The Influence of Survivors' Empowerment on the Commitment and Turnover Intentions Following Downsizing

Kwame Owusu Boakye[1], Isaac Nyarko Adu[1], Michael Asiedu Gyensare[1], Abdul-Kahar Adam[1] and Augustina Adei Ashie[1]

[1] Department of Management Sciences, School of Business, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana
*Corresponding Author: Kwame Owusu Boakye[1]

ABSTRACT: The study involved a multivariate correlational design which investigated the influence of employee empowerment on employee commitment and turnover intentions of survivors following downsizing. Data were collected from one hundred and ninety-six (196) participants from a cross-section of organisations that had undergone downsizing within the previous one year in the Accra metropolis using questionnaires. Findings showed that dimensions of employees' psychological empowerment had significant positive relationship with commitment with competence having the strongest effect. However, all the dimensions of employee empowerment had a significant negative influence on turnover intentions with competence having the strongest effect. These findings are discussed in relation to previous studies within the framework of self-determination theory. It is recommended that the planning and implementation of downsizing strategies should focus on enhancing the psychological empowerment and commitment of survivors to prevent employees' turnover.

KEYWORDS: Affective Commitment, Downsizing, Empowerment, Survivors, Turnover Intentions

I.   INTRODUCTION

What happens when an economic crisis or insecurity forces an organization to reevaluate its commitment towards the employees through workforce reduction? Layoffs and downsizing force organizations to restructure in order to control costs. These restructuring are likely to threaten survivors' sense of control. As a result, while employers expect surviving employees to sacrifice and make efforts to achieve the goals of the downsizing, layoffs are likely to threaten survivors' sense of control, the rippling effect of which could be sharp drops in organizational commitment among employees which will invariably influence their intentions to turnover; a situation dysfunctional to the organization (Maertz, Wiley, LeRouge & Campion, 2010). Therefore, psychological empowerment of employees that affect their sense of control in the context of downsizing is likely to be important in influencing survivors work attitudes including their commitment and intentions to leave the organization after downsizing. However, empowering employees presents a subtle dilemma to the organisation especially during the downsizing period. The problem is will the empowered employee be attached to the organisation and therefore stay with the organisation or will the sense of empowerment make the employee feel mobile and be less attached to the organisation with intentions to leave or otherwise?

Empowerment reflects an intrinsic motivation or a personal sense of control in the workplace as manifested in four beliefs about the person-work environment relationship which involve meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Thus, according to Thomas and Velthouse (1990), these four cognitions reflect employees' perceptions about their work environment and their ability to shape or influence their work roles (Spreitzer, 1995). Meaning reflects a sense of purpose or personal connection about work. Competence indicates that individuals believe they have the skills and abilities necessary to perform their work well. Self-determination reflects a sense of freedom about how individuals do their own work. Impact describes a belief that individuals can influence the system in which they are embedded. Unlike more popular conceptions of empowerment, this definition does not imply an alignment with the vision of the organization. Thus, it is possible for the empowered employees to work to further their self-interests and not be aligned with the vision of the organization. These are the "loose cannons" that organizations fear will result from empowerment. In addition, this definition conceptualizes empowerment as residing within the survivor, rather than in a set of management practices; thus, it reflects a set of beliefs about personal control in the work environment.

Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) concerns the interaction between the individual and the social environment and how the social environment influences the individual. SDT of human personality and motivation describes the critical impact of the social and cultural milieu in either supporting or inhibiting people's basic psychological needs, perceived sense of self-direction, performance, and well-being (Legault,

2017). In other words, self-determination theory opines that the individual makes an effort to satisfy these needs through constant and active interaction with the social environment and acts in response to the prevailing conditions of this social environment that either enhance or inhibit these needs. Consequently, this interaction predisposes people to become motivated, committed, and well-integrated, or discouraged, unproductive, and undedicated. In this way, the organisation becomes a primary source of the empowerment needs of the employee. Organisations utilise their systems, structures and policies among others to encourage desired behaviour. Organisational policies, supervisory styles, and other managerial interventions promote work-related attitudes. This occurs through internalization and integration of the expectations of these systems which invariably makes organisationally prescribed behaviour become internally or personally regulated creating an intrinsic motivation.

SDT reveals that people have an inherent predisposition to growth and intrinsic motivation. -Thus, consistent with Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) conceptualization of empowerment, SDT is centered on the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness and their necessary role in self-determined motivation, well-being, and growth. SDT is based on the basic humanistic assumption that people naturally seek growth, value, meaning and creativity. This demands the satisfaction of the three psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs of the employee is critical to enhance the employee's internalization of the cultural norms and values of the organisation (Wilson, Longley, Muon, Rodgers, & Murray, 2006). The satisfaction of these basic psychological needs is therefore intrinsic and has a significant positive effect on wellbeing (Harris & Hagger, 2007; Wilson *et al.,* 2006). In other words, people make efforts to develop and appreciate themselves by incorporating new experiences; by nurturing and promoting their needs, desires, and interests; and by relating with others and the outside world (Legault, 2017). SDT indicates that this natural tendency to grow must not be taken for granted as people can be demotivated and withdrawn when these needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are deterrmined by a deficient social environment.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) offers insight into how employee empowerment positively impacts employees' work attitudes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Within the work context, the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs correlates positively with favourable work outcomes (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). Morrison (1996) has also proposed that empowered employees are encouraged and enabled to exercise initiative and in turn become committed to the organization. Hence, psychological empowerment has been associated with various work outcomes. The influence of psychological empowerment on stress and health outcomes (Lind, Hagelquist & Rasmussen, 2020; Tripathi & Bharadwaja, 2020) and organisational outcomes are well documented (Di Maggio, Santilli, Nota & Ginevra, 2019; Han, Seo, Li & Yoon, 2015; Humborstad & Perry, 2011; Khoshmehr, Barkhordari-Sharifabad, Nasiriani & Fallahzadeh, 2020; Liu, Chow, Zhang & Huang, 2019). Psychological empowerment has been associated with various work outcomes such as job satisfaction (McNaughtan, García, Garza & Harwood, 2018), work engagement (China, Meng & Sun, 2019), work agility (Muduli & Pandya, 2018), and organizational citizenship behaviour (Noranee, Abdullah, Mohd, Khamis, Aziz, Som & Ammirul, 2018).

Research relating to the relationship between psychological empowerment and commitment are inconclusive due to mixed findings. Previous studies have revealed that empowerment has a significant positive influence on commitment (Ahmad & Oranye, 2010; Bufquin, DiPietro, Orlowski & Partlow, 2017; Hauck, Quinn-Griffin & Fitzpatrick, 2011; Joo & Shim, 2010; Kuo, Ho, Lin & Lai, 2009; Prabhakar & Ram, 2011). However, Choong, Tan, Kuek, Tan and Choe (2019), in a study among the academic staff in Malaysian public universities, revealed that, even though autonomy, impact and competence significantly influence affective commitment, meaningfulness does not. However, Ugboro (2006) found a negative relationship between competence and affective commitment. Some researchers are certain of the fact that this relationship between psychological empowerment and commitment is rather explained by other variables. For example, Yogalakshmi and Suganthi (2018) explain that career self-management fully mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment and affective commitment. And that Kim, Lee, Murrmann and George (2010) reveal in their study among employees in hotel restaurants in Seoul, South Korea that management trustworthiness fully mediates the relationship between dimensions of empowerment (influence and attitude) and organizational commitment. Again, it has been revealed that a significant negative relationship exists between employee empowerment and turnover intentions (Cai & Zhou, 2009; Bhatnagar, 2012; Gardner, Wright & Moynihan, 2011; Hauck et al., 2011; Islam, Ahmed & Ahmad, 2015; Kim & Fernandez, 2017; Van Schalkwyk, Du Toit, Bothma & Rothmann, 2010). However, these findings are inconsistent and inconclusive. Kim and Fernandez (2017) claim that empowerment has both direct and indirect effects on turnover intentions. For instance, commitment has been found to mediate the relationship between co-workers' perceived competence and employees' turnover intentions (Bufquin, DiPietro, Orlowski & Partlow, 2017). Iftikhar, Shahid, Shahab,

Mobeen and Qureshi (2016) found that affective commitment mediates the relationship between organizational empowerment and turnover intentions. However, Spreitzer and Mishra (2002) claim that empowerment does not predict voluntary turnover, directly or indirectly, through commitment.

The context of downsizing has the potential to influence the impact of employee empowerment on employees' intent to leave the organization. It is worth noting that empowerment is a social construct embedded in how an individual incorporates beliefs of personal control, a positive attitude to life and an understanding of the socio-political environment (Zimmerman, 1995). Hence, empowerment is contextual (Foster-Fishman, Salem, Chibnall, Legler & Yapchai, 1998) and the contextual reality of the downsizing is critical in understanding the empowerment, commitment and turnover intentions' relationships. This is because the decision-making by survivors during the layoff period requires an intuitive contextual understanding of the layoff and its implication. This notwithstanding, much of the research attention to the effects of downsizing involves laid-off employees (Amundsen, Borgen, Jordan & Erlebach., 2004) just as management's concentration on planning, execution and management of downsizing programme centers on terminated employees to the neglect of survivors upon whom the survival and success of the organization after the downsizing depends (Brennan & Skarlicki, 2004).

Beyond the experience of "survivor syndrome" characterized by feelings such as guilt, anger, loss of motivation, loss of morale, questioning of self-worth and anxiety (Amundsen et al., 2004), downsizing is likely to be experienced as a 'shock' to employees, jarring them 'toward deliberate judgments about their jobs,' particularly in deciding whether to stay or leave the organization (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Moreover, the downsizing may be experienced as a violation of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995), making survivors more susceptible to voluntary turnover than employees in a more stable work environment. At a minimum, survivors are likely to experience significant changes in their work context following a downsizing, including possibly new job responsibilities and reporting relationships, changes in processes and procedures, and the loss of colleagues (Allen, Freeman, Russell, Reizenstein & Rentz, 2001). Thus, it is critical to better understand how survivors' experiences of the downsizing influence their attachment and willingness to stay with the organization.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A number of studies have been conducted to test the direct relationships between employee empowerment and organizational commitment (e.g., Ahmad & Oranye, 2010; Joo & Shim, 2010) and employee empowerment and turnover intentions (e.g., Cai & Zhou, 2009; Hauck et al., 2011; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010). However, most of the studies conceptualized employee empowerment in terms of structural empowerment (e.g., Cai & Zhou, 2009; Hauck et al., 2011) while those that conceptualized it as psychological empowerment either investigated the construct as a composite (e.g., Ahmad & Oranye, 2010; Joo & Shim, 2010) or investigated some dimensions of the construct to the neglect of other dimensions (e.g., Brockner, Spreitzer, Mishra, Hochwarter, Pepper & Weinberg, 2004). Moreover, employee commitment has been conceptualized to involve only affective commitment. In line with Paré and Tremblay (2000), normative commitment was omitted for three primary reasons. Firstly, there is a strong significant correlation between affective and normative commitment (e.g. Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Sommers, 1995). Secondly, researchers (Meyer et al., 1993; Ko, Price & Mueller, 1997) assert that there is a strong overlapping in the determinants and consequences of both constructs. And even though some overlap exists between affective and normative commitment, both are relatively independent of continuance commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Yet continuance was also omitted since employers value employees' affective commitment than continuance commitment. Finally, in general, prior findings in the organizational behaviour literature are much more conclusive for the affective dimension than for the normative dimension (e.g., Bolon, 1997). Therefore, the study explored the influence of the various dimensions of empowerment (meaningfulness of job, competence, self-determination and impact) on survivors' affective commitment and turnover intentions and to ascertain which of these dimensions is most important in predicting survivors' affective commitment and turnover intentions.
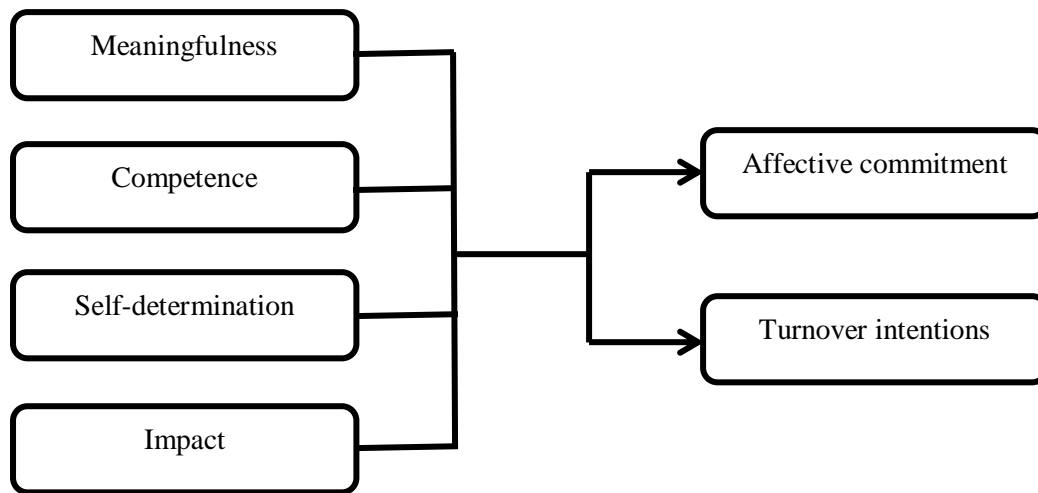
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Consequently, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: Meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact have a significant influence on employee commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Competence will have the strongest impact on employee commitment than meaningfulness, self-determination and impact.

Hypothesis 3: Meaningfulness of job, competence, self-determination and impact will have a significant negative influence turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 4: Competence will have the strongest impact on employees' turnover intentions than meaningfulness, self-determination and impact.

III.   METHODOLOGY

3.1   SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

The population for the study involved surviving employees from two private organisations that had undergone downsizing within the past one year in the Accra Metropolis. Participants were selected using the non-probability sampling technique involving purposive and convenience sampling techniques. A sample of one hundred and ninety-six (196) employees was selected from the two organisations which had undergone downsizing that allowed data to be collected from their employees. A participant qualified to participate in the study only if such a surviving employee was present with the organization during the downsizing and is still working with that respective organization. Thus, employees who did not meet these criteria were not allowed to participate in the study. The participants were full-time employees from these organizations. Participants who responded to the questionnaire personally consented to respond to the questionnaire without coercion. The questionnaires were administered with precise and succinct instructions to guide participants in responding to the questionnaires. Questionnaires were collected for screening. In all, two hundred and seventy-nine (279) questionnaires were administered with two hundred and seventy returned out of which one hundred and ninety-six (196) were fit for analysis. The questionnaires that were incomplete and those with double responses were rejected. Questionnaires that passed the inclusion criteria were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software using the multiple regression statistical test.

3.2   MEASURES

A number of standardized scales were adapted and piloted to establish their reliabilities to measure the variables involved in the study.

Meaningfulness scale: The meaning items were taken directly from Tymon (1988). One of Tymon's items is borrowed from Hackman and Oldham's (1980) meaningfulness scale. The other items on Hackman and Oldham's (1980) scale were not appropriate as they dealt with how "most people" experienced their work rather than with a focal individual. Example, "My job activities are personally meaningful to me". The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for this subscale for the present study yielded .87.

Competence scale: The competence items were adapted from Jones's (1986) self-efficacy scale. The items were altered to target competence in an individual's current role rather than in a new role. Example, "I am confident about my ability to do my job". The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for this subscale for the present study was .85.

*Self-determination scale***:** The self-determination items were adapted from Hackman and Oldham's (1980) autonomy scale. Example, "I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work." The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for this subscale for the present study was .90.

Impact: The impact items were adapted from Ashforth's (1989) helplessness scale. Items were altered to emphasize the individual's "department" as the target of the influence efforts. For example, "My impact on what happens in my department is large". The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for this subscale for the present study yielded .76.

Appropriate reliabilities have been established for the scale among industrial and insurance samples. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the overall empowerment construct reported by Spreitzer (1995) were .72 for the industrial sample and .62 for the insurance sample. However, the Cronbach alpha reliability of the overall empowerment construct for the present study was .71. The range of scores for each subscale is 3-21 with a higher score indicating a higher experience of that construct.

Organizational Commitment Scale: Allen and Meyers's (1996) Organizational Commitment scale was employed for this study. For this study, only the measure for affective commitment involving eight (8) items (example, "I really feel as if this company's problems are my own") was used. The overall range of scores is 1-5 with a higher score indicating high commitment and vice versa.

According to Noor and Noor (2006), the measure for affective commitment has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.81 and a split-half reliability coefficient of 0.77. The range of scores on the Affective Commitment subscale is 1-5. A high score indicates high affective commitment and vice versa. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient and split-half reliability coefficient for the measure of continuance commitment as reported by Noor and Noor (2006) is 0.78 and 0.76 respectively. This scale has a range of scores of 1-6 with a high score indicating high continuance commitment and vice versa. In the present study, the measures for affective commitment and continuance commitment have Cronbach's alpha values of .93 and .78 respectively with a Cronbach's alpha value of .87 for the overall commitment scale.

Turnover Intentions Scale: A 3-item scale by Camman, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979) was used to measure turnover intentions. An example of the items on the scale is 'I often think about quitting my job with my present organization'. The scale's alpha reliability as reported by Aryee *et al.* (2002) was 0.79 but .92 for the present study. The range of scores varies between 3 and 21 with a high score indicating high intention to leave. All items were measured on a 7 point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. The reliability coefficients for all measures were above the recommended minimum criterion of 0.70 suggested by Nunnally (1978) and Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010).

IV.   RESULTS

The descriptive statistics of the study variables are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the study variables

	Mean	*Std. Deviation*	*Alpha*
Meaning	16.39	3.109	.87
Competence	15.51	4.137	.85
Impact	11.36	4.988	.90
Self Determination	14.06	3.608	.76
Employee Commitment	39.48	15.382	.93
Empowerment	57.32	10.440	.71
Turnover Intentions	9.96	4.645	.92

5.1 TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

The standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the impact of meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact on affective commitment. The results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of Standard Multiple Regression Analysis for Meaningfulness, Competence, Self Determination and Impact as predictors of Overall Commitment

Factor	B	Std. Error	β	Decision
(Constant)	19.283	8.279		
Meaning	1.713	.445	.260***	Supported
Competence	1.932	.306	.390***	Supported
Impact	-.966	.284	.235**	Supported
Self Determination	1.661	.366	.292***	Supported

$R^2 = .307$ **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Result from the standard multiple regression analysis indicated that Meaningfulness, Competence, Self Determination and Impact made significant contributions to the model [$F(4, 192) = 21.275$, $p < .05$]. Looking at the variables individually, Meaningfulness ($\beta = .260$, $p < .05$), Competence ($\beta = .390$, $p < .05$) and Self Determination ($\beta = -.292$, $p < .05$) and Impact ($\beta = .235$, $p < .05$) significantly predicted Organizational Commitment. An observation of the beta values indicated that Competence (39%) had the most influence on Commitment followed by Impact (29.2%), Meaningfulness (26%) and Self Determination (23.5%) in that order. These findings, therefore support Hypothesis 1a-1d which states that meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact have a significant influence on employee commitment. Comparing the impact of the dimensions of empowerment on affective commitment, it was found that Competence ($\beta = .390$, $p < .05$) had the strongest impact followed by Self Determination ($\beta = .292$, $p < .05$), meaningfulness ($\beta = .260$, $p < .05$) and Impact ($\beta = .235$, $p < .05$) supporting Hypothesis 2.

Moreover, Hypothesis 3 stated that meaningfulness of job, competence, self-determination and impact will have a significant negative influence on turnover intentions. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of Standard Multiple Regression Analysis for the dimensions of Empowerment as predictors of Turnover Intentions.

	B	Std. Error	β	
(Constant)	30.193	1.806		
Meaningfulness	-.504	.052	-.450***	Supported
Competence	-.746	.117	-.494***	Supported
Impact	-.125	.050	-.027*	Supported
Self-Determination	-.096	.072	-.043*	Supported

$R^2 = .619$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .00$

Summary of results from the standard multiple regression analysis indicated that Meaningfulness, Competence, Self Determination and Impact all made significant contributions to the model [$F(8, 195) = 39.556$, $p < .05$]. Looking at the variables individually, Meaningfulness ($\beta = -.450$, $p < .05$), Competence ($\beta = -.494$, $p < .05$), Self Determination ($\beta = -.043$, $p < .05$) and Impact ($\beta = -.027$, $p < .05$) all significantly predicted Turnover Intentions. Thus, **Hypothesis 3** which stated that meaningfulness of job, competence, autonomy and impact will have a significant negative influence on turnover intentions was supported. Again, the comparison of the various dimensions indicated that Competence ($\beta = -.494$, $p < .05$) had the strongest impact on turnover intentions compared to Meaningfulness ($\beta = -.450$, $p < .05$), Self Determination ($\beta = -.043$, $p < .05$) and Impact ($\beta = -.027$, $p < .05$) supporting Hypothesis 4.

VI. DISCUSSION

The study found that the dimensions of empowerment have a significant positive relationship with employee commitment but a significant negative relationship with turnover intentions. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Ahmad & Oranye, 2010; Hauck *et al.,* 2011; Joo & Shim, 2010; Kuo *et al.,* 2009; Prabhakar & Ram, 2011; Van Schalkwyk *et al.,* 2010) but contradicts the findings of Spreitzer and Mishra (2002) who found that employee empowerment does not influence turnover intentions. Thus, the hypothesis that meaningfulness of job will have a significant positive relationship with organisational commitment and negative

relationship with turnover intentions was confirmed. Certainly, the potential impact of downsizing on survivors in organizations is significant and enormous. Not only does downsizing lead to negative outcomes but also provides a wealth of opportunities for growth and development (Cartwright & Cooper, 1992) which satisfies the needs central to SDT. For example, the assumption of new responsibilities after the downsizing creates opportunities for job enrichment. And employees make self-analysis of the social value and dignity associated with their job and they expect that their job roles are associated with some appreciable level of respect and dignity. In effect, if an employee's self-analysis of the social value and dignity associated with the job results in negative perception, it lowers the employee's commitment to the job and the organisation. In a similar vein, if an employee's self-analysis of the social value and dignity associated with the job results in positive perception, it increases employee's job longevity. In the socio-cultural context, it is revealed that self-analysis of the social-value and or reputation of the organization as well as the job plays a vital role (Balogun, Oladipo & Odekunle, 2010). In other words, employees who are positively inclined towards society's portrayal of the job can be motivated to perform extra-role at work and be committed to the organisation. Hence, the linkage of organizational commitment to the meaningfulness of job indicates that job meaningfulness stands to play a pivotal role in enhancing employee's commitment because in the socio-cultural context, culture of respect and dignity occupy their pride of place (Balogun *et al.,* 2010). Thus, an employee's increased commitment could be as a result of the satisfaction with the perception of social value and dignity attached to the job.

Furthermore, the hypothesis that competence will have a significant positive relationship with organisational commitment and negative relationship with turnover intentions was supported which confirms the study by Gardner *et al.* (2011) but it is inconsistent with the studies by Spreitzer and Mishra (2002) who found no significant relationship between employee empowerment and turnover intentions and that of Ugboro (2006) that showed a statistically significant negative relationship between competence and affective commitment. The study reveals that enhancing the competence of employees energizes them to be committed to the organisation and willing to stay. Being competent is seen as a job requirement and a necessity to obtain a job and stay employed (Saad, Samah & Juhdi, 2008). But it has been found that, even though the aftermath of downsizing provides a wealth of opportunities for growth and development (Kotter, 1995) through the assumption of new roles which offers opportunities for job enrichment, people feel uncomfortable in encounters and situations they appraise to exceed their knowledge, skill and abilities and therefore tend to avoid such situations whilst they feel confident in difficult situations which they believe they are capable of handling. A sense of competence on the job is more likely, therefore, to enhance commitment to work and the organization while lack of competence in new job roles would lead to stress and subsequent withdrawal.

Moreover, an individual's self-concept is enhanced by one's sense of competence in areas that the individual and others value (Torrey, Mueser, McHugo & Drake, 2000). In fact, employees with high self-concepts are more accepting and more likely to lead active lives with a sense of self-determination and wellness. The enhanced self-concept as a result of employees' competence will enable such employees to be better able to tolerate internal or external distress resulting from the downsizing. This will make them less anxious and less sensitive to criticism (Modrcin-Talbott, Pullen, Ehrenberger, Zandstra & Muenchen, 1998) which invariably enhances organisational commitment. Prabhakar and Ram (2011) assert that, to ensure utilization of skill sets, the organization must invariably ensure a person-job fit which would lead to worker commitment. Research has found that the competence dimension of psychological empowerment is significantly related to both conscientiousness and sportsmanship (Wat & Shaffer, 2005). The influence of competence on conscientiousness can be explained by the fact that individuals who believe they have the capability to achieve goals do what is required to achieve them. However, it is unlikely that those who lack self-confidence will go beyond minimum role requirements. With sportsmanship, competent employees are willing to tolerate less than ideal circumstances and they do not complain about them (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990). In essence, Spreitzer (1995) noted that competence results in effort and persistence in challenging situations, coping and high goal expectations, and high performance. It is unlikely that individuals with these qualities will easily complain about less-than-ideal situations.

Furthermore, the hypothesis that self-determination will have a significant positive relationship with organisational commitment and negative relationship with turnover intentions was supported. The positive significant relationship realized between self-determination and organizational commitment and a negative relationship with turnover intention supports the study by Brockner, Ackerman and Fairchild (2001). Of course with limited control, employees feel as though they are mere cogs in a machine making work experiences more stressful leading to withdrawal and a state of helplessness. However, According to Tumwesigye (2010), a sense of personal control boosts employees' hardiness at work and leads to a personal initiative which makes them more likely to engage in more proactive coping to reduce the potential for strain. Thus, employees who experience a sense of autonomy in the work roles are able to cope with the challenges that the downsizing event brings to bear on them providing opportunities for learning thereby experiencing less strain (Parker & Spriggs, 1999). In essence, autonomy might bolster perceptions of personal competence and contributes to the employees

feeling of personal competence and self-worth (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Therefore, employees with a great deal of control feel more as owners of the organisation enhancing commitment among employees.

Control and choice over work situations are vital for employees without which employees feel stuck in a co-dependent relationship with an organisation that is not trustworthy (Devine, Reay, Stainton & Collins-Nakai, 2003). According to Archibald (2009), when there is a decrease in workers' power in general, employers are able to control more aspects of the workers' working lives, and to a greater degree than usual. Employees experience of less control over their work itself could result from the intensification of work for survivors after downsizing which would require employees to work 'harder' mentally and/or physically, directly through being more closely supervised (Archibald, 2009), or indirectly because of the assumption of new roles and the need to speed up working processes to achieve results. Consequently, downsizing leads to 'organizational anorexia' (Duxbury & Higgins, 2003) where few surviving employees are required to accomplish large work demands within a limited time frame (Brockner *et al.,* 2001) resulting in increased alienation from work and employers (Isaksson, Hellgren & Pettersson, 2005). This would lessen employees' control over work pace, and perhaps also a choice about how survivors do their work leading to dissatisfaction with work. The strict control and monitoring by management inadvertently lead to a lack of control with its attendant lack of intrinsic interest in one's work. Therefore, if employees would be committed at all, such commitment will not be characterized by affectively identifying with the organizational goals but would be committed because of the security of their job. Thus, when employee's work is intensified with increased demands at work but has lessened 'decision latitude', their level of commitment to their employer decreases while both their absence from work and their thinking about and actually leaving for other employment increases (Duxbury & Higgins, 2003) because of their dissatisfaction with their job (Tumwesigye, 2010). Therefore, when organizations empower their employees rather than create stress among the employees by tangling them in red tapes, they become more satisfied with their work and enhance their commitment to the organization. Consistent with the SDT, there is a salient need for organizations seeking to create high-performance workplaces to redesign jobs after downsizing to provide more responsibility and stimulation and employee participation to enhance job satisfaction (Parker, Chmiel & Wall, 1997).

The study also found a negative relationship between employees' sense of impact and turnover intentions and a positive relationship with organisational commitment supporting the hypothesis that impact. This is consistent with the study by Brockner *et al.* (2001). In fact, employees strive to accomplish their work goals in enhancing the vision and mission of the organization. This in part can be attributed to the desire of employees to be considered as valued members of the group as espoused by Lind and Tyler's (1988) group-value model. So the degree to which employee's work roles and behaviours are perceived as "making a difference" in terms of achieving the goal (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) and influencing strategic, administration, or operating outcomes in one's department or work unit could serve as an index of how valuable they perceive themselves to be within the organization. Therefore, institutional procedures and involvement in unproductive work would be sources of stress for employees even more than the downsizing itself. Individuals who perceive that their work roles do have an impact will be more likely to perform beyond the minimum role requirements (Wat & Shaffer, 2005). When employees have some degree of influence or control in the system in which one is embedded in with some control over decisions, these employees are able to protect their self-interest (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995). These employees are likely to exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment with less turnover intentions because they identify with organisational goals. Designing jobs that are significant, assigning jobs that create an identity for job incumbents and due recognition for jobs well-done would go a long way in increasing affective commitment (Prabhakar & Ram, 2011). Thus, empowered survivors are more likely to respond actively, believing they can shape and influence the downsizing situation for the better, giving them a reason to want to stay connected to the organization.

In sum, downsizing and its management practices have the potential to shake an employee out of a steady-state with respect to the employee's thinking about the job and organization (Donnelly & Quirin, 2006). Firms shouldn't lose sight of the fact that modern employees are active agents in the organisation, are motivated towards psychological growth and development and are willing to take on responsibilities (Deci & Ryan, 2000; van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, Lens & Andriessen, 2009). So, especially when their needs are considered and met, employees would be more inclined to adopt favourable attitudes and behaviour (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). It is suggestive within the framework of SDT that the satisfaction and enhancement of employees' sense of empowerment as reflected in the basic needs of *autonomy, competence*, meaningfulness and impact, are essential for optimal functioning at work and in several life domains (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Van den Broeck et al., 2009). Hence, the satisfaction of these needs which are also innate psychological nutrients that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000) will predispose survivors to be committed to and stay with the organization. Thus, when companies create workplace conditions that fail to address employees' basic survivors' needs after downsizing, it will lead to less commitment and high intentions to leave the organization (McKnight, Phillips & Hardgrave, 2009).

VII.   CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The current study buttresses the importance of employee empowerment. Empowerment provides a buffer against the threat inherent in a downsizing initiative by helping survivors feel better able to cope while satisfying employees' psychological needs. Hence, management should redesign jobs and work roles in a manner that ensure that employees' jobs require a variety of skills and provides work autonomy, and at the same time strategically empower workers in seeking an opportunity to enhance their competency and autonomy. It is suggestive that organisations, after downsizing should focus on improving employees' commitment to the organisation by paying attention to the content and context of survivors' job through redesigning jobs that enhance employees' sense of impact and task meaningfulness. This is particularly important since an organization's ability to realize the performance objectives of downsizing depends, to a very great extent on commitment and constructive responses of survivors. Employees are concerned about the meaningfulness of their job, competence, autonomy and the impact of their work roles in their organization. This suggests that organizations should be particular about the work context of survivors after downsizing to ensure that employees' need for empowerment is met to enhance commitment to the organization. Thus, organisations are reminded that job characteristics of work redesign must be supported by various forms of psychological empowerment, i.e. meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact, without which organisational commitment may not occur.

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*Corresponding Author: Kwame Owusu Boakye[1]
[1](Department of Management Sciences, School of Busines, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana