Factors Affecting Employee Engagement in India: A Study on Offshoring of Financial Services

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to explore factors that affect employee engagement in financial offshore organizations in India. Sixty employees involved in offshoring financial services were interviewed. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data collected in the study. Three main themes were identified: (1) implicit benefits, (2) organizational culture and (3) organizational policies. The findings of this study are important due to their practical implications. First, the factors will encourage employers to make more employee friendly policies, and second, by resolving the employee issues raised in this paper, it is anticipated that the employers will be able to enhance the overall efficiency of their workforce and improve the employer-employee relationship.

Keywords

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Factors Affecting Employee Engagement in India: A Study on Offshoring of Financial Services

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The objective of this study is to explore factors that affect employee engagement in financial offshore organizations in India. Sixty employees involved in offshoring financial services were interviewed. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data collected in the study. Three main themes were identified: (1) implicit benefits, (2) organizational culture and (3) organizational policies. The findings of this study are important due to their practical implications. First, the factors will encourage employers to make more employee friendly policies, and second, by resolving the employee issues raised in this paper, it is anticipated that the employers will be able to enhance the overall efficiency of their workforce and improve the employer-employee relationship. Keywords: Employee Engagement, Financial Services, Offshoring, Organizational Culture, Thematic Analysis

Companies in India are increasingly devising new ways and means to optimally utilize their workforce. However, only eight percent of the employees in India are engaged in their workplace (Kohli & Grover, 2013). Like other industries, engaging employees in the offshoring industry is also becoming a priority for human resource (HR) managers (Thite, 2010). Offshoring is an emerging business in the world market (Lewin, Massini & Peeters, 2009) with financial services being one of the industries that includes activities like banking, trading, financial analysis, auditing and hedge funds accountancy (Palugod & Palugod, 2011). Companies including Delloite, Ernst and Young (E&Y), Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), Genpact and Infosys Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Ltd. are actively involved in offshoring of financial services and want to increase their productivity by increasing the number of their employees engaged. Past research has demonstrated that achieving higher process efficiency aided by an engaged workforce can improve the bottom lines of these offshoring companies significantly (Khanna & Palepu 2006; Overby, 2003).

According to Kahn (1990), *engagement* is defined as the attachment of the organization members to their job roles. Considerable research has been done on differentiating employee engagement from the other related constructs and making it measurable. For example, an employee is engaged if he can freely express himself physically, cognitively and emotionally in his official role (Kahn, 1990; Purcell, 2006; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). In offshoring, that entails dividing a process into several separate activities and assigning of few of these abroad (Michel & Rycx, 2012), the concept of engagement is particularly important. It is because, the offshoring of financial services demands intense cognitive work during odd hours in order to gain from the time lag between two countries (Amiti & Wei, 2009; Kikuchi & Long, 2010). High HR turnover and high employee stress are a few of the side-effects surfacing in the offshoring industry. Nevertheless, researchers argue that the solution lies in the concept of employee engagement (Lockwood, 2007).

This research bridges the gap between employee-employer concerns. The first section reviews the literature on employee engagement and offshoring. The second section describes the methodology used to conduct the. The third section includes results and discussion. The last section examines the managerial implications of this research.

Literature Review

The term, *engagement* it is defined as the emotional, physical and cognitive attachment of employees to their work. Due to its orientation towards practice, researchers have explored (e.g., Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013; Francis et al., 2013; Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013; Reissner & Pagan, 2013; Townsend, Wilkinson, & Burgess, 2014; Truss et al., 2011;) and tested (e.g., Alfes et al., 2013; Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013; Bhatnagar, 2012; Biswas, Varma, & Ramaswami, 2013; Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006; Juhdi, Pa'wan, & Hansaram, 2013; Rees, Alfes, & Gatenby, 2013; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008; Shantz et al., 2013; Viljevac, Cooper-Thomas, & Saks, 2012; Yalabik et al., 2013) the theory of engagement in the workplace. Schaufeli et al. (2002) for instance found vigour, dedication, and absorption as important measures of engagement. Maslach et al. (2001) and Harter et al. (2002) developed the construct of engagement empirically by establishing burnout-antithesis link and testing satisfaction-engagement nexus, respectively. Likewise, Saks (2006) proposed a multidimensional approach that explored various aspects of employee engagement construct holistically. However, researchers find engagement, a highly contextual construct (Freeney & Fellenz, 2013; Kühnel, Sonnentag, & Bledow, 2012; Menguc et al., 2013; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Wang et al., 2013; Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Their studies were based on job demand – resource (JD-R) model which states that for every type of job, there is a different set of resources which captures what the job requires (job demands) and what kind of support (job resources) is available to the employee (Karasek et al., 1998). Thus, exploring the antecedents of engagement in different contexts is important. More importantly, a review of the literature on the engagement-performance relationship by Shuck (2013) concludes that an engaged employee is a better performer, which is why the construct deserves more attention (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011).

Employee Engagement and Offshoring in India

Automation has affected almost all aspects of work, whether it is the requirement of professional qualifications to meet the job demand or the conditions in which the work is done. (Crozier & Friedmann, 1958). The Indian information technology (IT) industry is no exception (Majumdar, 2004). Offshoring is an important part of this industry. According to NASSCOM-Everest (2008), Indian BPO industry generated nearly USD 11 billion in export revenues within a decade and notably employs more than 700,000 people that accounts for more than 35% of the BPO market worldwide. Offshoring of financial services is still emerging in India within its relatively mature IT industry (KPMG, 2012). Despite this, phenomenal growth and high amount of market share, employee-related issues in India are not well addressed thereby causing under-utilization of human resources (Bhatnagar, 2007). This argument was supported by a study in which it was found that only 8% employees in India are engaged with their companies as shown in Figure 1 (Kohli & Grover, 2013). A service intensive industry cannot afford to maintain such low levels of engagement but the reality is that engaging employees with their jobs and organizations is proving to be the biggest challenge for Human Resource (HR) managers (Shao & David, 2007).

Figure 1. Employee engagement in Indian companies as of 2012
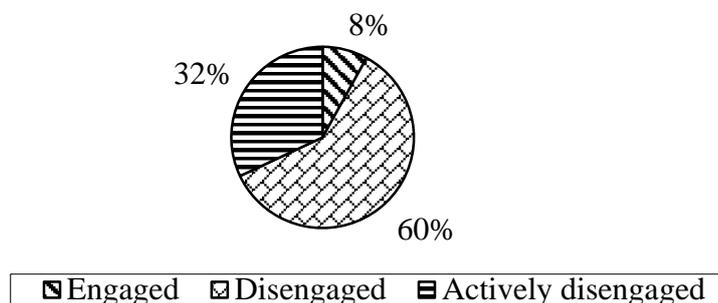
Adapted from Kohli and Grover (2013)

Some reasons behind low levels of employee engagement in the Indian outsourcing industry can be broadly classified into three reasons. Firstly, the retention of well trained and productive employees is difficult (Budhwar, Luthar, & Bhatnagar, 2006; Budhwar et al., 2006; Taylor & Bain, 2005). According to Thite (2010), the second reason is the highly volatile HR turnover rate in the Indian information technology enabled services (ITES) and the third reason is an acute shortage of required skills in the emerging markets. This is further exacerbated by the fact that the booming Indian economy has created well-paying job opportunities outside the ITES industry for graduates, in the retail, airline and hospitality industries (Thanawala, 2008).

Because an organization's outcome is positively correlated with employee engagement, the lesser the number of engaged employees in a company, the less the efficiency of that company will be (Harter et al., 2013). Researchers in countries such as the Netherlands and the United States have already started investigations at the individual level, group level, industry level and across the industries in order to discover remedies for these issues (Aron & Singh, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary for a company in this environment to discern the factors that affect engagement of an employee with a company. Ram and Prabhakar (2011) for example, examined the role of employee engagement in work-related outcomes and categorized engagement factors in employee's perception, job characteristics and rewards. Though some of the subsequent researchers (e.g., Freeney & Fellenz, 2013; Menguc et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2013) have recently worked on the antecedents of employee engagement yet more research is needed in the offshore of financial services.

The aforementioned literature review indicates four important literature gaps. First, more research is needed to explore augment the JD-R theory in different contexts. Second, research investigating the depth of the responses collected from employees of companies involved in offshoring jobs is needed. Third, offshoring, being an emerging concept, the researchers are yet to explore it, especially from the employees' point of view. Fourth, offshoring particularly in financial services is probably the least explored concept to date. Question that addresses these research gaps is: which JD-R factors according to the employees working in financial offshoring in India can help them engage with their job role in a better manner? Thus, **t**he objective of this research is to explore those factors that affect employee engagement in offshoring of financial services in India.

Methodology

Interviewer, Interview Setting, and Participants

The interviewer was a researcher with two – year full time work experience in the offshore of financial services profile in India. While working in that profile, he observed high employee attrition rates in his company as well as in the other company in India which were involved in offshoring. Thus, he was interested in exploring typical factors that affect attachment of employees with their work roles.

We used purposeful typical case sampling and the interviewer approached 60 individuals for this study (refer to Table 1). The interviewer took appointment from the participants for taking their interview in their workplace and met the participant as per pre-decided schedule and venue. The interviewer gave assurance to every interviewee that full anonymity would be maintained in terms of interviewee and his or her organization. The interviews took place in visitor's room. The sample was comprised of employees with experience working in the financial department of a company involved in the offshoring of financial services. Of the 60 individuals, 42 had worked with multiple companies at different hierarchical levels in the similar profile. Thirty percent of the sample was female. The age of participants ranged between 22 years to 41 years. Their education was pre-dominantly in finance, including master of business administration (MBA) in finance, chartered financial analyst (CFA), chartered accountant (CA) and company secretary (CS).

The researcher asked participants open ended questions (refer to Table 2 for the list of typical questions) by starting with an introductory question, i.e., *Tell me something about your job profile.* We had already divided the interview into three parts on the basis of the type of questions asked. First part contained questions such as, *since you are pretty much experienced in this field, can you tell me what kind of expectations do new comers have when they join your company?* And *how do you find the timing of your job in comparison to a typical nine to five government job?* The Second part contained direct questions involving *what all things fascinate you to perform better in your workplace.* And *why would you like to perform better in your workplace?* The interview ended with questions including *anything that you would like to recommend to the management so that you people can be motivated more to work?* And *anything else that you would like to share that can act as an input to my research?*

After each interview, we documented the response after each interview and was later on transcribed verbatim. Thereafter, we analysed transcription by using Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of thematic analysis. In the first phase, we read and re-read the descriptive responses obtained from all the sixty participants in order to get familiarized with the content. In the second phase, we coded the transcription into thirty-nine initial codes based on the literature review. In the third phase, we aggregated the initial codes to form distinct themes called potential themes which experts reviewed to further aggregate them into reviewed themes (also called main themes). We performed this analysis using QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis) miner 4 and named the reviewed themes as:

1. Implicit benefits
2. Organizational culture
3. Organizational policies

We then defined these themes as per our understanding of the review of other research papers. This completed the fifth and the second last phase of the analysis process. In the sixth phase, we re-analyzed the results obtained in the light of previous researches like that of

Sutherland (2011) and Aladwan et al. (2013). Finally, we mapped the main themes as shown below in Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4.

Table 1. Demographic details of participants

Demographic component	Category	Observation
Age (in years)		
	Minimum	22
	Maximum	41
Gender		
	Male	42
	Female	18
Number of companies work with		
	One	18
	Two-three	33
	More than three	9
Current hierarchical level		
	Assistant	16
	Associate	28
	Managerial	16
Educational qualification		
	Chartered Accountant	12
	Chartered Finanacial Analyst	4
	Company Sectretary	16
	MBA (Finance)	28
Experience in the current organization (in years)		
	0.5 – 1.0	17
	Greater than 1.0 - 1.5	24
	Greater than 1.5 – 2.0	13
	Greater than 2.0 - 2.5	4
	Greater than 2.5 – 3.0	1
	Greater than 3.0	1

Table 2. Set of Questions Typically Asked from the Participants

- Tell me something about your job profile
- Since you are pretty much experienced in this field, can you tell me what kind of expectations do new comers have when they join your company?
- What they (new comers) expect from the management of a typical company in such an industry?
- How do you find the timing of your job in comparison to a typical nine to five government job?
- What all things fascinate you to perform better at your workplace? Why would you like to perform better at your workplace?
- Anything non-monetary which motivates you?
- Anything that you would like to recommend to the management so that you people can be more motivated than what you presently are.
- Okay so, anything else that you would like to share, so that it can act as an input to my research?

Note. Probing questions differed from participant to participant.

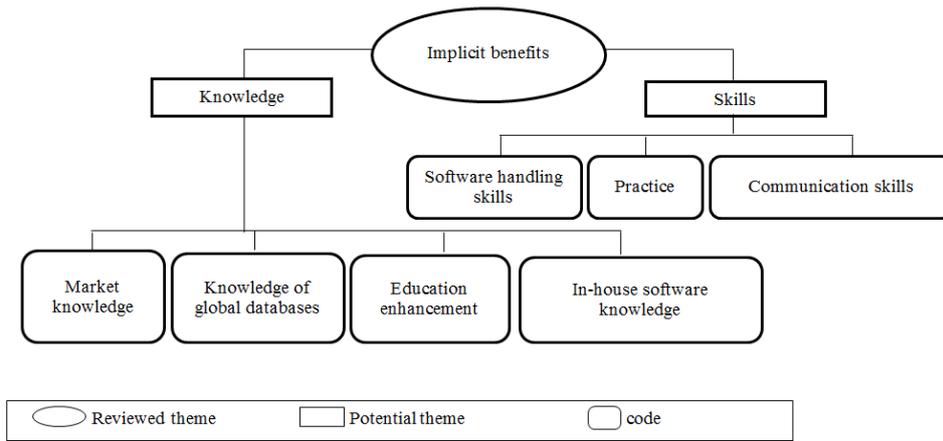**Figure 2.** Thematic Map for the Reviewed Theme 1 (implicit benefits)

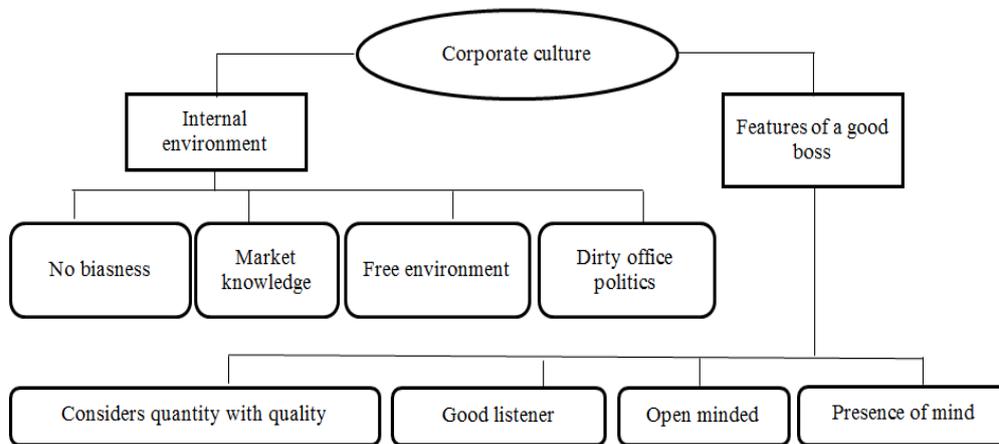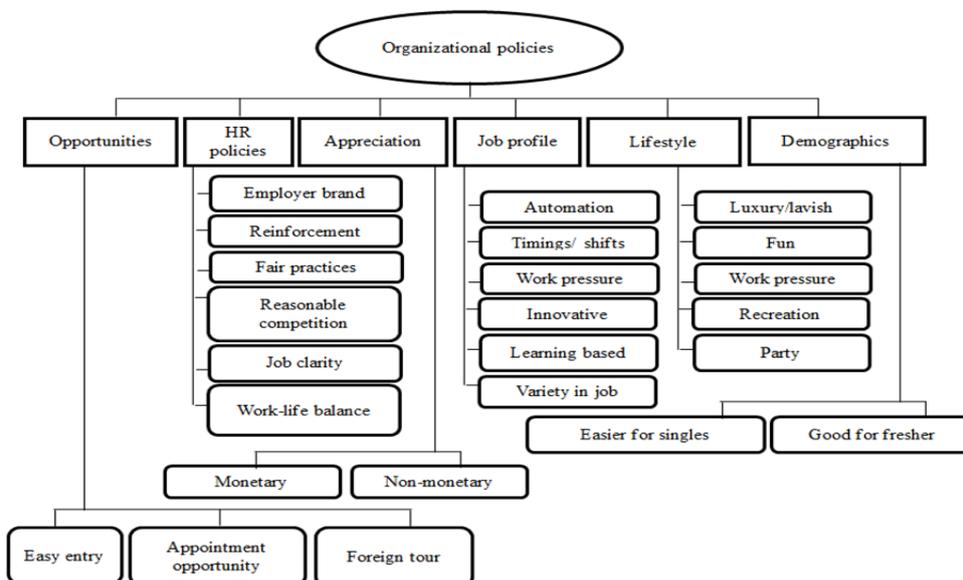**Figure 3.** Thematic Map for the Reviewed theme 2 (corporate culture)

Figure 4. Thematic Map for the Reviewed theme 3 (organizational policies)

Data Analysis

Every interview was analysed before conducting the next interview. Using this procedure, information saturation was achieved by the sixtieth interview marking the end of the data collection phase. Though, information saturation generally occurs in a small sample, the questions we raised were at three levels such as, individual, inter-personal and organizational which is why information saturation took more time. For credibility and dependability, we used Corbin and Strauss's (1990) subjective inter-coder reliability method. Two co-authors who were not involved in data collection processes coded the entire interview transcript independently. These two coders along with the one who collected data discussed the codes and arrived at mutually agreed set of themes and thematic maps. All the three coders were aware of the engagement literature. We then mutually discussed and defined each theme as per the thematic maps drawn earlier. Thick description (Geertz, 1994) of a few of the representative interview excerpts has been done in the subsequent sub-sections for each reviewed theme.

Theme 1: Implicit Benefits

The definition of the implicit benefits as described by Mochama (2013) includes schemas, knick-knacks, paid time off, counselling services, bonding sessions and payment for overtime. However, his study was in the context of pipeline industry in Kenya and contrasts with our findings i.e., implicit benefits can be defined as per this study as benefits that are inherent in the job description or benefits due to being in the employment like improvement in the knowledge and skills. One possible reason of such differences in the definition may be that the former job requires more physical exercise, whereas an emphasis on the latter job (in the current study) is more on cognitive thinking. Nevertheless, the extent of capitalisation of these implicit benefits is in the hands of an employee. Codes such as market knowledge, experience, education enhancement, communication and software related skills emerged from statements, a few of which are presented below. These codes were integrated in order to make two potential themes, namely knowledge and skills (see Figure 2).

> They (new joiners) want to learn all the technical aspects and there are certain questions like why we are doing this? How can we do it in a better way? So they are curious and they want to know each and every aspect of the job they are doing. If you are working here, you will come to know how to reconcile the broker data and client data. How to communicate with the client. Participant-1.

When asked about what new joiners expect from the company of this type, the above reply of Participant-1 the manager reflects the interest of incumbents in learning new things. With his experience, the participant emphasized the fact that new joiners try to adapt to the new environment and focus more on individual development. As said by Participant-2 (a manager): "[…] improving the individual skills, improving the whole batches of the department […]," the priority of managers is also to develop their subordinates. Another response of a management trainee, a middle level employee is below:

> They [employers] personally know that the person who is working in the organization will leave soon, but they don't consider those things in mind. They consider the person's individual growth must be there so that they can enhance their business also. So they provide more training and development so that it can help them to consume less process time. Participant-3.

The above answer was in response of the probing done to understand how development of individuals through training helps a company engage employees who are more likely to switch jobs. Through this quote, the participant conveying that the offshoring of financial services is a new and emerging area of ITES industry, and hence, there is a high deficit of skilled workforce. So companies know that the employee who joins will switch jobs in a few years, yet they need to spend hefty money on their training in order to survive in the market. She also indicated that most of the training is on the job and by observation. The bosses learn macro level issues from their bosses, resolve confusions from their peers and fund specific or client specific technicalities with their sub-ordinates. Coming to the last line of the quote which deals with the focus of companies on reducing the process time, it is very important for them to take into consideration because India's advantage is that it is almost half a day ahead of western countries on which the whole offshoring industry of India survives.

Theme 2: Corporate Culture

Schein (1990) aggregated corporate culture within three levels, namely *behaviors and artifacts, values and basic assumptions* (unconscious level). Contrary to this, our research restricts us to define corporate culture in its very segregated or pure form, which needs investigation at both manifest and latent levels. Hence, as per our understanding, corporate culture can be defined as the extent of fairness, flexibility in working, the attitude of the colleagues and dirty politics within a company. This is deeply rooted into the organization and very difficult to change. Codes such as dirty office politics, no biases and presence of mind were combined into two potential themes (internal environments and features of a good boss) as shown in the figure 3. The statements below illustrate these themes:

> It should be treated fairly without any biases. In most of the cases, the people get demotivated due to this office politics or bias of the managers. So, this is one of the factors that we should consider if we want to get our team members motivated. Participant-5.

Participant-4 told her bad experiences of unfair ways of rewarding the people in the company. She said: "[…] Apart from that, there are many instances, where dirty office politics take place […]." She was asked to elaborate on when she felt that the management was unfair to her. Being a team leader, she consequently recommended that one of the ways to engage and motivate members of a team is not to favor a particular member and instead treating everyone equally which she practices in her team. Her quote resembled what participant-5 said when he was asked the same question. On asking another participant as to what a manager who wants to eliminate bias can do, the below reply was noted:

> […] there should be meetings with the employees. They [managers] should devote at least fifteen minutes every week to listen to all the team members, their query, their concerns and once the team members analyze that they are being heard, then automatically they will get motivated. It should not be like that we are doing it for the sake of doing. We should listen to them. We [managers] should resolve their queries and problems. If they are requiring any training or they are encountering any problem, then we should resolve them […]. Participant-6.

As clear from the above quote, openness to listen is the first step to make the subordinate feel that the boss is unbiased. For this purpose, weekly meetings can be arranged

which will motivate the employees in a hope that at least some action will be taken. The next step is to actually resolve the issue be it training or things like that. It will ensure their trust in the boss that everyone is treated fairly.

Theme 3: Organisational Policies

Favorable organizational policies build trust within the organization as empirically proved by Six and Sorge (2008). It is therefore a key factor for employee engagement for any organization. We define organizational policies as the rules, regulations and framework defined by the top management and is not in the hand of middle or lower level employees are called organizational policies. This theme comprised of highest number of codes that include ways of reinforcing, brand name of the company, HR policies, appointment opportunity, easy entry, lavish lifestyle, foreign tour, location of the company, recreational activities, work pressure, timings or shifts of work, automation, pay, and insurance. These codes were combined, giving rise to five potential themes: opportunities, demographics, lifestyle, job profile and appreciation (Money or/and Non-monetary). Below are few of the representative statements of codes for appreciation sub-theme:

> So people do lot of research and they try to make more and more macros. So that human intervention can be minimized and more and more work can be done by the machine itself so it saves a lot of time. People in this era are focusing on money. They are least bothered about the work they do. Actually, what they want to get is more and more money out of the fees they have invested in their studies except Chartered Accountants.

> […] insurance as well and sometimes it happens that some is not that sound financially is not sound. So, if you talk about the auto industry, they are providing complete family insurance to their employees [...]. Participant-7.

When asked about the things that motivated him to work in such profile, the participant instantly replied *money*. The above quotes reveal that good pay package is essentially a thing an employee looks for. And not just pay package, other financial benefits do matter especially insurance. This reflects his high security needs. He is also aware of what benefits are provided in the other industries and suggests his company to follow it. Another important point raised by the participant here is about automation. By generalizing his remarks to all the employees working in the same profile, he says that through this heavily paying profile, a fresher tries to repay his/her student loan as soon as possible without going into the nitty-gritty of the details. One exception, however, he said, is the community of Chartered Accountants who are accounting professionals in India. He further added to the above quote and explained that these CAs try to dominate their fellows with other degrees. CAs started resigning when automation drive was started as their felt their knowledge will be useless then.

This quote is just the opposite of what the first quote used for the first theme reflected. From the contradiction of lowest level employee's quote (the last one) and that of the manager (the first quote), it can be inferred that though the motivation of Process Assistants' to work comes from money, their managers feel that they work because they are more interested in the nitty-gritty of the system and processes. It shows a wide gap in the thinking of bosses and their sub-ordinates. The answer on the question on non-monetary benefits was as given below:

> Non-monetary yeah! Your reputation will be good with your manager or with your senior and there will be a different kind of *strike the deeper* if you are a

performer. Wherever you go in any industry if you are a performer, it's good for you. Up to what extent I've observed, in IT industry, the biggest concern is timings. Means everyone is concerned about the timings. Till the time you are single, means you can work at night, day, whatever you are going to get, but once you get married, and you have your family, you have responsibility. So, timing is my concern. Participant-8.

Participant-8 had experience with multiple Multinational Companies (MNCs). He summarized other benefits in his first response by saying that performance is the only criterion to both survive and surge at the workplace. This is contrary to the response of the woman (Participant-7) which revealed her bad experiences regarding bias in rewards. Possibly, offshoring industry in India does not treat men and women equally. The next quote above also reveals an interesting finding. It reveals that management should not take men for granted as far as timings are concerned. Their marital status is the key here. Once they get married, the management should ask their preferred work-shift beforehand. When probed further, the participant revealed that on birthday of his kids, his company does not sanction his leave due to month end workload and because of which, he is accepting an offer of his company's competitor. The below quote of another employee of another company suggested the best practice instead.

[…] we get complementary dinner and other benefits like leaving early other day […] so we have to complete only 47.5 hours in the organization. So we can accommodate those hours in the other days also. The biggest factor would be if a person wants to be in home town like an employee who needs to stay in his hometown. For him it would be a good option. Participant-9.

When asked about whether he also faces the same problem of timings, his reply differed in company policies and was visible in his expressions of pride. He told that unlike his previous company, his present company understands this issue and has a policy of fixed hours per week but flexible per day. So, an employee can do overtime one day and compensate it on the next working day. All the employees work in tandem and with mutual understanding, no shortfall of personnel occurs on crucial days. The location of appointment also seemed to be a very important factor for engaging employees. Participants in their response revealed that their colleagues in general would like to work near their home town even on the cost of brand name of the company and package. The same is evident from his last quote cited above. The complete thematic map comprising of all the potential themes and codes under the main theme called *organizational policies* has been schematically represented in the figure 4 (refer Appendix 4).

Discussion

The study was done in order to explore the factors that affect employee engagement in the companies involved in offshoring of financial services was achieved by exploring factors across the experiences of the information rich cases. After the in-depth analysis and interpretation, it was found that there are mainly three factors of employee engagement in an Indian company indulged in offshoring of financial services. These are namely *implicit benefits*, *organizational culture* and *organizational policies*. Based on the current study, implicit benefits are inherent in the job description and are derived from being in the employment like improvement in the knowledge and skills. The extent of capitalization of these implicit benefits is in the hands of an employee. The next theme, i.e., organizational culture is the level of fairness, flexibility in working, the attitude of the colleagues and dirty politics. This

is deeply rooted into the organization and very difficult to change. The rules, regulations and framework defined by the top management and are not in the hand of middle or lower level employees are together called organizational policies.

The study findings are in line with several other studies. For example, Winterton et al., (2006) in their work reaffirmed the importance of studying skills and knowledge separately. Individually, knowledge has been classified on the basis of complexity and tackiness (Zhou et al. 2005) or as shared work producers, shared work practitioners, expertise-seeking novices and secondary knowledge miners (Markus & Lynne, 2001) or as domain-specific, procedural, and general knowledge (Ullman, 2010). Some of the researchers termed this classification as dimensions of knowledge. For instance, according to De Luca and Atuahene-Gima (2007), these are breadth, depth, tackiness, and specificity whereas, as per the study of Raedeke and Rikoon (1997), these are temporal and spatial. Skills have been popularly defined and classified either based on the level of an organization's hierarchy (e.g., Katz, 1974) or in the terms of skill sets of a particular individual competence like that of leadership skills, technical skills and communication skills (e.g., Swanson & Holton, 2009). Partly resembling with the latter philosophy and much different from that of Bryan and Harter (1897) is the definition of skills in the context of the current study which consists of software handling skills, practice and communication skills.

The two important dimensions of the internal environment of an organization found in the study of Neely et al. (1995) were

1. The role of the board of directors
2. The influence of ownership on corporate governance

The concerned findings of the current study are in line with this study and are rather more specific. The potential theme *internal environment* points out at need for procedural and distributive justice that an organization should facilitate. Along with a company specific environment and efforts to build strong employee friendly environment, good bosses is another factor that builds corporate culture. Sutton (2010) described when a boss becomes good enough in the eyes of his company as well as his subordinates. According him, a good boss works persistently to discharge his duties to the advantage of themselves as well as of the company. He is open to change and understands that his every act or behavior will be monitored closely and will set benchmarks for his subordinates. So he should behave accordingly. Hence, the characteristics of a good boss that this paper puts forth like

1. Open mindedness
2. Good listener
3. Balance of quality and quantity
4. Presence of mind are in fact prerequisites of an adaptive and effective boss

One of the potential themes that emerged out of the study is *opportunities*. Christopher and Tanwar (2012) have recently described these opportunities in a similar context of Knowledge Management Offshoring as

1. Opportunity to work closely with others
2. Knowledge sharing, but these have been quoted in terms of the team and not individuals and therefore the codes constituting opportunities in the current study are unique

With the support of the next potential theme of this study that is HR policies, Lee (1999) discusses the need to structure HR policies to support internal knowledge assets in such knowledge based organizations. Another theme under organization policies is appreciation. Fagley and Adler (2012) have come out with eight aspects of employee appreciation namely a focus on what one has (*have* focus), awe, ritual, present moment, self/social comparison, gratitude, loss/adversity and interpersonal appreciation which this study combines into monetary and non-monetary. The theme *job profile* has been extensively covered by Van den Broeck et al. (2012). According to them, different types of job profiles (demanding, resourceful, poor and rich) lead to different levels of employee engagement in the workplace. However, this exploratory study goes in depth to find particular reasons behind it that includes

1. Automation of the processes
2. The timings or shifts the employees need to work in
3. The kind of work pressure that fluctuates from least in the middle of the month to the highest in the month begin and end
4. Innovation at the workplace in terms of job enrichment and psychological empowerment as described by Bhatnagar (2012) where more learning is possible

Schmitz (2004) confirms increase in the purchasing power of Indian middle class due to the introduction of the offshoring concept in India. The current study identifies that employees working in an offshoring company seek luxury, fun, party, recreation and reasonable work pressure in order to remain engaged in their work. Lifestyle is therefore a matter of utmost importance for them. Other than lifestyle, the type of demography also matters. Surprisingly, only two demographic variables, namely: *easier for singles* and *good for fresher* were identified in the study

The quotes also gave some interesting insights into employees' mind. It was found that unlike other ITES areas, women working in the profile of offshoring of financial services did not demand any special arrangement for the security of the workplace. In fact, when asked, they straightforwardly denied of any such requirements. Another thing found was the craze of a fresher for foreign tourism and awareness of their bosses about their desire for it. As a matter of fact, it is a win-win thing for both bosses and their sub-ordinates as the newcomers are sent to the headquarters of the company located in England or America for training. All employees are hence mandated to possess their passport.

This study mainly contributes to the theory of employee engagement which is based on the self-role relationship. In that, role acts an extrinsic motivation for an employee to work and is highly contextual in nature. Scholars including, Jenkins and Delbridge (2013) have argued that context is an important influencer of employee engagement. This context is constituted by various external factors identified in this research such as, job profile, opportunities, and HR policies. This research reveals what are the expectations of employees with their management as well as what managers think about their subordinates. Implicit benefits theme lists the factors that affect employees working in such an industry at individual level. Corporate culture theme involves precursors of inter-personal relationship. Organizational theme involves organizational level factors that affect employees' attachment with their work role.

The practical implications of the research are twofold. Firstly, the factors explored in the research provide rich information to the concerned employer about what can engage employees in their work. It can particularly help these companies in controlling the high attrition rates by understanding the expectations of their employees, which are unique to the Indian offshoring industry. Secondly, an employer by paying due attention to the importance of the findings, can foster healthy employee relations in the company as the employees can

then derive more meaning out of their jobs. As an increased level of employee engagement essentially means the emotional attachment of the employee with the job if not with the organization, a higher level of productivity can be obtained from the same employee.

Like any other study in social sciences, this study is also not free from limitations. Firstly, we took interviews of employees working at various hierarchical levels. Due to time and availability constraints, we could not conduct a dyadic study wherein, sub-ordinates and their respective bosses are both interviewed. Future researchers are encouraged to overcome this limitations by conducting a dyadic study. Secondly, since the questions were related to informants' respective current organizations, some participants were little hesitant to speak much despite assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. Despite these limitations, being a qualitative study, on one hand it provides valuable insights of the day to day difficulties that employees working in the offshoring companies face, whereas on the other hand it makes us familiar about employees' likings that can increase their productivity. The disengagement factors are actually embedded in the difficulties and frustrations that they would like to overcome, whereas engagement factors are embedded in their likings about the company. However, it is yet to test as to which factor negatively affects engagement factor and which affects it positively. This calls for an empirical examination of the causal relationship in between them. Gender specific issues that emerged in the findings demands future studies to concentrate on the levels of engagement based on gender and inquire to understand the differences between them in the results. Moreover, it will be interesting to examine the change in the level of engagement due to change in factors like automation, leaving workplace early, Training and Development (T&D) and opportunities which may or may not result in a higher attrition rate. Future studies can focus on capturing the engagement dynamism by conducting longitudinal studies on a particular company, thereby predicting the possible engagement levels of that company's key employees.

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