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The Effects of Employee Engagement on Employee Turnover: A Case Study from the UAE

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The UAE is a federation comprising seven emirates—Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Fujairah, Ras al Khaimah, Umm al Quwain, and Ajman (O'Neill, Hodgson, & Al Mazrouei, 2015, p. 9). Organizations in the UAE employ a mixed workforce, consisting of individuals from varied nationalities seeking work opportunities (Suliman & Al-Junaibi, 2010, p. 1472). However, employee engagement is seen to be gaining importance in recent years, as a survey done by an HR (human resource) consultancy, Tower Perrins, indicated that over 95 percent of the workers believed that they would be more productive if they were happier and engaged at the workplace (95% of employees believe they would be more productive if they were happier, 2017). This can pose a challenge in promoting "long-term growth and global competiveness" in the UAE (Khoury & Tozer, 2013).

Employee turnover has been rising over the past few years in the UAE, with the rate being higher than the global average (Nair, 2017). A study on UAE workers, done by Robert Half, has provided some reasons for

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this increasing rate (Maceda, 2017d): inefficient management, stricter workplace regulations, absence of interaction with peers, lack of challenging work, "poorly executed" meetings, and a vague "understanding of the significance of their contribution to the company's bottom line" (Maceda, 2017d). However, most experts have pointed out that lack of employee engagement is one of the most important factors that could cause a high level of employee turnover (Nair, 2017).

According to Gallup, which is an analytics firm, employee survey results have stated that about 85 percent of the employees within the UAE are "not engaged" or are "actively disengaged" in their work (Maceda, 2017a). This means that only about 15 percent of the total UAE workforce is connected to their work (Maceda, 2017a). This implies that though employees are physically present at the workplace, they do not feel a "psychological connection", and as a result, they decide to leave (Maceda, 2017a). For this reason, many firms now focus on engaging employees through increased pay and other benefits.

This chapter explains the link between employees who are immensely engaged at their workplace and the subsequent impact on their intention to leave. It also highlights how higher levels of employee turnover are associated with firms with reduced opportunities for engagement. Therefore, the study aims to answer the following questions based on an extensive analysis of literature and secondary data:

- Does culture play a role in determining the level of engagement among employees?
- Does job tenure of the employees have an effect on the level of engagement and consequently their intention to leave?
- Are employees more engaged in certain industries as compared to others?

Employee Engagement

In general, employee engagement can be seen as a form of motivation that helps employees to connect with the organizations, both physically and psychologically (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016, p. 831). In fact, employee

training, welfare, and safe working conditions can be seen as some of the approaches aimed at employee engagement. Often in literature, the word "commitment"' is used interchangeably to describe this concept (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010, p. 89). On the contrary, there could be a situation where employees may not become fully committed to their job roles (Sibiya, Buitendach, Kanengoni, & Bobat, 2014, p. 132). This leads to a situation called disengagement (Sibiya et al., 2014, p. 132). Disengaged employees tend to display less interest in their work, make poor decisions, are highly distracted, and take more days as leave, thereby resulting in lower productivity (Sibiya et al., 2014, p. 132).

Engaging employees seem to produce various benefits for both the individual and the organization. On an individual level, it can improve job satisfaction and performance (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016, p. 831). For the organization as a whole, engaged employees could mean a source of competitive advantage, which can increase productivity and thereby contribute to the organizational goals (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016, p. 831). This is evident from the survey that Tower Perrins had piloted in 2017, where the findings demonstrated that "the operating income of businesses with low levels of employee engagement" fell by 32.7 percent while those with high levels rose by 19.2 percent (95% of employees believe they would be more productive if they were happier, 2017).

Engagement can be affected by certain factors such as HR practices, job satisfaction, commitment, organizational culture, remuneration, management support, relationship with colleagues, work–life balance, and training and development (Kaur, 2017, pp. 10–19). However, in the context of the UAE, three factors can be identified to have impact on the level of engagement, namely, culture, job tenure, and type of industry.

Based on the understanding of literature, the framework shown in Fig. 5.1, has been proposed. This framework will be employed to explain
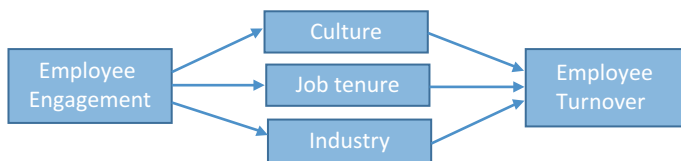

Fig. 5.1   Employee engagement and turnover framework. Source: Author

how employee engagement can be influenced by the culture of the organization, job tenure of the employees, and the type of industry, thereby leading to turnover intent in the UAE.

Role of Culture

Firstly, organizational culture is seen to have a profound effect on the level of engagement among employees (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016, p. 838). Kirkman et al. (2009) describe culture as a set of shared values, beliefs, norms, and attitudes that an individual derives from "morals, laws, customs and practices of a society" (cited in Sheikh, Newman, & Al Azzeh, 2013, p. 1082). As a result, organizations can adopt either an individualistic attitude, where employees work individually, or a collectivist attitude, where employees work interdependently with other employees (Sheikh et al., 2013, p. 1082). Abdalla and Al-Homoud (2001) have mentioned that the UAE has a collectivist culture (cited in O'Neill et al., 2015, p. 22).

In addition to this, since firms operate across borders, national culture also shapes a firm's "values, politics," and "management styles" (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016, p. 832). It could also affect the way a team operates, relationship with peers, or even the general working environment (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016, p. 835). Hence, national culture can also have an influence on organizational culture. In fact, a report suggests that organizations in the UAE are reshaping their workplace culture due to increasing innovations, industries, technologies, and working models, which seem to impact the way employees communicate and work with each other (UAE's work culture is getting future ready, 2017). Similarly, theorists such as Lockwood (2007) have established that culture can also determine the level of engagement among employees (cited in Smith & Macko, 2014, p. 60). This is why organizations, today, focus on creating a cooperative culture in order to enhance employee commitment (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016, p. 838).

Role of Job Tenure

Secondly, job tenure also plays a role in determining the level of engagement. In literature, job tenure has been defined as the number of years an employee works for a firm (Carmeli 2003, as cited in Sibiya et al., 2014, p. 134).

The trend of employees changing jobs in less than two years has risen to a large extent (Khalife, 2016). This phenomenon could be due to the changing nature of business and advancement in technology, where individuals are increasingly adopting to work for a short-term period (Maceda, 2017a). These individuals may represent the younger generation who are less engaged in the workplace, due to the lack of commitment displayed by them as compared to the older workers (Maceda, 2017a). In the UAE, this seems to be a common phenomenon in the last few years and has made firms reconsider their employee retention strategies (Khalife, 2016; Maceda, 2017b).

Normally, one would surmise that employees who spend a longer period of time working with a firm are engaged with the firm (Harter, 2015, p. 4). These employees become specialists with in-depth knowledge about their field, which is hard to be gained through business schools or other company roles (Harter, 2015, p. 5). As a result, these employees become a source of competitive advantage for the firms, as they have immense tacit knowledge of the firm's operations (Harter, 2015, p. 4). This, in turn, is linked with improved performance levels (Harter, 2015, p. 5). However, studies also provide contrasting views where employees consider leaving the firm despite working for a longer period of time (Studies Reveal Efforts to Engage Employees at Work and Beyond, 2015). Harter (2015, p. 3) specifies that the main reason for this is the lack of engagement for the employees with the firm.

Role of Industry

Thirdly, the degree of engagement tends to have a variation among different industries. This could occur between heavy and light industries or between different sectors—private versus public. For example, in the hospitality industry, front-office hotel workers, who were engaged with and emotionally attached to the organization, had a positive perception of their work and had lesser intent to leave (Karatepe, 2015). Another instance is when HR experts from a range of global firms had to participate in a training program, which is also viewed as a form of engaging employees (Kay, 2007). Furthermore, a study done on Indian retail firms has demonstrated that engagement had largely benefited employees (Sumathi, 2017).

In the UAE context, the level of loyalty and engagement tends to be high for the public sector (Ibrahim & Al Falasi, 2014). However, a study on the working professionals in the UAE oil industry had concluded that committed individuals might also develop the intent to leave (Suliman & Al-Junaibi, 2010, p. 1472).

Effect of Employee Engagement on Turnover

During last five years, many firms have realized that lack of engagement among employees is one of the main causes of increased employee turnover. In fact, it is one of the major obstacles faced by firms today, as turnover has associated costs for the organization. Numerous studies provide support to this relationship (Sibiya et al., 2014; Smith & Macko, 2014). In fact, Sibiya et al. (2014, p. 139) mention that employee engagement has a positive impact on retention and an inverse relationship with turnover.

According to CIPD (2012), employee turnover is defined as the number of "employees who leave an organization over a set period" of time (cited in Smith & Macko, 2014, p. 57). There could be many reasons leading to employee turnover, including lower pay, longer working hours, low job satisfaction or involvement, minimal growth prospects, poor facilities, and lack of training (Hendrie 2004, cited in Smith & Macko, 2014, p. 58). However, we might also reckon that employee turnover can

bring in new hires with fresh perspectives. Yet, it is associated with costs such as increased recruiting, loss of knowledge, additional training costs, and lowered morale for the rest of the employees (McKay et al. 2007, as cited in Sibiya et al., 2014, p. 134).

Meanwhile, a study in the UAE states that the main factors for engagement in the UAE are identified to be "communication, leadership, benefits, image, and empowerment" (O'Neill et al., 2015, p. 5). At this point of time, it is important to note that there is a lack of literature aimed at UAE workforce in different industries. Also, most studies have used a quantitative approach to explain this relationship.

Nevertheless, one can infer that the views among researchers are not constant. This is true even for the various theories and concepts used by them to describe this relationship. For example, if employee engagement is seen as providing a safe work climate, then the social exchange theory can be used (Huang et al., 2016, p. 249). According to this theory, if the employers provide employees favorable treatment such as programs aimed at engagement, the employees reciprocate by being more loyal and committed to the firm (Huang et al., 2016, p. 249). Some other theorists attribute Herzberg's two-factor theory to engagement, where satisfaction at work is divided into two broad categories—motivators and hygiene factors (Berry & Morris, 2008). Motivators are the factors of work that produce direct satisfaction, such as recognition, while hygiene factors may not produce immediate satisfaction but when removed can cause discontentment among employees (Berry & Morris, 2008). Therefore, engagement can be seen as a form of motivator.

Ability-Motivation-Opportunity Model

According to Savanevičienė and Stankevičiūtė (2011), the ability, motivation, and opportunity model, or the AMO framework, seems to be most appropriate model to understand employee engagement. This is best expressed in terms of the equation given below, which shows that ability, motivation, and opportunity are required to attain high performance among employees (Boxall & Purcell 2008, as cited in Collings & Mellahi, 2009, p. 310).

$$P = f(A,M,O)$$

According to this theory, employees need to have the required ability (in terms of capacity and skills), motivation (in terms of reinforcement and willingness), and an opportunity to perform (with the help of the right tools and working conditions) in order to perform well (Blumberg & Pringle 1982, cited in Collings & Mellahi, 2009, p. 310). If a situation arises where the employee has the required skill as well as opportunity, in terms of their current position, but do not have much motivation from the management, they can fall back on performance. A similar issue occurs when skilled employees who have the zeal (or the motivation to perform) are not given the opportunity to excel through engagement programs.

This theory is commonly associated with firms that are high-performing work systems, wherein "bundles or systems of human resource policies and practices" are used "to influence firm performance" (Muduli, Verma, & Datta, 2016, p. 130). Basically, if the organization aligns its objectives with the goals of employee engagement, employees are seen to be more motivated and keen to improve performance (Muduli et al., 2016, p. 135). Moreover, instilling HR practices that aim at improving employees' skills and motivation levels have been seen to have an effect on the employees' reluctance to leave the organization (Gardner et al. 2011; Sun et al. 2007, as cited in Kaifeng, 2012, p. 1268). In this way, the organization will value their contribution and encourage them by providing more opportunities, thereby establishing long-term relationships (Kaifeng, 2012, p. 1268). As a result, the employees, too, will feel more engaged and work harder and are less likely to leave (Kaifeng, 2012, p. 1268).

Discussion

The data employed for this research are secondary data, qualitative in nature, collected from the websites 'Indeed' (2018) and 'Glassdoor' (2018), where employees are allowed to give their views about UAE firms. Using secondary data is useful as it allows one to reanalyze

quantitative data or combine information from various data sets (Vishwanath, 2015). In other words, an online research can be undertaken for deductive reasoning. According to Hyde (2000), deductive analysis involves identifying a specific theory and testing whether it applies to the context. In this research, the AMO framework has been chosen to ascertain if it can explain the relationship between employee engagement and turnover in the case of four firms.

A small sample size is used in the research, which involves four firms in the UAE—Siemens, Petrofac, Apparel, and DHL. Siemens is a "global technology company with core activities in the areas of electrification, automation and digitalization" (Siemens Aktiengesellschaft, 2018, p. 3); Petrofac is an "oilfield service company" (Petrofac Limited, 2017, p. 3); Apparel Group is "a global fashion and lifestyle retail conglomerate" in the UAE (Apparel Group, 2018); and DHL is a global logistics firm (DHL Supply Chain (formerly Exel Inc.) SWOT Analysis, 2018, p. 3).

The current as well as former employees of these four firms have provided information on their respective firm's culture, their length of employment, and type of industry they are employed in. Furthermore, the study was conducted on a cross-sectional basis, that is, for a specific period of time ranging between September 1, 2017, and January 31, 2018. This allows us to critically analyze the employee turnover perspective. Apart from that, the individuals occupy various positions, across various firms located within the UAE, not limited to a specific department.

In order to study the effect of the variable 'culture', comments that emphasized on the word 'culture' were used. In addition, comments that emphasized on 'work–life balance' were also used. In fact, work–life balance can also be considered to be a part of the cultural component. Taneja, Sewell, and Odom (2015, p. 49) justify this by saying that when the organizational culture can promote an environment where employees are able to "strike a balance between work and individual goals", this can lead to "high performance and employee engagement".

Similarly, to study the level of engagement among industries, two factors, that is, management and pay, were used. In literature, these two factors seem to have a significant role in empowering and engaging employees for two reasons. Firstly, scholars note that interaction and support from the management is seen to be essential in achieving a higher

level of engagement and performance (Taneja et al., 2015, p. 52). Secondly, the right kind of pay and incentives is also seen to have a positive correlation with the commitment and satisfaction levels of the employees (Ogbonnaya, Daniels, & Nielsen, 2017, p. 2).

Scholars have pointed out that when the culture of an organization does not match the level of commitment shown by its employees, it can lead to frustration and burnout (Pauken, 2008). Thus, Kelleher (2015, p. 18) asserts that engagement is an important segment of organizational culture, and managers often play a role in shaping an atmosphere where employees feel empowered. In reality, this is one of the reasons for the success of large corporations such as Johnson & Johnson, where the employees have demonstrated an exceptional work–life balance (Kelleher, 2015, p. 19).

It is interesting to note that employees who had been with a company for more than five years felt committed. On the contrary, there were employees who had left their firm in less than a year, due to various reasons. In fact, this supports the views expressed in literature that employees who are more engaged or committed tend to stay longer at their firm and are less likely to leave (Ismail 2012, as cited in Ibrahim & Al Falasi, 2014, p. 569). Employees who have held longer tenures with their firm are said to have more stable employment, are more engaged, and have less intent to leave (Bal, De Cooman, & Mol, 2013, p. 108).

The role of industry is pivotal. In fact, in industries such as oil and gas, there tends to be a high amount of work pressure and tight deadlines, leaving the employees less time for training or other activities. Comparatively, in the retail sector, more training, opportunities, and incentives are provided. Therefore, the amount of engagement of employees can depend on the type of industry they are employed in.

A thorough analysis of the literature review has demonstrated that results of research in a particular industry cannot be generalized across all industries to understand the engagement levels. For instance, the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) had instituted a form of engagement program based on employees' views (Utzinger, 2009, p. 17). It had introduced a buddy system, opened up new channels for communication, encouraged employees to contribute ideas, and strengthened the trust-based relationship between the management and the employees (Utzinger, 2009, p. 18). As a result, DIFC had transformed into a

high-performance organization (Utzinger, 2009, p. 16). Another example is DHL, which has been awarded various accolades for employee engagement (Maceda, 2017c). According to Maceda (2017c), DHL has introduced certain reforms focusing on developing employees and creating a safe working culture, which has, in turn, helped the firm reduce turnover by drastic levels and retain more employees as compared to others.

Meanwhile, the research by Suliman and Al Junaibi (2010, p. 1472) indicated that employees in the oil and gas firms displayed no correlation between their level of commitment and their intent to leave. In a similar vein, petroleum sector employees in the UAE had indicated that when managers show a positive leadership style, it could help employees feel more empowered and engaged (Al Sahi, Zaabi, Ahmad, & Hossan, 2016, p. 812). In this way, different industries have varied forms of engagement schemes that cater to their employees' needs.

As mentioned earlier, the AMO framework seems to explain this link between employee engagement and turnover. A study by Gallup (2014) indicates that employees who have the right talent (ability) but are not engaged (given fewer opportunities to display their talents) can deliver subpar performance (lower levels of motivation) for the organization (cited in Harter, 2015, p. 4). In other words, when the organizational culture allows for more engagement through training, better work climate, and safety, the employees feel more motivated. This aspect is also displayed by some of the firms analyzed in this research. Therefore, when skilled employees are offered a culture that allows for more opportunities for engagement, they become motivated to perform better.

Similarly, in such an engaging culture, the organization can retain more talented workers. However, this research has also seen the contrary, where engaged employees also leave the firm due to certain reasons. Harter's (2015, p. 4) study suggests the idea that when employees are skilled and engaged, they tend to perform better than average workers, even if they have a job tenure of less than two years. CIPD (2012) explains that HR experts are therefore often tasked with the responsibility of motivating and engaging employees in a dynamic business environment, thereby helping the firm in reducing costs and turnover (cited in Smith & Macko, 2014, p. 66). However, one should bear in mind that turnover

may also include workers who leave the firm after an internship or a part-time or temporary job opportunity with the firm (Smith & Macko, 2014, p. 66).

Some industries, especially large-scale firms, offer an environment with high work pressure and tight deadlines. But, if the industry provides a reasonable amount of work to the employees coupled with some opportunities of engagement, this seems to help the employees. At this point, one can notice that all aspects of the AMO model can be applied to the context, and the respective firm or industry can retain employees.

Furthermore, a common theme found in the comments is the longer working hours expected of the employees, which could contribute to employee turnover. This view is also illustrated in literature, where a study done on construction workers in the Middle East indicated they had to work for longer hours because of which the level of turnover increased in such firms (Redfern, 2007).

Findings

Four firms in the UAE that have an excellent record of employee engagement were selected for the purpose of this research. In totality, 40 comments were gathered for analysis, and the results of the data analysis for each variable are discussed below.

Culture

In terms of workplace culture, the comments of employees from four firms in the UAE were analyzed from the 'Indeed' website (Indeed, 2018). The results are compiled in Table 5.1.

As observed from the table, the management at Petrofac has incorporated a good work culture. Here, the multicultural workforce liked to learn new things each day. Apart from that, they also seem to value everybody's opinions. Some comments even focus on team-based work and state that supportive management was the key element to their success. Meanwhile, the work culture at DHL was characterized as being good

Table 5.1 Employee comments

Firm	Statements on	
	Culture	Work–life balance
Petrofac	"Very Dynamic and demanding work culture, very little resources available, yet 100% commitment is expected" • Former Deputy Manager Logistics (January 24, 2018)	"It's very productive company." • Former Administrative Assistant (September 11, 2017)
DHL	"The Managers are nice and entrust their employees greatly to drive a synergy at work place." • Former B2B Sales Executive (November 27, 2017) "Better place to be" • Former Accountant in Customer Accounting, Finance Department (September 19, 2017) "My favorite part of my last job includes the ability to work independently (trust from employers) and the people I worked with." • Former Credit Controller (September 18, 2017) "I enjoyed most are the people, the different kinds of culture that I got to learn and adopt." • Former Tracing Adviser—Customer Service Executive (October 4, 2017)	"We learn from our ups and down." • Service Point Advisor (January 1, 2018) "To make daily report, accept package from counter, do security scan, give valid feedback to clients when shipment is lost or damaged, arrange delivery" • Former Customer Service Employee (January 28, 2018) "Long hours" • Transport Coordinator (January 3, 2018) "I use to handle great individual with different culture and personality." • Former Logistics Operation Team Leader (November 4, 2017)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Firm	Statements on	
	Culture	Work–life balance
Apparel	"Apparel Group is really a very good place to learn more." • Merchandise Planner (November 18, 2017)	"It's a very known company having 65+ international brand and spreads in GCC almost 1500 stores and I would say it's a great place to work where dreams come alive." • Former Assistant Area Sales Manager (December 29, 2017)
	"I can't say that I have faced some unresolved problems or felt any hardest part of the job." • Sales Associate/Customer Service (January 14, 2018)	"The working environment helps how to communicate with different culture and kind of people." • Sales Associate (October 25, 2017)
	"Coach in store team with the action plan for the day to reach our goals flowing up for full day and managing customers with team and office requirement is always flowing up to make sure that we are not missing any chance to achieve our targets and always having team activity." • Store Manager (January 12, 2018)	"General organization of work flows was pretty good as well." • Former Sales Associate (January 23, 2018)
	"Fun to work around, friendly and help full members around" • Marketing Specialist (January 4, 2018)	"Long hours work" • Sales Associate (September 21, 2017)
	"Very good place to work in, with very nice and professional people, and the employees are provided by the newest and most advanced devices and tools to work." • Former Online Specialist (December 31, 2017)	"They are very professionals and want to see you grow in a good work life balance if you also help yourself." • VM of Tommy Hilfiger/Pumpkin Patch/Moreschi (November 7, 2017)
	"I have learned and trained others as part of my job." • Former Operational manager (November 27, 2017)	"Long hour" • Former Sales Associate (December 10, 2017)
	"Taught me to deal with different cultures and taught me to be helpful in the team" • Senior Sales Associate (November 14, 2017)	"Apparel group UAE is a great place to work." • Senior Store Manager (October 14, 2017)
Siemens	"Flexible working hours, great workplace culture" • Former Intern (October 9, 2017)	"Work is good and great seniors to guide." • Assistant BMS Engineer (October 30, 2017)
	"Learning while working is the most enjoyable part of working here." • Electrical Engineer (January 4, 2018)	"Also, there are a lot of events organized by employees, so you have a pretty good work–life balance." • Former Industrial Customer Service Representative (October 21, 2017)

Source: Indeed.com

and motivating for the employees to work in. It is similar to Petrofac in terms of engagement; however, it differs on the innovative incentives offered. Apparel has offered a similar culture that encourages the employees and gives them room for improvement. This is also similar to Siemens, where employees enjoyed the workplace culture that encourages engagement and fosters better work–life balance. Ultimately, all the employees of the four firms have demonstrated that a strong work culture is key to better engagement and retention.

Job Tenure

Again, employee data of the four firms were gathered from the 'Glassdoor' website (Glassdoor, 2018) to analyze whether job tenure has a relationship with their engagement. Some of the employees at the petroleum firm, Petrofac, had left despite being offered an exciting job with good pay, due to other reasons. These employees held a senior position in the firm. In addition, an effective form of training in new technology and experience in their particular field had helped them in their future jobs. However, former employees from the retail firm, Apparel, have left the firm citing unrealistic targets as their reason. It important to note that employees who had worked for more than eight years with the firm had resigned, even though the work culture and perks were deemed as good enough. Most of them also complained about the long working hours required by the firm.

In the logistics firm, DHL, there were cases where employees had resigned after spending more than 15 years with the firm, due to other reasons. These employees had mentioned that the firm had opportunities for growth and development such as training. On the other hand, some former employees had left the firm within a year of joining. In the case of the technological firm, Siemens, some employees had not provided information on the length of employment. Therefore, data for very few employees were available, and these employees had stated other reasons for leaving the firm.

Industry

For the purpose of this research, four industries were selected. In each industry, a firm was analyzed, on the basis of their engagement levels, from the 'Indeed' website (Indeed, 2018). The level of engagement is identified through two drivers of employee engagement—pay and management. These factors seem to affect the engagement among employees in various industries (Table 5.2).

Oil and Gas Industry

For Petrofac, five comments on the 'Indeed' website were analyzed, which included four from current employees and one from a former employee. The comments suggested that although the firm seems a nice place to work, the work seems to be for longer hours and is characterized as dull and boring. However, this could be due to the high pressure of work activities found in such large-scale firms. Moreover, some comments state that the management offers a participative leadership style, contributing to a meaningful and safe work environment. This shows that it focuses on engaging employees by involving them in all activities and ensuring that they are happy with the work. The company also provides a good work culture and also includes diversity as part of its philosophy. Likewise, the firm provides various facilities to its employees such as catering, accommodation, and transport.

Logistics Industry

As regards DHL, six comments were present on the 'Indeed' website, out of which three belonged to current employees of the firm. Some of the employees have also undertaken part-time work and internships. The employees of this firm applaud its engagement initiatives, such as training, good benefits, and its supportive management structure. Also, the pay given is commensurate with other firms in the industry.

Table 5.2 Industry-wide comparison of engagement levels

Industry	Statements on Pay and benefits	Management
Petrofac (Oil and gas)	"Excellent benefits" • Former Deputy Manager Logistics (January 24, 2018) "Open time working hours" • Telecom Commissioning Engineer (January 15, 2018) "Normal 8 hours" • QHSE Officer (September 25, 2017) "On time salary" • Transport Coordinator (January 3, 2018)	"Expectations are: Safety first daily plan and follow up for the workforce 2-3 week look ahead plan time management and schedules" • Telecom Commissioning Engineer (January 15, 2018) "Management is very good and all managers are so so lovely." • QHSE Officer (September 25, 2017)
DHL (Logistics)	"Great team, highly appreciate the management team" • Service Point Advisor (January 1, 2018)	"The management is very good when it comes to how to handle their staff especially in motivating them." • Former Logistics Operation Team Leader (November 4, 2017) "The management is good and the workplace is okay." • Tracing Adviser—Customer Service Executive (October 4, 2017)

Table 5.2 (continued)

Industry	Statements on	
	Pay and benefits	Management
Apparel (Retail)	"And the same is the most enjoyable part being a part of the company—good benefits, good work life balance and learning never ends." • VM of Tommy Hilfiger/Pumpkin Patch/Moreschi (November 7, 2017) "I am glad that I have been the member of apparel group with benefits and serving my service." • Sales Associate (September 21, 2017) "Learned management skills, self-development" • Senior Store Manager Retail (October 14, 2017) "Our request from the office takes long-time." • Former Department Manager (November 9, 2017) "I like because it gave me first experience in UAE." • Senior Sales Associate (November 13, 2017) "Sometimes had to work a lot more than 40 hours" • Former Sales Associate (January 23, 2018) "It's a good place to work indeed." • Senior Store Manager (September 14, 2017)	"The management were very cooperative where work is concerned." • Former Operational Manager (November 27, 2017) "Management was fair and loyal towards employee's needs." • Former Sales Associate (January 23, 2018) "I got such a good experience and fully knowledge by the working to this company, especially there are some good support from the management side and our managers." • Sales Associate/Customer Service (January 14, 2018) "In apparel academy, I learn a lots starting from customer service passing by people management business management and customer management with inventory management." • Store Manager (January 12, 2018) "Management is easy to communicate with." • Marketing Specialist (January 4, 2018) "The management gives all employees equally all credit to think and creative, and when anyone comes up with new idea, they give him all ears and try to think with him for better results." • Former Online Specialist (December 31, 2017) "I learned a lot from the company as it is my first job in the UAE, the management is very supportive and good to learn from." • Assistant Store Manager at SMYK (December 17, 2017)

Siemens (Technology)	"The salaries are a bit lower as compared to some of its competitors." • Senior Engineer (January 9, 2018) "Lot of stress. No time for yourself. Work Load is very high." • Former DR Consultant (September 14, 2017)	"Management really gives chances to those capable and responsible ones." • VM of Tommy Hilfiger/Pumpkin Patch/Moreschi (November 7, 2017) "As management requires team work, it is always important to have a good Regional Manager." • Former Regional Manager for LV, SWGR, and Automation (January 14, 2018)

Source: Author

Retail Industry

For the firm Apparel, six reviews were available for the year 2018, out of which two were based on the experiences of former employees. Despite the engaging and supportive environment, some employees state that they had to work for long hours. Nevertheless, the firm provides incentives such as free insurance and overtime to motivate them. Apart from that, it provides various opportunities for development, helping the employees learn and gain experience, and also recognizes their achievement. In addition, the employees liked working there and had found the management to be fair and supportive toward the staff.

Technology Industry

Data collected from six employees at Siemens indicate that they enjoyed working with the firm. As per their statements, the management is seen to be very supportive and helpful to the employees. Employees are treated as family members, and the senior members seem to mentor the workers. This is evident from the open-door policy mentioned by some of the employees. Furthermore, the firm provides competitive perks, including free lunches and allowances. Some employees had to work in teams and found their colleagues to be helpful and respectful.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to understand whether employee engagement could have an impact on the turnover rate based on three variables identified for the context of the UAE. This study on four firms in the UAE has demonstrated that this relationship holds true, on the basis of the AMO theory. It can be inferred that workplace culture as well as job tenure can impact the level of commitment among employees. Moreover, the relationship can also depend on the kind of industry they are employed in. This study suggests addressing the issue of engagement and turnover in the workplace through three ways. Firstly, as Lockwood

(2007) states, HR experts must assess the needs of the leaders and the workers, which will help them create systems and policies that cater to those needs (cited in Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016, p. 831). In this way, the interests of the workers and the goals of the organization can be aligned. However, this process requires the organization to hire the right talents (Harter, 2015, p. 5). When these two are paired, they can improve employee engagement levels, reduce turnover, enhance performance, and increase productivity, thereby becoming valuable organizational resources (Harter, 2015, p. 6).

Secondly, managers need to have a mechanism whereby they can understand employees' needs and allow employees to have a certain degree of autonomy in performing their tasks (Harter, 2015, p. 6). This involves assessing their needs and talents (Harter, 2015, p. 6). In fact, it is the duty of the management of a firm to create a culture that allows for trust and commitment among employees. This is evident from the research, which shows that the management is responsible for about 70 percent of efforts aimed at engagement (Maceda, 2017a). The management can do this by redesigning job tasks by introducing more variety and autonomy into it (Maceda, 2017d).

Thirdly, there must be a platform for employees to voice their views through a suggestions or feedback system (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010, p. 91). This can be done in the form of surveys that employees can fill in to provide their views (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010, p. 93), based on which the management can create action-oriented plans aimed at development (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010, p. 93). This also involves the management instilling a culture fostering mutual respect among employees, which is essential for the engagement to take place (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010, p. 94).

Nevertheless, all these processes require the management to have effective strategies in place, so that human resources can be managed in a more strategic manner (Harter, 2015, p. 6). It must be kept in mind that creating a good work environment and offering higher pay alone does not contribute to engagement. Rather, studies have proven that offering benefits and other initiatives directed at employees developing themselves is the only way in which a firm can combat the issue of employee turnover (Nair, 2017). The benefits could be either financial, such as better pay or

allowances, or non-financial, such as training and work–life balance initiatives (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010, p. 93). As a result, skilled employees will feel more motivated to perform well, becoming a competitive advantage for the firm.

Although the findings of the research justified the relationship between employee engagement and turnover, there were certain limitations faced in this research. There was a time constraint, since the research had to be undertaken within the cross-sectional time horizon. As a result, only data for the five months spanning from September 1, 2017, to January 31, 2018, have been used. According to scholars, this can impede our "understanding of the causal relationship" between variables such as engagement and their effect on turnover (Dayan, Zacca, & Di Benedetto, 2013, p. 236). Therefore, a longitudinal study, spanning many years, must be undertaken by including a large number of participants in different organizations (O'Neill et al., 2015, p. 22).

Also, since not many studies have been undertaken in the context of various sectors within the UAE, further research on engagement needs to be undertaken in different industries. Apart from that, the current research focuses on only three variables. Other demographic variables also need to be identified and examined on the employees. Besides, the study is carried out in the context of the UAE alone. As scholars have pointed out, further research needs to be carried out in other contexts as well in order to improve our understanding (Dayan et al., 2013, p. 236).

It is observed that retaining employees who have spent more than two years in a firm has been an issue faced by large organizations. Employee turnover increases costs to the organization, especially after investing in expensive training programs for the employees (Harter, 2015, p. 3). Therefore, this research will help us understand that when firms create opportunities for engagement based on the abilities of the employees and provide right motivational support, the turnover level reduces to a large extent.

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