

The Meaning of Lay-off in the Eyes of Survivors

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One of the common changes done by companies is downsizing, or also known as lay-off. Lay-off can have negative effects, not only to the victims but also to the survivors (those chosen to continue working in the company). This qualitative research with phenomenology approach used intensive dan deep interview to eight chosen survivors by using theoretical sampling. The verification of the research results was done by using member checks and external audits. Results of this research showed that survivors felt that the lay-off was done unfairly, with subjectivity, and non-transparent, affecting their psychological condition, performance, and loyalty to the company. The survivors also did coping to their condition like external coping to help them solve the problems that occurred because of the lay-off.

Keywords: survivors, lay-off, phenomenology, effects, coping

Salah satu bentuk perubahan yang biasa dilakukan oleh perusahaan adalah downsizing (perampingan tenaga kerja) atau yang biasa disebut dengan PHK (Pemutusan Hubungan Kerja). Ternyata PHK bisa menimbulkan terjadinya dampak negatif, tidak hanya pada mereka yang menjadi korban PHK tapi juga pada *survivors* (mereka yang terpilih untuk tetap bekerja dalam perusahaan). Penelitian kualitatif yang menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi ini menggunakan wawancara intensif dan mendalam kepada delapan orang *survivors* yang dipilih dengan menggunakan *theoretical sampling*. Verifikasi hasil penelitian dilakukan dengan melakukan member checks dan external audits. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa survivors merasa PHK yang terjadi dilakukan secara tidak adil, ada unsur subyektivitas, dan tidak transparan, sehingga akhirnya memengaruhi kondisi psikologis, kinerja, dan loyalitas *survivors* kepada perusahaan. Survivors juga melakukan *coping*, seperti *coping* eksternal guna membantunya mengatasi masalah yang timbul akibat PHK.

Kata kunci: survivors, PHK, fenomenologi, dampak, coping

Change, growth, and development are phenomena often encountered in the life of a company so it's able to stay effective. Reorganization, restructuring, and technology implementation are tendencies faced by a company, and can cause someone to lose a fellow employee, income, long life employment, work safety, and many others.

One of the most common forms of change done by companies are downsizing, or also known as lay-off. Lay-off is one of the company changes done to anticipate external and internal pressure. Lay-off is done by the company's management department in order to increase efficiency, productivity, and to maintain the company's performance (Cameron, 1994; Kozlowski, Chao, Smith, & Hedlund, 1993). According to Cameron, Freeman, and Mishra (1991), lay-off has three implementation strategy, which are: (1) A workforce reduction

strategy, (2) An organization redesign strategy, and (3) The systemic change strategy. In several cases, lay-off managed to make the company control structure more effective, flexible, and faster in decision making because of the slim bureaucracy and the short chain of command. Meanwhile, the positive effects for the survivors (employees chosen to continue working for the company) are that they will work more actively (Brockner et al, 1988) and perform better (Bies, Mmaknan, & Brockner, 1993).

Even though several researchs have shown that lay-off have a positive goal, lay-off may also damage the company and its employees (Cascio, 1993). The company executives often underestimate the high price they must pay when they do the lay-off, causing the failure in reaching the intended revenue and benefits of the lay-off. This can be seen in the research done by the Wyatt Company Consultants, United States of America (Hitt, Keats, Harback, & Nixon, 1994) which shows that less than 50% of the companies research couldn't

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