt, insecurity and stress. Layoff survivors can develop survivor syndrome, which is the combination of feelings of insecurity, stress, decreased motivation, decreased job satisfaction and decreased affective commitment. (Kholodova, 2009).

Downsizing seem to have an impact on a number of work-related attitudes such as organisational commitment, turnover intentions, job involvement, role clarity, role overload, satisfaction with top management, and satisfaction with job security, and the impact also varies over time. (Allen, Freeman, Russel, Reizenstein & Rentz, 2001).

Armstrong-stassen (2000) found that compared to management and non-management survivors after downsizing, non-management survivors reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction, perceived threat of job loss and lower levels of morale. Job attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, role overload, role clarity, satisfaction with top management and turnover intentions become less favorable after downsizing.

In a longitudinal study Nelson, Cooper and Jackson (1995) found that levels of job satisfaction, mental health and physical health declined more significantly for manual workers compared with white-collar workers and managerial staff members. (as cited in Chipunza & etal).

### Downsizing and well being

Positive Psychologist Ed Diener (1999) worked for thirty years with subjective well being. As an important part of the positive psychology movement, Subjective well beings popularity and importance reflect societal trends valuing the good life and what makes people happy. Almost everyone seems to rate happiness over money (eg: In a survey (Suh, Deiner, Oishi & Triandis, 1998) of 7,204 college students in 42 countries, only 6 percent rated money more important than happiness).

Academically, Diener and his research group made a break from simple feelings of happiness and just the demographic characteristics that correlate with it. Over 30 years ago, the derived profile of the happy person was dominated by descriptive demographics such as young, well educated, either sex, married and well paid. More recently, the interest is more on the processes that underlie life satisfaction. Specifically there has been a shift away from who is happy (i.e., the demographics) to when and why people are happy on what the

processes are that influence subjective well being. To recognize this comprehensive nature of subjective well being, Diener and colleagues have identified the following major components:

1. Life Satisfaction- The global judgments of one's life.
2. Satisfaction with important domains- Examples would include work satisfaction.
3. Positive affect- The experience of many pleasant emotions and moods.
4. Low levels of negative affect- The experience of few unpleasant emotions and moods.

It is reported that employees with good work life balance could manage their work and life responsibilities with lower burnout level. They also experience greater job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions as well as actual turnover (Malik et al., 2010).

**Well-being & Job satisfaction of Downsizing survivors**

Donald & Siu (2002) investigated the relationship between environmental conditions and employee health in Chinese white and blue-collar samples, and to examine the role of organizational commitment as a stress moderator on 158 white and 138 blue collar workers in Hong Kong and 372 blue collar workers in China using self administered questionnaire, and found that environmental conditions (including ventilation, workable space, illumination, temperature, noise, air pollution and freedom to move around at work) are positively related to job satisfaction, and physical and mental well-being. These relationships were particularly true in the Hong Kong white-collar and China blue-collar groups. The longitudinal study on hospital nurses from 1996-1999 November revealed that, Hospital based nursing staff reported less job satisfaction, more absenteeism, greater psychological burnout and poorer psychological well-being than nurses now employed somewhere (Burke, 2003).

A meta-analysis (Tait, Padgett & Baldwin, 1989) of 34 studies found an average correlation of 0.44 between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. To determine whether job satisfaction leads to SWB or vice versa (i.e., the correlation studies do not yield the direction of causality), Judge and colleagues used sophisticated statistical designs. It was found that SWB was a significant predictor of job satisfaction five years later, but not vice versa. Thus, it appears that people who are satisfied with their lives tend to find more satisfaction in their work. (Luthans, 2008).

Ahn (2007) examined the importance of intangible job characteristics in workers job and life satisfaction among 6,000 Spanish workers. The study found a number of intangible job characteristics that affected job i.e., life satisfaction of workers, flexibility, independence, social usefulness, pleasant work environment, pride, stress and the perception of receiving on adequate wages. Organisational changes such as downsizing, restructuring and amalgamation could increase work loads, work stress and job insecurity.

An increase in control was strongly associated with an increase in job satisfaction, and also there is no decrease in employee well being as a result of downsizing, despite an increase in demands (Parker et al., 1997). The study of Malik, Ahmad & Hussain (2010) on effects of downsizing on layoff survivor's job satisfaction and life satisfaction also revealed that downsizing negatively affects the job satisfaction and life satisfaction of survivors.

Terry, Callan & Sartori (1996) in their study found that merged airline company employees had lower job satisfaction and

poor mental well-being.

In a study by Waraich and Bharadwaj (2009), top management had opined that executives in an Indian environment are better off than employees in the workmen category because of their great family support.

Waraich et.al. (2011) in their study on Indian manufacturing industry mention that downsizing survivors experience stress resulting in behavioral, physical and psychological strains and their coping strategies differ significantly.

The present study investigates the relationship between the wellbeing and job satisfaction of blue and white collar employees. Though there are several studies on downsizing survivors, very few studies were done on white and blue collar employees. Thus the researcher focuses on blue and white collar employee's job satisfaction and well being in a manufacturing industry.

**METHOD**

**Organizational Background**

The study was conducted in a manufacturing garment industry, where downsizing had occurred at all levels, although the degree of downsizing was slightly greater among the shop floor employees than among executives, managers etc.

**Operational Definition**

- Survivors: Those employees who remain in the organization after the downsizing.
- Implementers: Those who are involved in the process of downsizing.
- White-collar employees: The employees at higher level such as Managers, Executives etc.,
- Blue-collar employees: Tailors, helpers, checkers, house-keeping etc.

**Aim & Hypotheses:**

The main aim was to investigate the relationship between well being and job satisfaction on survivors.

H0: Blue and white collar employees do not differ in wellbeing.

H0: Male and female employees do not differ significantly in their wellbeing

H0: Blue and white collar employees do not differ in job satisfaction.

H0: Male and female employees do not differ significantly in job satisfaction

H1: There exists a significant relationship between well-being and job satisfaction.

**Research Design**

The research is exploratory in nature. It adopts a 2 x 2 factorial design.

**Sample**

The total sample of the study consisted of 200 employees. The sample consisted of 50 male and 50 female both blue and white collar employees.

Type of Employment	Male	Female	Total
White-collar	50	50	100
Blue-collar	50	50	100
Grand total			200

The survivor respondents (executives and workers at different levels) who had not been laid off but had witnessed or experienced the workforce reduction scenario.

**Tools** The tools used for the study were-

Title of the tool	Author	Year	Reliability	Validity	Constructs measured
Subjective well being Inventory	Nagpal & Sell	1992	0.71	----	Subjective well-being positive affect, expectation achievement congruence, Transcendence, Family group support, Social support, Primary group concern, Inadequate mental mastery, Perceived ill-health, Deficiency in social contacts & General well-being negative affect.

<b>Job satisfaction scale</b>	Singh & Sharma	1971	0.812	.743	Job intrinsic factors & Job extrinsic factors
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Socio-Demographic Data Sheet - The socio-demographic details were collected from the employees; the details included name, age, sex, educational qualification, number of years of experience, marital status, salary and such other details.

**Procedure**

The researcher obtained the permission of the concerned person from the manufacturing garment industry. The tools selected for the study were in English, since it was administered to blue collar employees who knew only kannada, the researcher gave the questionnaire for translation into kannada for the experts in the field of Psychology, the translated questionnaire was given for back translation, and after checking the content validity and the reliability of the translated questionnaire it was used for the research. The employees were met individually after taking their consent to participate in the study, socio-demographic details were collected, later the subjective well being questionnaire and job satisfaction questionnaire were distributed to the white collar employees and it was collected after 3 days, where as for the blue collar employees the questionnaire was administered individually and their response was obtained.

**RESULTS**

**Table 2**  
*Analysis of variance for overall subjective well being among male and female blue and white collar employees*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	129.605	1	129.605	1.453	0.23
bluewhite	91.125	1	91.125	1.021	0.313
Gender * bluewhite	25.205	1	25.205	0.283	0.596
Error	17486.06	196	89.215		
Total	17732	199			

**Mean and standard deviation of different groups on overall subjective well being**

Type of Employment	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Blue collar	Male	88.74	8.3	50
	Female	86.42	9.511	50
	Total	87.58	8.957	100
White collar	Male	89.38	8.917	50
	Female	88.48	10.863	50
	Total	88.93	9.898	100
Total	Male	89.06	8.576	100
	Female	87.45	10.210	100
	Total	88.26	9.440	200

The hypothesis that blue and white collar employees do not differ significantly from each other in their subjective well-being and the hypothesis that male and female employees do not differ significantly from each other in their subjective well-being was tested using two way analysis of variance. None of the F values are significant; hence we accept the null hypothesis. The study conducted by Parker & etal (1997) also supports the findings of the current study that employee well-being does not decrease as a result of downsizing.

**Table 3**  
*Analysis of variance for overall levels of Job satisfaction among male and female blue and white collar employees*

Source	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
bluewhite	5735.205	1	5735.205	17.582	0.000
Gender	295.245	1	295.245	0.905	0.343

bluewhite * Gender	280.845	1	280.845	0.861	0.355
Error	63936.1	196	326.205		
Total	70247.395	199			

**Mean and standard deviation of different groups on overall levels of job satisfaction**

Type of Employment	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Blue collar	Male	75.4	18.757	50
	Female	80.2	23.238	50
	Total	77.8	21.148	100
White Collar	Male	67.06	14.309	50
	Female	67.12	14.43	50
	Total	67.09	14.297	100
Total	Male	71.23	17.119	100
	Female	73.66	20.336	100

The hypothesis that blue and white collar employees do not differ significantly from each other in their levels of job satisfaction and the hypothesis male and female employees do not differ significantly from each other in their levels of job satisfaction was tested using two way analysis of variance. The F value is significant, for blue and white collar employees hence we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that "Blue and white collar employees differ significantly in their level of job satisfaction". From the mean and standard deviation of different groups on overall job satisfaction, it can be inferred that Blue collar employees have significantly higher job satisfaction when compared to white collar employees. The findings disagree with the previous study by Nelson, Cooper and Jackson (1995) which states that levels of job satisfaction, mental health and physical health declined more significantly for manual workers compared with white-collar workers and managerial staff members. Similarly Armstrong- Stassen (2000) also mentions that non-management survivors had lower level of job satisfaction, perceived threat of job and lower level of morale.

**Table 4**  
*Pearson's correlations between subjective well being and job satisfaction*

Variables	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Subjective well being and job satisfaction	0.193**	0.000

The hypothesis that there exists a significant relationship between well-being and job satisfaction was tested using Pearson's correlation. It shows that there is a significant relationship between well being and job satisfaction. Hence, we accept the alternative hypothesis. This is also supported by the findings of Judge & colleagues (as cited in Luthans, 2008) who also found that subjective well being was a significant predictor of job satisfaction, Thus people who are satisfied with their lives tend to find more satisfaction in their work.

One of the earlier studies by Donald & Siu (as cited in Luthans, 2008) found that environmental conditions are positively related to job satisfaction and physical and mental well being. Subjective well being was a significant predictor of job satisfaction, thus people who are satisfied with their lives tend to find more satisfaction in their work. Thus indicating that there is significant relationship between the well being and job satisfaction.

Economic slow down in the US and EU has affected the textile business in India, resulting in a drastic decline in the country's garment exports. To sustain themselves in the market, apparel manufacturers chose to go for layoff and cost cutting. In 2008, almost 8, 00,000 garment and textile employees lost



their jobs. In this study it is observed that the wellbeing of the surviving employees is good, and they have high job satisfaction even after the downsizing, it is more so in the case of the blue collar employees. This may be because during the downsizing the employees of the organization were met by human resource department, and they were explained about the scenario as to why the workforce was being reduced, notices were sent all over the factory. The employees were asked "not to get panic, and to be with them in the crisis time too". It is evident from this research that empathic and caring attitude of the employers leads to high job satisfaction and wellbeing.

### Conclusion

1. There is no significant difference among blue and white collar employees in subjective well being.
2. There is no significant difference among male and female employees in subjective well being.
3. Blue collar employees have significantly higher level of job satisfaction when compared to white collar employees. The current findings is contradicting with the litera-

ture study which says that levels of job satisfaction, mental health and physical health declined more significantly for manual workers compared with white-collar workers and managerial staff members. ( Nelson, Cooper and Jackson,1995).

4. There exists a significant positive relationship between subjective well-being and job satisfaction, indicating that when the wellbeing of the individuals is high they have a good level of job satisfaction and vice-versa.
5. Job satisfaction is derived from ones happiness, and content in the workplace. Hence wellbeing and job satisfaction are interrelated. Some of the factors contributing are motivation, commitment etc.

### Limitation

The study was conducted in a manufacturing garment industry; hence it cannot be generalized to other organizations.

### Scope for further research

1. An in-depth study can be made to understand the various aspects that affect the survivors of downsizing.

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