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OVERCOMING THE SURVIVOR'S SYNDROME:

CURRENT THEORIES AND PRACTICES

A Thesis

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

BY

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VITA

The author was born in Chicago, Illinois, on August 2, 1987. She graduated from Prospect High School, received her Bachelor of Arts degree from DePaul University in 2009, and also received a Masters of Arts degree in Psychology from the same university in 2010.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the United States watched in fear as the economy drastically fell into a recession. Many speculated to the causes of the recent recession beginning with the downturn of the housing market, which started around 2006 (Isidore, 2008). In effect, billions of dollars were lost creating a mortgage fiasco that left many banks in dire need of help. Additional momentum for the economic avalanche came from the skyrocketing prices of oil and the devaluation of the dollar (Armentano, 2008). Spilling into other areas of the economy, corporate America soon felt the effects. Organizations were no longer as profitable as years past, causing many to cut costs, including downsizing their employment workforce.

In 2008, the number of jobs lost totaled roughly 2.6 million, the highest since 1945 (Goldman, 2009). Additionally, the United States Labor of Department reported that during the final four months of 2008, there where 1.9 million jobs lost, averaging nearly 15,000 people everyday that lost their jobs within those four months. As of recent, many Americans are finding that the economy is slowly starting to pick back up; job markets are beginning to reopen, positions are being filled and companies are overwhelmed with a large applicant pool. An example from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), notes that there were 2.4 million job openings in November of 2009 (BLS, 2010). Moreover, the unemployment rate has dropped from 10.0% to 9.7% in January of this year (BLS, 2010).

While some organizations may be looking to expand once again and others are content on seemingly staying afloat within the current economic state; many organizations have overlooked one important issue, or rather group of individuals. Much conversation regarding the recession has been directed towards those who have lost their jobs, while little attention has been directed

towards the multitude of employees that have retained their jobs. Initially, many of these employees felt lucky to even have a job, yet, what is of importance now is the fact that many of these employees may have experienced a phenomenon labeled as the "survivor's syndrome". The survivor's are those who have remained within an organization after a reduction or downsizing of the staff. The syndrome, as will be further described, refers to survivors' reactions to reductions.

The importance of focusing on survivors, especially within the current economical context, is that survivors have become vital members of the organizations. For instance, many were required to take on multiple job responsibilities due to the reductions. By taking on multiple job responsibilities beyond what was previously required, survivors have increased their job related skills, abilities and knowledge. As a result, survivors have increased their value and organizations should recognize the importance of retaining valuable talent. As the economy starts to pick up, many organizations are slowly regaining funds to build a strong workforce. Survivors who are experiencing the survivor's syndrome may consider leaving their organization for better opportunities, causing potential problems for the survivors' current employers.

The main focus of the present review is twofold. The first part is focused on providing an understanding of the survivor's syndrome. To accomplish this, the current review will begin by providing the history and definition of the term. Following will be a comprehensive review of the literature available on the syndrome, including applicable theories and research. The second part is focused on providing suggestions and recommendations on how to overcome the different aspects of the survivor's syndrome. Suggestions and recommendations provided are based on the theories and research reviewed within the first part of the present literature review. Overall, the

main goal is to increase awareness on the importance of overcoming the survivor's syndrome for both practitioners and academics, alike.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

It was unknown how much research or literature had been done on the survivor's syndrome. In hopes of conducting a systematic review of the literature, the first step involved a basic search on the Internet, using the search engine Google, and the DePaul University's online journal and article databases (i.e. PsychInfo, Business Source Complete, Google Scholar). Initially the search involved reading through a wide variety of articles to find substance related to employees whom have stayed behind after a large reduction. The direction of the research became more focused as key terms (i.e. the term "survivor's syndrome") and authors (i.e. Brockner) were uncovered. Research and literature presented within the present review were selected based on whether the research was conducted directly on employees remaining after a reduction, literature around attitudes concerning reductions or variations closely applicable to the topic. After reviewing over 60 articles (including research on various topics both closely and loosely related to the survivor's syndrome, research on consequences, and other internet articles), the current review includes approximately 20 articles related to the survivor's syndrome. The research presented in the following sections has been organized in chronological order, according to publication date. Particular theories used within the research have been further explained to enhance the understanding of the literature. Finally, supplemental studies are also presented to in order to provide further evidence towards that piece of research. In hopes of adding substantial literature to the field, the following sections provide a comprehensive review of the literature surrounding the survivor's syndrome.

History and Definition

Before examining the literature surrounding the survivor's syndrome, it is important to define the concept. The term was originally used to describe a set of reactions and behaviors shared by individuals who survived an adverse event, such as the Holocaust (Baruch & Hind, 2000). Within management studies, the survivor syndrome has become known as the emotional and attitudinal characteristics shared by those who have survived a reduction (Travaglione & Cross, 2006). The term was introduced into management studies by Brockner's research in the early 1980's (e.g. Brockner, Davy & Carter, 1985; Brockner, Greenberg, Brockner, Bortz, Davy & Carter, 1986; etc.). He adopted this term to illustrate the impact of redundancies on individuals (Baruch & Hind, 2000). Best described by Brockner, Davy and Carter (1985), the survivors are individuals that remain within an organization after a significant cut in the workforce. As will be further showcased through the work of Brockner and a variety of other researchers, the survivor's syndrome encompasses shared feelings of job insecurity leading to loss of organizational commitment, feelings of injustice or inequity, and stress and burnout resulting from a reduction.

Literature Review

Although Brockner was one of the first to focus his work around the survivors left after a reduction, he was influence by the early work of Greenhalgh (Brockner, Grover, Reed, DeWitt & O'Malley, 1987). Greenhalgh's main focus was on maintaining an effective workplace after major organizational changes, in particular, reductions (Greenhalgh, 1983). Important to the current review is Greenhalgh's idea that any change within an organization threatens job security to some degree; additionally job insecurity is an important variable between the situation and how the employees respond, both attitudinally and behaviorally (Greenhalgh, 1983). Employee

attitudinal and behavioral responses can have a substantial impact on organizational effectiveness, such employee productivity and commitment (Greenhalgh, 1983). Greenhalgh mentions that many employees feel "paralyzed by the fear that the next wave of surprise layoffs could affect them;" therefore, many employees feel less committed to the organization and only put forth enough effort to secure their jobs for the time being (Greenhalgh, 1983).

Brockner was clearly inspired and intrigued by Greenhalgh's work as it is apparent by the explosion of studies that emerged shortly after Greenhalgh's study. Brockner's earlier work demonstrated the syndrome's significant relation to equity theory. His findings indicated that layoffs cause employees to experience increased feelings of remorse and develop more negative attitudes towards co-workers, as found in equity theory (Brockner et al., 1985 & Brockner et al., 1986). Brockner was also interested in survivor's feelings of injustice, in particular injustice regarding victims of the reductions. Brockner, Grover, Reed, DeWitt & O'Malley (1987) found that survivors would either react by distancing themselves from the victims, or distancing themselves from the organization. If employees distance themselves from the organization, it could lead to potential negative consequences, such as exhibiting work behaviors and attitudes non-congruent with the organization (Brockner et al., 1987).

Non-congruent work behaviors and attitudes could vary from lowered work performance or organizational commitment, eventually leading to a lost of revenue for the organization. Through their study, Brockner and colleagues (1987) found that if organizations showed commitment to their employees, the employees perceived the organizations to be more just (1987). It is what the authors described as the principle of reciprocity, that surviving employees would be more committed to an organization if the organization showed commitment to an employee being terminated, such as through providing severance pay or offering counseling

(Brockner et al., 1987). The authors also note that communication is important; that the information regarding what has been done for those let go is available and clear to survivors. Interestingly, the authors found that the effect of organizational commitment was greater when the survivors where able to identify with the victims (Brockner et al., 1987). Overall, the study provided more insight to the reactions and behaviors of survivors that had not been previously present.

In an attempt to establish a model describing job satisfaction, organizational commitment and behavioral intentions to withdrawal from the organization, Davy, Kinicki and Scheck (1991) drew from previous ideas of job security and perceived fairness. The authors' main focus was to study job insecurity and the perceived fairness of the layoff as predictors of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and behavioral intentions to withdraw form an organization. By means of a questionnaire, Davy and colleagues (1991) found that job security and perceived fairness of the layoff had direct effects on job satisfaction. Furthermore, they found that job satisfaction mediated the relationship between job security and perceived fairness and organizational commitment. The authors also found a direct negative effect between organizational commitment and behavioral intentions to withdraw. Davy and colleagues (1991) concluded through their findings that employees who where low on job satisfaction had lower organizational commitment and had higher intentions to withdraw from the organization. Employees can withdraw from their jobs and organizations both mentally, by lowered commitment leading to lowered performance, and physically, such as absenteeism. Organizations should be aware of the effects that job security, perceived fairness and job satisfaction have on organizational commitment and intentions to withdraw from the organization.

One of the most significant consequences resulting from the survivor's syndrome is stress. Brockner, Grover and Blonder (1988) wanted to test the assumption that a post layoff work environment had the potential to be extremely stressful to an employee. The authors found that perceived inequity and job insecurity were major sources leading to survivor stress. In addition, Brockner, Spreitzer, Mishra, Hochwarter, Pepper and Weinberg (2004) found stress to be a result of perceived control and a threat assessment of physical and/or psychological well-being. MacDermid, Geldart, Williams, Westmorland, Lin and Shannon (2008) mention that employees are most susceptible to physical and/or mental health problems in work situations where there are high psychological demands, low control and low social support.

Further support is found through the study conducted by Van Yperen & Hagendoorn (2003), who closely followed the demand-control model proposed by Karasek (1979). The demand-control model states that job strain is a result of high demands in combination with a lack of job control; in that, high demands that are unable to be transformed into actions, due to the of lack of job control, create high job strain (Van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003). Karasek's model explains that the arousal from high job demands will then be redirected internally creating consequences for the individual, such as fatigue and exhaustion (Van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003). This is supported by the moderating effect of control on the relationship between high job demands and negative health-related outcomes (Van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003). In Van Yperen & Hagedoorn's (2003) study, the authors examined whether job control and/or job social support could simultaneously reduce signs of fatigue and enhance intrinsic motivation among employees that face high job demands. Now while Van Yperen and Hagendoorn did not directly study survivors (primary focus was on nurses), their research had important implications in that many survivors do experience higher work demands. The authors found that when job demands

are high, there will be greater fatigue when job control is low (Van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003). Additionally, they found that if job control or social support is high, it has the ability to increase the intrinsic motivation of the employee.

Another interesting look at the survivor's syndrome is the research by Armstrong-Stassen (1994) on how survivors cope with layoffs. Her research was greatly influenced by the stress and coping theory from Lazarus and Folkman (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984 as cited in Armstrong-Stassen, 1994). The stress and coping theory states that there exists a transactional relationship between the person and environment; furthermore the relationship is dynamic, mutually reciprocal, and bidirectional (Folkman, Lazaurs, Gruen & DeLongis, 1986). Stress is defined as the relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as either exceeding or taxing his or her resources and endangering their well-being (Folkman et al., 1986). There are two mediating processes important to the stress and coping theory. The first is the cognitive appraisal process, where a person evaluates whether a particular encounter with the environment is relevant to his or her well-being, and, if it is, in what way (Folkman et al., 1986). Within the cognitive appraisal process, there are two kinds of appraisals: primary and secondary. Primary occurs when the person evaluates whether he or she has any stake in the encounter (e.g. harm, benefit, etc) and secondary occurs when the person evaluates what, if anything, can be done to overcome or prevent harm or to improve the prospects for benefit (Folkman et al., 1986). The second important mediating process within the stress and coping theory is coping. Coping is defined as the person's cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage (e.g., reduce, minimize, master and/or tolerate) the internal and external demands of the person-environment transaction, as appraised by the individual (Folkman, et al., 1986). Coping serves two major functions:

dealing with the problem that is causing distress (problem-focused coping) and regulating emotion (emotion-focused coping).

One can easily see how this theory is applied to the survivor's syndrome. The person-environment interaction is the employee's experience within his or her job after a reduction. If the employee appraises the situation that is in someway taxing or exceeding his or her resources (e.g. too much work to compensate for lost coworkers) and/or endangering their well-being (e.g. worrying that they will be next to lose their job), stress will be present. The primary cognitive appraisal begins for the individual when he or she evaluates how much at stake they have, harm or benefit could be a result of the situation (e.g. how will they provide for their family if they lose their job, etc). The secondary appraisal process then works to evaluate what, if anything can be done as a result of the situation. Such an example is an individual may weigh their options in regards to the work necessary to stay with the company, the other options they might have outside of the company, and so forth. This is the point when the individual then chooses a coping strategy to deal with the interaction.

The stress and coping theory states that the interaction between the person and the environment will affect two appraisal processes regarding stress (cognitive) and coping. As previously stated, this will affect what actions will be taken, if at all possible. An important connection to the stress and coping model found by Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, Delongis and Gruen (1986) was the relationship to an individual's health. They found that the relationship between appraisal, coping and somatic health were negative, or in other words, the more the individual felt they had at stake and the more they had to cope with the situation, the worse their health was (Folkman et al., 1986). On the other hand, the more the person felt mastery over a situation, the better their health was (Folkman et al., 1986). An important note

highlighted through their research is the point that particular coping measures have the potential to hurt an individual's health (Folkman et al., 1986). Coping methods such as smoking, drugs and alcohol could develop into serious addictions, causing serious problems for an individual. It is not solely limited to the individual, however; if an employee adapts an adverse coping method, they could potentially create negative consequences for their organization. Consequences could include, by are not limited to, absenteeism, coming to work intoxicated, which would negatively affect their work performance, to causing damage to organizational property or hurting to another employee.

As previously mentioned, Armstrong-Stassen's primary goal was to examine survivors' reactions to layoffs based on the stress and coping model by Lazarus and Folkman (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994). She focused on two coping strategies: control coping (consisting of actions and cognitive reappraisals that are proactive and take-charge in nature) and escape coping (consisting of actions and cognitive reappraisals that involve escapist, avoidance strategies). Armstrong-Stassen (1994) found that optimism and sense of mastery were positively related to control coping, rather than escape coping. Moreover, it was found that those who did engage in control coping reported to have higher organizational commitment, higher job performance, and lower intent to leave the organization (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994). Those who resorted to escape coping reported lower organizational commitment, lower job performance, and higher intent to leave. Additionally, she found a significant relationship between high perceived supervisor support and greater organizational commitment, higher job performance and lower intentions to leave the organization than survivors with low perceived supervisor support (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994). Interestingly enough, Armstrong-Stassen found that co-worker support was only a significant predictor for turnover intention.

Going further, a consequence of stress is burnout. Herbert Freudenberger, a clinical psychologist, coined the term *burnout* after experiencing stress responses exhibited by staff members in institutions such as free clinics and halfway houses (Jackson, Schwab & Schuler, 1986). Burnout is most widely used in reference to a state of emotional exhaustion caused by excessive psychological and emotional demands (Jackson et al., 1986). Important to this review, burnout has been shown to significantly predict intentions of turnover and actual turnover (Jackson et al., 1986). In particular, the study by Jourdain and Chenevert (2010) provides further support in regards to the relationship of stress, burnout and intentions for departure from the organization. The authors based their work on the job-demands resources (JD-R) model of burnout as detailed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli, (2001). Similar to the Karasek (1979) model, the JD-R model describes burnout as a persistent dysfunctional state resulting from exposure to chronic stress (Demerouti et a.l., 2001). Furthermore, chronic stress is described as a high level of demands and insufficient resources connected to both the work itself and the context in which the work takes place (Demerouti et al., 2001). There are two dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Emotional exhaustion encompasses feelings of being emotionally drained and exhausted, either physically or mentally, by one's work (Demerouti et al., 2001). Depersonalization encompasses feelings of insensitivity and impersonal responses to others (Demerouti et al., 2001). While the study by Jourdain and Chenevert focused primarily on nurses, there are important implications for other organizations. Jourdain and Chenevert's (2001) study shows that the most important determinant of emotional exhaustion is job demands. Additionally emotional exhaustion is associated with the intention to leave the profession (Jourdain & Chenevert, 2010). The authors' recommendation for nurses was a dual strategy of reducing job demands and increasing job resources, which is similar to

previously described research for different organizational settings (e.g. Van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003; Armstrong-Stassen, 1994). The findings from Jourdain and Chenevert (2010) are relevant for the current review to highlight the importance of how stress can elicit strong emotional exhaustion, i.e. burnout, which has potential to motivation employees to leave their organizations.

In a recent study, Maertz, Wiley, LeRouge and Campion (2010) looked at the relationship between negative attitudes and higher intentions to quit within survivors. Specifically, they wanted to research survivors' attitudes towards outsourcing and off-shoring in combination with attitudes towards layoffs, something that had not been previously researched. In their study, outsourcing was defined as a decision to move work to outside domestic entities (e.g. consultants), while off-shoring was defined as a decision to move work to foreign entities (Maertz et al., 2010). By looking at responses from a survey done across industries and organizations, the authors found that recent survivors of layoffs generally had lower perceived organizational performance, lower job security, lowered affective and calculative attachments to the organization and higher turnover intention than a no downsizing comparison group (Maertz et al., 2010). Interestingly enough, the authors found that off-shoring and outsourcing generally did not produce reactions of less job security, less organizational attachment or higher turnover intentions beyond layoffs. Their results revealed that layoffs are the most negatively regarded and costly form in terms of increased turnover propensity (Maertz et al., 2010).

Beyond the psychological outcomes of stress, Beehr and Newman (1978) bring light to the physiological and behavioral consequences. In regards to physical consequences, the authors note that much of their research found a relationship between job stress and cardiovascular issues, such as blood pressure, cholesterol level and pulse rate (Beehr & Newman, 1978).

Additionally, they pointed out a naval study that highlights the relationship between general health and job stress. The study found that sailors categorized as more stressed were found to receive more medical attention and take more sick days off than those not categorized as stressed (Rane, Gunderson, Pugh, Rubin & Arthur, 1972 as cited in Beehr & Newman, 1978). Beehr and Newman suggest that while there is not as much research on behavioral job stress within the industrial/organizational field as compared to physical or psychological consequences, there are some relationships to particular behaviors and job stress. Much of their review found that the amount of smoking was influenced by job stress and the characteristics of the job (Beehr & Newman, 1978). Additionally, they found that stressful aspects of a job were related to escapist drinking, which has potential to lead to lower job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, organizational liability, and potentially worse outcomes for both the individual and the organization. These findings are in line with the coping outcomes related to job stress as described by the stress and coping model.

Spector and Fox's (2002) model helps describe potential behavioral outcomes of job stress stating that job stressors are conditions generally associated with negative emotions at work, which can lead to counterproductive workplace behaviors. In line with previously discussed models (e.g. Lazarus and Folkman), Spector and Fox (2002) discuss how environmental and personal factors can contribute to a person's emotions (through an appraisal/interpretation process), which in turn affects their behavior (action). The action can be categorized as either organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB's) or counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWB's). To review, organizational citizenship behaviors are altruistic or helpful acts that have potential to enhance the organization. Counterproductive workplace behaviors, on the other hand, are behaviors intended to hurt the organization or other members of

the organization. Acts with the potential for harm, such as avoiding work, doing tasks incorrectly, physical aggression, verbal hostility, sabotage, and/or theft, are considered to be counterproductive workplace behaviors (Spector & Fox, 2002). The model created by Spector and Fox, in its most simple form, suggest that the interaction between the environment and person lead to either a positive or negative emotion (through a process of interpretation of the environment-person interaction, as seen in previous models), which then lead to either OCB's or CWB's, respectively. An important part of the model is that it is generally cyclical; actions reinforce feelings, which in turn reinforce actions. The Spector and Fox (2002) model reiterates how survivors' reactions of the reduction situation has potential to elicit behaviors that are counter productive to the organization; highlighting the importance of understanding the survivor's syndrome and its consequences.

CHAPTER III

DISCUSSION

It is evident through reviewing the survivor's syndrome literature that survivors experience feelings of job insecurities, perceptions of injustice and mistrust, and stress which can all lead to lowered organizational commitment, lowered job performance, burnout and higher intentions to leave the organization. The second purpose of this literature review is aimed towards providing solutions in hopes to overcome each of the negative reactions due to the survivor's syndrome. Again, the importance of this cannot be overstated. Many survivors have not only expanded upon their skills, abilities and knowledge, but have become vital pieces of the organization's functioning. Losing these employees would be backtracking for an organization, requiring more money, time and effort to replace those employees rather than towards increasing the success of the organization. In order to help organizations overcome the survivor's

syndrome, the following sections provide potential solutions based upon organizational and employee situations. Suggestions and recommendations are based upon theory and research previously reviewed; in particular addressing job insecurities, then perceptions of injustice and mistrust, and finally addressing stress and burnout. Additionally, Table 3.1 located in the Appendix provides a quick reference sheet for suggestions and recommendations in regards to the consequences of the survivor's syndrome.

Job Insecurity

While organizations may not be able to fully promise employment security to their employees, they can alleviate some job insecurities by taking proactive action. One quick way to ease insecurities is to provide employees with information regarding organizational plans, steps and other pieces of pertinent to the employees (Greenhalgh, 1983). Along the same lines, organizations can provide training to their employees. Many survivors do not receive the necessary training needed for the sudden increased workload. Eriebach, Amundson, William and Jordan (2004) interviewed survivors finding one employee describing the situation: "[s]o you had an increase in workload, a different job description, and virtually no training because they had to downsize that too, so you had to learn by the seat of your pants" (Moving On: New Job, para. 2). Examples of training may include technology training for new software and/or equipment, teambuilding, or time management seminars. Training should be based on the needs of the employees. Depending on time and organizational resources, identifying needs could be as simple as asking the employees through self report questionnaires to identifying the skills and abilities needed for new tasks employees will be performing by conducting or consulting job analyses and job descriptions. Beyond the lack of training, organizations do not spend the necessary time to introduce employees that have been reassigned to new departments. This can

be damaging as described by one employee from Eriebach and colleagues' (2004) study, "[y]ou have a group of people that essentially don't trust one another, yet they have to work together" (Moving On: New Coworkers, para. 3). By spending little time and resources on training and team building employees, employees will feel more secure in not only their abilities to successfully complete new demands and responsibilities, but also feel more secure about their place within the organization.

Additional efforts to alleviate job insecurities can be targeted towards skill and career development of survivors. Focusing on career development can be essential in retaining employees. Boswell, Colvin and Darnold's (2008) review provides empirical support for career development in that it produces positive employee attitudes and enhances work motivation in employees. Further support for career development can be found through the changing nature of the job market. Beyond the types of jobs present within our economy (i.e. the shift from manufacturing jobs to service orientated), the normal length of stay within an organization is has changed to approximately four years from the previous norm of 15 to 20 years (BLS, 2008). If employees are generally spending less time within an organization and may be leaning towards leaving (due to effects of the survivor's syndrome), providing career development opportunities for employee growth can be an incentive for the employee to stay (Boswell et al., 2008). Through training and development, organizations can not only alleviate some job insecurities due to the survivor's syndrome, but also add incentive to stay with the organization.

Injustice and Mistrust

To overcome perceptions of injustice and mistrust, one can use the perspective of two notions of fairness as proposed by Cropanzano and Folger (1991). The first notion of fairness is procedural justice; which is focused on the manner in which the decision-making process has

been conducted, or rather how a decision was made. Cropanzano and Folger (1991) suggest that procedures should remain consistent across different people and different times. Furthermore, a fair procedure should be one that is based on society's shared ethical standards and takes into account the concerns of everyone involved. Evidence supports the previous suggestion in that survivors felt positive reactions to layoffs when they were able to have a say and fully understand the situation rather than if their input was not sought out or rather ignored (Eriebach, Amundson, William & Jordan, 2004). Cropanzano and Folger (1991) also suggest that fair procedures be unbiased and include a system that allows erroneous decisions to be corrected. Although layoffs have already occurred and survivors have established perceptions of mistrust and fairness, there is still opportunity for organizations to develop future fair procedures and processes by including suggestions and/or ideas from survivors. Taking this time of economic growth as an opportunity to rejuvenate employees can help to reestablish trust, which can increase organizational commitment in survivors.

The other notion of fairness as described by Cropanzano and Folger (1991) is distributive justice, which is an individual's assessment of whether or not they have been treated fairly at work by examining their own ratio of outcomes (e.g., rewards) to inputs (e.g., the amount of work they do). This is crucial due to the fact that many survivors have begun to feel under valued within their organizations. Although these employees have kept their job, they have been faced with dramatic increase in workloads and a diminished sense of organizational value (Eriebach et al., 2004). Additionally, survivors have started going through a process of reevaluation of their current career situation within the context of their organization and the job market. Survivors have begun to question their hard work, commitment and loyalty to the organization (Eriebach et al., 2004). By expressing to employees that the organization recognizes that they are vital and

important parts, the organization may be able to reestablish trust and commitment, preventing employees from leaving. Organizations can recognize employees through a wide variety of options, depending on organizational resources and capabilities. Potential examples may include monthly employee recognition programs, offering employees more autonomy or advancement on a project or within their department, or simple compliments from supervisors.

Increasing the communication also has been shown to increase trust between employees and management. Eriebach and colleagues (2004) interviewed employees on critical incidents in regards to the downsizing process and found that inadequate, contradictory or vague communication increased confusion, anxiety, speculation and mistrust among survivors. The authors noted that timely, sufficient communication could allay fears and convey respect for employees. One interviewee in Eriebach and colleagues' (2004) study mentioned "…honesty I guess [what] is extremely important [is] being forthcoming and forthright with people and just letting them know that the hells going on" (Moving Into and Moving Through: Leadership, para. 2). Additionally, when supervisors withheld information, they were seen to be untrustworthy. Increasing the amount and quality of communication can allow survivors to feel apart of the organization. It can also help survivors rebuild trust with the organization, which will hopefully help the organization from loosing key employees.

Stress and Burnout

The first suggestion in over coming stress and burnout resulting from the survivor's syndrome is simple acknowledgement from the organization that it understands and recognizes that employees have experienced an emotional strain. Acknowledgment shows survivors that the organization has concern, is sensitive and is being proactive on some level (Eriebach et al., 2004). Survivors would feel better if they felt that they were cared about at their place of work.

The next suggestion would be to implement programs or initiatives to help reduce stress and burnout.

The first part of the current review explained that high job demands and low control can lead survivors to feel extreme levels of stress. Van Yperen & Hagedoorn (2003) found that high job demands in combination with high job control and high social support can help employee performance and motivation. In the current situation, survivors are generally faced with high job demands and little to no job control or social support. To overcome this, organizations should focus on enhancing job control and social support rather than reducing job demands and sacrificing productivity (Van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003). By doing so, not only will job strain be reduced and intrinsic motivation of the survivors will be increased, the organization does not need to experience a loss in productivity.

As per Armstrong-Stassen's (1994) findings that those who engaged in control-orientated coping reported higher organizational commitment, higher job performance and lower intent to leave, an organization should consider aiding survivors towards control-orientated coping. For example, stress management training with a focus on self-mastery, optimism, and other adaptive coping strategies would fall in line with control-orientated coping. This style of coping would benefit both survivors and the company by minimizing the detrimental effects associated with layoffs (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994). Armstrong-Stassen (1994) also encourages organizations to provide counseling that is aimed towards being more proactive in nature, rather than towards escapist. As Kammeyer-Mueller, Scott and Judge (2009) found, employees vary in emotional stability. The authors found that employees with lower levels of emotional stability may need additional encouragement to confront stressors directly (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2009). In line with Armstrong-Stassen (1994), the authors suggest that organizations develop interventions or

workshops to help employees with coping strategies focused around improving perceptions of control, self-image and enhancing positive mood states. Mood states and morale can be very important in the workplace; in particular the mood of a few employees can affect the rest of the employees. In Eriebach and colleagues' (2004) study, participants noted that the negative moods of co-workers influenced their own negativity, "I was angry; as a group we were all angry so that kind of feeds on itself" (Moving Into and Moving Through: Morale, para. 2). Additionally encouraging co-worker support has been shown to help reduce turnover intentions (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994).

Beyond helping employees cope with the stressors, the research also mentions that organizations can help their employees overcome stress and burnout by providing necessary resources. Some examples that can be provided to employees are quality training, valuable workshops (based on employee needs), adequate employee assistance programs (EAP's) and flexible policies (Eriebach et al., 2004). Quality training, as previously suggested, can give employees the necessary tools and skills to tackle many new responsibilities. EAP programs can provide support for employees in a variety of areas both within the work and private lives. Flexible policies may include different empowerment initiatives, flexible work hours/locations, and/or allowing people to work from home. It is important to remember to inquire upon what resources employees feel are needed, this will allow employees to find organizational efforts valuable and meaningful.

Lastly, supervisor support plays an important and vital role in stress created by the survivor's syndrome. As found in Armstrong-Stassen (1994), supervisor support had a significant relationship between organizational commitment, job performance and turnover intentions. Eriebach and colleagues (2004) found that employees generally thought that

management was constantly trying to play catch up and were disappointed with supervisor performance. The researchers found that survivors were appreciative when supervisors were proactive and demonstrated a positive attitude, especially within the ever-changing environment of a poor economy (Eriebach et al., 2004). Organizations can increase supervisor support easily by training supervisors to provide emotional and instrumental support to subordinates (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994).

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

The current literature review had two main goals beginning with defining the syndrome and elaborating upon the theories and research surrounding the survivor's syndrome. Secondly, the literature review provided organizations with research driven suggestions on how to overcome the survivor's syndrome. In summary, the survivor's syndrome is defined as the emotional and attitudinal characteristics shared by those who have survived a reduction, including feelings of job insecurities, perceptions of injustice and mistrust and lastly high levels of stress. Each characteristic has potential to lead to burnout, decreased organizational commitment, lowered job performance and higher intentions to leave; ultimately leaving an organization to lowered or lost productivity, lowered effectiveness and profit lost. Beyond the negative consequences of the survivor's syndrome of employees within the organization, there is potentially more to lose if survivors did decide to leave the organization.

More and more organizations are beginning to understand the importance of retaining current employees. In a study done by Forbes Insights, 65% of a surveyed 319 senior executives reported that they were highly or very highly concerned that potential talent and leadership would leave once the economy turns (Schwartz & Erickson, 2009). Additionally, the survey

found that 52% of the executives predicted that there would be an increase in voluntary turnover. Not surprisingly, one in five executives reported that their company had no retention plan, even though it has been shown that replacing an employee can be up to two or three times an employee's annual salary (Schwartz & Erickson, 2009). For example, if two survivors with salaries at $65,000 each (totaling $130,000) decide to leave the organization, the organization could spend nearly $400,000 on replacing those employees. By developing a retention plan based upon the suggestions provided within the current literature review, organizations would spend less time and resources on retaining employees than replacing them. Even providing a salary increase, if possible, to the two employees would not cost nearly as much as replacing them.

One final suggestion is for organizations to act quickly (Schwartz & Erickson, 2009). These employees have survived difficult times and in turn increased their desirability to other organizations. As mentioned before, survivors who are stressed, burnout and dissatisfied with their organization, are more likely to seek opportunities outside of the organization, especially if the market is beginning to reopen once again. The suggestions provided to overcome feelings of job insecurities, mistrust and injustice and stress and burnout provide organizations with the knowledge to overcome the survivor's syndrome. Through overcoming the survivor's syndrome, organizations secure their productivity and allow for continued growth. Organizations will hopefully recognize the importance of overcoming the survivor's syndrome and take proactive steps in securing their futures.

Beyond suggestions to overcome the survivor's syndrome, there is great opportunity to expand upon the theories and research on this phenomenon. Particular research ideas could involve looking at the survivor's syndrome from different organizational levels, such as how

high level executives might vary from managers and employees. Furthermore, it may be interesting to see if there are any differences in the causes or outcomes of the survivor's syndrome depending on gender, ethnicity, job market, and/or generations (i.e. generation X versus Y versus Net Geners). It would also be interesting to see how attitudes and behaviors change and/or vary depending on how much time an employee spends within the company after the reduction. Additionally, research could be conducted on survivors who voluntarily left the organization with a focus on how long they stayed before voluntary termination and what factors influenced their decision. As one can see through the few examples provided, there is potential for much more research and theory development. Advancement should not be limited to using typical motivation theories, but should be open to exploring theories outside the Industrial/Organizational and management realms; even open to completely new ideas.

As previously mentioned, the previous literature review's main goal was to bring awareness to the survivor's syndrome phenomenon. To the knowledge of the author, this is the first piece of literature with a sole focus of bringing together theories and research on the survivor's syndrome to one place to increase the knowledge and awareness. The current review showcased different theories and research conducted on survivors to detail the consequences of the syndrome. Additionally, the review provided theoretical and empirical based suggestions in overcoming the syndrome. Beyond the importance of understanding and overcoming the survivor's syndrome, it is important for research and theory to constantly be changing and evolving such as the world we live in. If theories and research do not evolved or are applicable to the practical application, what is the true point of the theories and research? Theories and research should not only help individuals understand the happenings of the world, those within it and to help progress it, but also be inspired by it. In following this belief, the present review

aimed to spark further research and help organizations retain key employees by providing a comprehensive review of the survivor's syndrome and potential recommendations to overcome the syndrome.

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APPENDIX A.

Suggestions and Recommendations in Overcoming the Survivor's Syndrome

Table 1

Suggestions and Recommendations in Overcoming the Consequences of the Survivor's Syndrome

CONSEQUENCE	SUGGESTION/RECOMMENDATION	EXAMPLE(S)
Job Insecurity	Information	• Organizational plans for the future
	Training	• Skills, technical, time management training • Team building
	Skill & Career Development	• Send employee to conference on career development
Injustice & Mistrust	Fairness: Procedural	• Implement fair procedures based on: organizational/societal standards, concerns of employees
	Fairness: Distributive	• Monthly recognition programs • Compliments from supervisors • Prizes for good performance
	Communication	• Increase communication between organizational levels (e.g. employees and supervisors)
Stress & Burnout	Acknowledgement	• Telling employees the organization understands the employee is experiencing a difficult time
	Demand-Control and Resource Relationships	• Increase job control and social support • Focus on control-orientated coping (adaptive) strategies • Provide resources (training, materials, knowledge, etc.)
	Supervisor Support	• Positive reinforcements from supervisors • Assisting employees if needed