THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL IT SOURCING ORGANIZATIONS: AN IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

Completed Research Paper

M.S.Sandeep
Loughborough University
Leicestershire, UK LE113TU
s.m.sandeep@lboro.ac.uk

M.N.Ravishankar
Loughborough University
Leicestershire, UK LE113TU
m.n.ravishankar@lboro.ac.uk

Donald Hislop
Loughborough University
Leicestershire, UK LE113TU
d.hislop@lboro.ac.uk

Abstract

In this paper, we use qualitative methods to explore how social information technology (IT) sourcing organizations balance the paradoxical orientations of commerce and social upliftment. We apply the theory of organizational impression management to explore how such organizations meet the demands imposed by multiple audiences. The results of our study suggests that in managing the duality of the orientations, organizations segregate, align with and convey different images to audiences using impression management strategies. We found that the social IT sourcing organizations in our study strategically disclosed information to convey the images of competency and legitimacy to clients and potential investors. Additionally, these organizations ensured their policies and practices were congruent with the prevalent social and cultural norms. Drawing on our empirical findings, we develop a process model that illuminates the crucial role of impression management strategies in the establishment of social IT sourcing organizations.

Keywords: Social IT sourcing, Organizational impression management, framing, India

Introduction

Social information technology (IT) sourcing is referred to as the provision of information technology services to clients by social enterprises located in rural areas[1] (Heeks and Arun 2010; Madon and Sharanappa 2013). As a model of organizing sourcing activities, social IT sourcing is beginning to gain traction in many emerging markets such as India and China (Sandeep and Ravishankar 2013). Alongside their profit-oriented business motive, these firms are also characterized by a strong underlying social mission of providing employment opportunities to disenfranchised sections of the society. These firms combine the logics of both traditional for-profit companies and not-for-profit organizations to deliver value to customers and to the society at large (Battilana and Dorado 2010). However, managing the duality of being for-profit and at the same time having strong social welfare goals can pose challenges. For social IT sourcing vendor organizations, which have an overt business mandate as well as an equally prominent social welfare mission, meeting the expectations of different sets of stakeholders can be potentially conflicting and difficult to manage. We elaborate the problem in detail below.

Social IT sourcing vendors are increasingly seeking out international clients, expanding locally and approaching investors. In fact, some of these firms have already begun catering to clients based in USA and have a client portfolio which includes large Indian multinational corporations (Sandeep and Ravishankar 2013). Without prior reputation and status, social IT sourcing vendors have to make a serious effort to portray an image of a competent, sustainable business enterprise capable of delivering quality work. On the other hand, when they are engaging with the local community, they have to show a strong commitment to their social mission of providing employment opportunities to disenfranchised sections of the society. We therefore argue that managing impressions with multiple stakeholders and balancing dual, paradoxical objectives is crucial to the sustainability of these enterprises (see Du et al 2011, Battilana et al 2010). Failing to do so could potentially lead to a fall out with key stakeholders. Therefore, our main inquiries in this paper are (1) What are the impression management strategies used by social IT sourcing organizations to influence their multiple audiences? and more broadly, (2) How do impression management strategies influence the establishment of new social IT sourcing models? We attempt to answer these questions through an inductive qualitative multiple case-study approach of seven social IT sourcing organizations based in India.

Impression Management (IM) refers to 'the process by which individuals control the impressions others form of them' (Leary and Kowlaski, 1991: 34). The roots of IM theory can be traced back to Erving Goffman's (1959) seminal work *The presentation of self in everyday life*. In this paper, we draw on Goffman's notion of 'audience segregation' to examine how social IT sourcing firms decouple multiple audiences and engage in organizational level IM. Elsbach, Sutton and Principe (1998:68) define Organizational IM (OIM) as 'any action that is intentionally designed and carried out to influence an audience's perceptions of the organization'. To understand how organizational representatives bridge the misaligned perceptions existing between them and their audiences, and how they go about influencing their audiences to bridge this gap, we use the concept of *framing alignment* borrowing from the social movements literature (Goffman 1974; Benford and Snow 2000).

Our research primarily contributes to the literature on social IT sourcing. By using impression management and framing in conjunction, we shed unique light on the strategies which social IT sourcing organizations use to garner support for their firms. We also uncover how these strategies influence the establishment of social IT sourcing models by illustrating a process model. Both these aspects have not yet been explored in social IT sourcing literature. In the following sections we review literature on

[1] This paper focuses on vendor firms in emerging economies although it must be noted that there are now similar vendor firms in countries like the US. In the US, the social IT sourcing phenomenon is sometimes called rural sourcing (Lacity et al 2010). More broadly, in the context of emerging economies, *Impact Sourcing* (Gino and Staats, 2012) is used as an umbrella term to refer to rural sourcing and social IT sourcing. Impact sourcing is outsourcing that benefits individuals in low employment areas (Accenture, 2013). The impact sourcing agenda is being championed by the Rockefeller foundation in Africa and Asia. More recently, impact sourcing is being referred to as *Digital Jobs* (Rockefeller Foundation, 2013). Given the newness of the sector, there are multiple interpretations of the work being done by the vendor companies by both academics and practitioners and therefore terminologies have been evolving.

organizational impression management and social IT sourcing.

Organizational Impression Management

Organizational members who represent the organization are referred to in the business literature as organizational elites (Whetten et al. 1992). They are key decision makers who are entrusted with the responsibility of representing the organization. In *The presentation of self in everyday life*, Goffman (1959) presents a dramaturgical perspective of the social world and interactions therein. In this social world, organizational elites are the 'actors' who stage 'performances' in front of an 'audience'. As Goffman notes, actors often play multiple parts; each part is meant for a particular audience and a setting. Actors always ensure that the audiences are 'segregated' and at no time their 'performances' are seen by more than one audience group. Goffman refers to this concept as 'audience segregation', i.e. 'the individual ensures that those before whom he plays one of his part will not be the same individuals before whom he plays a different part in another setting' (1959: 57). This suggests that organizational elites present different versions of the organization when they are interacting with multiple audiences (Arndt and Bigelow 2000). These *versions* are referred to as organizational images, i.e. the images projected by organizational elites to important outsiders (see Whetten et al. 1992). The use of such impression management strategies to convey particular organizational images is all the more critical in the case of newly emerging socio-economic hybrid organizations as both external and internal stakeholders do not have an accessible organizational template which they can map the organization to (Tracey et al. 2010; Battilana and Dorado 2010). This gap leaves room for interpretation and it is this grey area which organizational actors try to control via OIM (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978).

Research on organizational impression management strategies, goals and settings is not as comprehensive as the literature on impression management at the individual level (Bolino et al., 2008). While there is diversity in OIM studies in terms of research settings and nature of inquiries, there is little overlap of strategies and tactics which organizations use to manage impressions. This suggests that the field is relatively open to exploration (Bolino et al., 2008). Extant literature on OIM can be largely divided into two streams: OIM being used in either a reactive or a proactive manner (Mohamed et al., 1999). Reactive OIM refers to the remedial measures which the organizations take to manage threats and controversies which have the potential to affect organizational reputation and legitimacy (Elsbach, 1994; Marcus and Goodman, 1991). For example, Ravasi and Schultz (2006) explored how organizational leaders from time to time sensed identity threats and engaged in impression management internally to counter these threats. Elsbach and Sutton (1992) showed how social movement organizations used reactive or defensive impression management tactics to shift the audience's attention from their illegitimate actions to largely socially desirable goals.

In proactive OIM, organizational representatives foresee possible threats and crisis impending upon the organization and take necessary actions in anticipation of upcoming events (Elsbach et al., 1998; Arndt and Bigelow, 2000; Siegel and Brockner, 2005). For example, Elsbach et al. (1998) examined anticipatory OIM tactics in a hospital, which aimed to influence customers' response to hospital bills. Arndt and Bigelow (2000) showed how certain hospitals used proactive OIM before an organizational change initiative to increase acceptance of the planned change among internal constituencies. Bolino et al. (2008) have examined OIM strategies that do not necessarily deal with managing organizational threats, crises and controversies, focusing instead on achieving general organizational objectives (also see Bansal and Kistruck (2006).

In the aforementioned studies, scholars have elicited many impression management strategies employed by organizations to 'repair or enhance organizational images' (Elsbach et al., 1998). For instance, Elsbach and Sutton (1992) describe the impression management tactics used by spokespersons of social movement organizations to diffuse threats. Somewhat similar to the proactive and reactive classification of IM strategies, Arndt and Bigelow (2000) proposed two types of impression management strategies – defensive and assertive. Elsbach et al (1998) noted the use of various impression management tactics in organizational life such as institutional conformity, threats, bureaucratic roadblocks and positive self-characterization to convey a desired image to stakeholders. The literature suggests that impression management occurs in two distinct steps. First, the organizational representatives choose a desirable organizational image and then this image is operationalized and conveyed to the intended audience. One way in which organizational images are operationalized is via *framing* (Fiss and Zajac, 2006). Framing refers to 'an active processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction' (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 614). Drawing from the social movements literature (Snow et al., 1986; Benford and Snow, 2000), Fiss and Zajac used the framing lens in their study to analyze how organizational representatives framed strategic change to their internal audiences. Framing processes enable organizational representatives to articulate and influence how their audience interprets versions of organizational reality via organizational images (Zajac and Fiss, 2006). In sum, OIM strategies are used either reactively by organizational representatives to accomplish key organizational necessities arising out of threats and crises, or proactively to manage upcoming events.

Organizational Impression Management and Social IT Sourcing Models

IT sourcing vendor organizations are finding it challenging to operate out of traditional outsourcing hubs in India such as Bangalore and Hyderabad due to rising costs in hiring and managing work force (Madon and Sharanappa, 2013). This has prompted entrepreneurs to adopt a different strategy. In the last five years, many social IT sourcing vendors have set up rural Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) centres based out of Tier-3, Tier-4 towns and villages. Entrepreneurs founding rural BPOs have dual missions – a profit seeking, business mission, as well as a strong underlying social welfare mission (Sandeep and Ravishankar, 2013). This form of organizing outsourcing, via socio-economic hybrids, has received scant attention in the IS literature (Lacity et al. 2010; Lacity et al., 2011; Madon and Sharanappa, 2013).

However, social IT outsourcing has been receiving considerable business press coverage. Datamark (2012) featured rural sourcing as one of the 10 biggest "trends" in business process outsourcing in 2012. Similarly, GigaOM (2012) has called it a trend to watch out for. Bahree (2012) called it "an evolution of the [Outsourcing] industry". An analyst with an Indian consulting firm noted: *'The rural BPO is small, but it will exist as a compelling option [...] it will spread to scale'* (Singh 2012). However, critics have pointed out that social IT sourcing strategies such as rural sourcing will at best remain a niche market (Mishra 2009). These criticisms are based on the issue of sustainability of these enterprises. Availability of skilled human resources and infrastructure adequacy has been the major points of contention (Sandeep and Ravishankar, 2013).

The pertinent issue for entrepreneurs of socio-economic hybrids such as social IT sourcing organizations is managing the duality of their missions. As Battilana and Dorado note, the liability of newness is even more pronounced in a hybrid organization which 'combines different institutional logics in unprecedented ways' (2010, p. 1419). In the case of social IT sourcing vendors, the entrepreneurs face the daunting task of establishing the legitimacy of the enterprise in the eyes of various stakeholders – which is vital to their sustainability (Aldrich and Fiol, 1994; Maguire et al., 2004).

In such a context, the question is how do entrepreneurs of social IT sourcing organizations come to navigate the challenges posed by the hybrid nature of the organization while trying to develop and establish their models? The world of social IT sourcing organizations when viewed through the lens of OIM offers insightful accounts in this regard. Retracing Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, we can draw parallels to this context. In the social world of social IT sourcing organizations, organizational elites are the 'actors' who stage 'performances' in front of an 'audience'. In the case of social IT sourcing organizations, the actors are the founders and entrepreneurs and their audience includes the various stakeholders with whom they interact such as potential clients, investors, government agencies, employees, the community and media. A performance is the act of conveying organizational images to these multiple audiences. As we will demonstrate in later sections of the paper, different audiences are presented with different images – through a process of audience segregation (Goffman, 1959). OIM would then mean organizational elites operationalizing these organizational images and trying to pro-actively and reactively influence audiences. While there has been some research on pro-active OIM strategies, we know very little about the pre-emptive OIM strategies used by organizations during the development of their business models. In this paper we attempt to illuminate these aspects.

In summary, we explored various business process sourcing models highlighting their configurations and issues. Both clients and vendors strive to maximize value for their stakeholders by exploring new ways of organizing. A key reason for the emergence of new sourcing models is clearly the attraction of an extended cost arbitrage. In the literature review above, we briefly described the social IT sourcing model and positioned it as a new way of organizing BPOs. The conflicting institutional logics which are integral to socioeconomic hybrids, such as rural BPOs suggest that impression management plays a key role in their evolution. While extant literature does illuminate some specific types of IM strategies, there is very little substantive research on how IM strategies are used in developing and establishing social IT sourcing models. We propose to address this gap in the subsequent sections of the paper by developing a data-driven model which describes the role of IM strategies in the evolution of new social IT sourcing models.

Research Methods

An initial desk research revealed that rural BPOs as socio-economic hybrids were grappling with paradoxical objectives. We intended to delve deeper into the social worlds of the founders and the upper management of social IT sourcing organizations to understand how they were managing the dual objectives of their organization. To this end, we conducted a multiple case studies (see Su 2013) adopting the interpretive approach (see Walsham 1995; Klien and Myers 1999). Although we did not have a pre-conceived framework about this social world of actors and their interactions with their immediate environment, we employed the broad sensitizing device of *frame alignment* (Goffman 1974; Snow et al 1986; Benford and Snow 2000) which guided our fieldwork (see Walsham 1993). We expected various frame alignment processes to guide how entrepreneurs managed their dual objectives; however we did not hypothesize their relationships prior to conducting our fieldwork.

Data Collection

Our research was informed by primary data collected via in depth semi-structured interviews (Patton 2002) as well as secondary sources of information. During our initial desk review, we used secondary sources of information such as company blogs, websites and social media outlets; and articles in the business press.

Table 1. List of Informants

Social IT Sourcing Organization	Designation of the Informant	Number of Interviews	Total Number of Interviews
Firm A	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Co-Founder	1	10
	Chief Technology Officer (CTO)	1	
	Business Development Manager (BDM)	1	
	Associate Vice-President- Human Resources (AVP-HR)	1	
	Manager (HR)	1	
	Marketing	1	
	Centre Manager	1	
	Team Leader	3	
Firm B	CEO/Founder	1	6
	Chief Operating Officer (COO)	1	
	Team Leader	4	
Firm C	CEO/Co-Founder	1	6
	Centre Manager	2	
	Manager - Training	1	
	Team Leader	2	
Firm D	Managing Director/Founder	1	2
	Executive Director/Co-founder	1	
Firm E	Board Member/Founder	2	2
Firm F	CEO/Co-founder	1	1
Firm G	BDM	1	1
Lobby Group	Manager	2	2
		Total	**30**

We carried out our fieldwork over a period of five months (September 2012 – January 2013) in India. We covered seven social IT sourcing firms and a lobby group. Access was negotiated through personal networks, cold calling and through informal work networks of entrepreneurs whom we interviewed. We were primarily interested in the social worlds of 'organizational elites' hence we focused our interviews at the founder and upper management level. Interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the informants and transcribed for analysis. Table 1 summarizes the informants of our study.

Data Analysis

We began our data analysis by looking for cues of frame alignment processes in the data set. Frame alignment processes were operationalized as any occurrence in our data set where representatives put an effort to influence their audience. We found evidence of three different frame alignment processes these were frame transformation, frame extension and frame articulation (Snow et al 1986). Additionally, we found that representatives used different strategies to influence their audiences, by projecting particular aspects of the organization. To further analyze this strand, we used the process of open coding (Locke, 2001) and axial coding (Straus and Corbin, 1998) to unearth themes related to (1) the organizational images which were conveyed to audiences as a result of frame alignment processes and (2) the impression management strategies which were used to operationalize these images. Using these strands we arrived at a tentative model which explained how social IT sourcing organizations were able to improve access to markets while meeting social objectives. We revisited our data and travelled back and forth iteratively from the data to the literature on frame alignment and impression management strategies until there was a reasonable fit between data and theory and no further iterations were valuable. In this manner, we developed and refined our model.

Findings

The Duality of Social IT Sourcing Organizations

Clearly, social IT sourcing organizations were influenced by two distinct institutional logics –logics of commerce and social upliftment. The broader norms and discourses of these logics had shaped the way entrepreneurs conceptualized and developed their models. In this manner, key features of the two divergent logics were embedded in the emerging hybrid logic – the social IT sourcing logic. Table 2 provides an overview of the three logics.

Table 2. Comparison of institutional logics (see Battilana and Dorado (2010))

Attributes of the logic	Commerce logic	Social upliftment Logic	Emerging social IT sourcing logic
Goals of the logic	Economic Profit	Development of disenfranchised persons and their community	Sustainable profit making enterprise which can support social upliftment goals of providing job opportunities to disenfranchised youth
Audience the logic is aimed at	Clients and investors are seen as sources of revenue	Employees and the community are the beneficiaries	Employees, community and the clients are seen as beneficiaries;
Governing principles	Professionalism and profit maximization	Maximizing impact on the development of employees and the community	Deriving profit from clients and investors and at the same time scaling up sustainably to fulfill social obligations

Social Upliftment Orientation of the Hybrid Logic

The social upliftment orientation of the hybrid logic guided the organization to engage and contribute to the local community. This motive was consistent in every organization which we studied. In the following paragraphs we describe how organizational representatives articulated their social upliftment mission.

There were four emergent strands, these were - social IT sourcing (1) reverses migration trends in rural areas, (2) provides job opportunities to a section of the society who otherwise have very limited opportunities, (3) enhances employability of youth and (4) indirectly benefits the larger community.

As the CEO and founder of an organization noted:

"We believe in job going back to home, we want to stop migration to the cities [...] we are very clear, we want to hire talent locally [...] Make them more employable and job ready by nurturing them."

Similarly, the founder of another organization explained:

"[...] the cost of living is low here [...] they gain a sense of pride and self esteem [...] all of these factors have encouraged rural workers to stay rural and this has initiated a trend of reverse migration."

Most of the entrepreneurs interviewed cited the effect social IT sourcing could potentially have on migration trends of semi-skilled workers. Their argumentation focused on how social IT sourcing provides local job opportunities to high school as well as graduate students, thus removing the need of migrating to urban areas to look for jobs.

Moreover, as many employees reflected, as the cost of living is much lesser in towns and villages compared to urban metros, employees can lead a more satisfactory life. One of the employees articulated his thoughts in this way:

"The allure of the city ends with its high cost of living. Here I can be with my family and enjoy a good quality of life. I am much happier here, than I ever was when I was in the city. The culture was also strange; I did not like it much."

The composition of the workforce in social IT sourcing organizations also points to a gendered phenomenon. Typically in a rural BPO, the sex ratio of women to men is around 3:1. This is mainly because men migrate to the cities in search of jobs and the women, partly due to cultural reasons, are expected to stay in their hometowns. As one founder of a company noted:

"There are many women who are with no jobs in rural areas, only the men migrate, this is empowering for the women. Their standing in the community has increased as a result of them having jobs and earning for their families. They did not have such options before. Their relatives and friends now look up to them."

Thus, social IT sourcing organizations claim to serve the disenfranchised section of the society. In urban areas too, social IT sourcing enterprises, as a part of their hiring policy are known to recruit only people with disabilities.

Furthermore, another key feature of these social enterprises is investing in the local youth's skill development and improving overall employability. Every recruit has to undergo training on language, communication and work-related skills. They are paid a stipend during this period of apprenticeship. This is a huge factor which attracts local youth. Moreover, at the end of the training period, they are free to quit the company in most of the cases. As a HR manager noted:

"The people we recruit are everyone from high school to graduates [...] *they are absolutely raw* [...] *they have minimum professional background* [...] *we are here to bridge that gap by providing them relevant training and experience."*

Apart from investing in their human resource, social IT sourcing enterprises also focused on holistic development of the community where they were based.

Commercial Orientation of the Hybrid Logic

On the other hand, the enterprises also exhibited a strong commercial logic. Data collected through interviews as well as communication material such as brochures and client presentations made it very clear that they were not charity houses. As the co-founder of Company 2 articulated:

"If you operate as purely an NGO (not-for-profit), there are problems. Yes, they (NGOs) try to do good, but they are dependent on government grants, donor agencies. This makes it very difficult for them to scale. In our social enterprise, we not only try to do good, but we try to do well by incorporating elements of the corporate such as accountability to our stakeholders. We are self-sustaining and

emphasize on scalability. We are accountable to investors, customers, Government and other stake holders. "

These enterprises clearly distinguished themselves from purely not-for-profit organizations. They were certain that going down the not-for-profit route was uncertain and unsustainable. They realized that to achieve scale, they needed to make profits. The only way they saw in being profitable was by offering high quality services to interested clients. A founder-CEO very bluntly noted:

"The clients don't care who is doing the work. End of the day, they want results. They may tolerate failures because we are new, but not for long. If we deliver, then there is a chance of a long standing beneficial relationship. This is why there is a strict emphasis on quality in our delivery centers. "

These sentiments are also reflected in some of the communication material publicly presented by three different organizations, suggesting an unequivocal commercial orientation guiding the organizations. For instance:

Delivering Top performance in Shareholder value through Economic Profit and return - benchmarked against our competitor group and uphold investor's confidence.

We deliver cost effective outsourcing solutions to our clients and thereby help them regain competitive edge.

Customers will get high quality and high value services at substantially lower price points compared to Indian cities.

As with all socio-economic hybrids, social IT sourcing organizations too are faced with the challenge of negotiating *mission drifts* (Battilana and Dorado, 2010). This refers to the tendency of organizations to lean towards either one of their orientations, in this case, either social upliftment or commercial goals. While mission drift points to several internal challenges, an equally pertinent concern is the audience's perceptions of the organization's mission drift. Organizations have to communicate their commitments to a divergent audience with multiple interests to avert the possibility of organizational interests being damaged via perceptions of a mission drift (see Elsbach et al., 1998).

As the CEO-founder of a social IT sourcing organization recollected:

"It was not at all easy sailing for us. When we conducted the first round of recruitment, we selected 14 candidates. The following day there was a huge hue and cry in the village. We had villagers coming to our centre and protesting. We found out that only one of the 14 candidates belonged to the village where our centre was based. They (the community members) said 'You promised jobs to our people and now you have selected only one from our village'. After that incident we have become more sensitive to the local realities. It is an ongoing process, we keep learning every day."

Other organizations too had to deal with similar challenges of communicating their social upliftment orientation effectively to the local communities. Alongside this, organizations also had to send out a clear message to audiences who were primarily interested in them as a viable business partner. To reiterate an earlier quote, not all clients and business partners may be sympathetic to the social upliftment cause of the organization. As the CEO of one of the companies noted:

"The question which finally determines a long term relationship is – will this firm give me good quality service at the best price?' Clients may seem enthusiastic about our social purpose, but not at the cost of quality of service."

The next two sections demonstrate how organizations managed the duality of divergent features of the hybrid social IT sourcing logic.

Audience Segregation – the Process of Managing Dual Orientations

Research has shown that multiple institutional logics can co-exist peacefully in an organizational environment (Reay and Hinnings, 2009). But, depending on how organizational members enact the logics, internal conflicts and contradictions may emerge. In hybrid logics too, which embody divergent orientations, conflicts may arise which then have to be managed to keep organizational interests intact (Battilana and Dorado, 2010). In the case of social IT sourcing organizations, the stimuli to manage the duality of hybrid logic stemmed from the expectations of multiple audiences.

As such, the logics of commerce and social upliftment co-existed peacefully within the organization. However, organizational members had to communicate coherently the divergent orientations of the emerging social IT sourcing logic to their key audiences. Organizational members dealt with this through a process of *audience segregation* (Goffman, 1959). Meaning, depending on the audience the entrepreneurs were appealing to, different aspects of the social IT sourcing logic was highlighted (see Fiss and Zajac, 2006). While the informants did not state this overtly, this strategy was apparent during the interview process. Table 3 gives an overview of the key audience groups who the organizational members were trying to manage.

Table 3. Audience groups and their interest in social IT sourcing organizations

Audience	Why are they interested in social IT sourcing organizations
Clients	Work done at cheaper costs and lower attrition rates
Investors/Social venture capitalists	Purely economic returns, or Economic returns on a social activity
Employees	Access to jobs, income security, self-development, standing in the community
Community	Community development
Government	Economic development through job creation

The question in focus then is how organizations manage to influence the perceptions of multiple audiences. In Goffman's terms, how are different performances tailored for these audiences to keep the dissonance low? As the next section will demonstrate, representatives framed organizational orientations differently to multiple audiences with the aim to gain their support (Zajac and Fiss, 2006; Benford, 1993). These were deliberate acts of influencing the perceptions of the organization held by the audience.

Frame Alignment, Organizational Images and Impression Management Strategies

In their quest to gain support of multiple audiences, organizations had to align their frames with that of the audience. The result of this frame alignment process (Snow et al., 1986) was the creation and communication of multiple organizational images using impression management strategies. These images selectively appealed to a particular audience group to influence their perception of the organization. The framing work which organizational representatives engaged in was either pre-emptive or reactive (Elsbach et al., 1998; Arndt and Bigelow, 2000). In this section we discuss the various frame alignment processes, organizational images and impression management strategies and goals which organizations used to influence their audiences. Broadly, the images projected were used to selectively highlight features of the commercial and social upliftment orientations of the organization. Table 4 summarizes the various frame alignment processes, the organizational images created as a result and the different impression management strategies used to convey the images.

Impression Management Strategies for Highlighting the Commercial Orientation of the Hybrid Logic

From our analysis we found that organizational representatives used frame alignment processes of *frame transformation* and *frame extension* (Snow et al 1986) to influence audiences whose primary interest was in the commercial orientation of the organization. As a result, images of *Competency* and *Legitimacy* were conveyed to highlight this orientation.

Organizations accomplished this by selectively disclosing information, a strategy known *Strategic Disclosure* (see Vaccaro 2010). In our context strategic disclosure refers to the efforts of the organization to selectively highlight and conceal information relating to organizational events and attributes (see Vaccaro 2010). The common goal of these frame alignment processes was to promote the commercial orientation of the organization. We discuss them below.

Table 4. Overview of organizational images, impression management strategies and goals			
Frame alignment process (Snow et al., 1986)	**Image projected**	**Impression management strategy**	**Goals of the strategy**
Images for highlighting commercial orientation			
Frame transformation	Competency	Strategic disclosure[2]	Inducing liking and diminishing attention of audience by correcting historical misunderstandings of the model
Frame extension	Legitimacy		
Images for highlighting social upliftment orientation			
Frame articulation	Change agent	Social congruence (Tan et al., 2010)	Increasing acceptance, inducing liking and overwhelming the audience
Frame transformation	Community partner		

Frame transformation: The organization's newness both in terms of design and model contributed to doubts regarding their ability to deliver work engaging low skilled labor with very little experience. As many informants noted, potential clients and investors were not sure if the organization could deliver quality work from rural locations which were known to be lacking in infrastructure such as internet connectivity and electricity. As the CEO-founder of a rural BPO exclaimed:

"I've worked in the IT/ITES industry for more than 15 years now. When my colleagues and I used to pitch for clients in New York, they used to ask me questions like 'How far is the centre from the airport?' 'How are the infrastructure facilities?' The questions have remained the same, but only the tables have turned. Ironically, my colleagues with whom I used to do those sales pitches in New York ask me the same questions about my enterprise when I approach them for business."

It was therefore up to the organizational representatives to avert any negative meanings arising from the nature of their model. Some of the organizations were faced with the challenge of positioning their business in such a way that they could appeal to potential clients who had little, or ill-informed understanding of their model. Organizations tried to correct these 'mis-framings' or misunderstandings of the audience by re-framing old meanings (i.e. the idea of a rural BPO) in a manner which was suitable to accommodate potential adherent pool (Snow et al., 1986; Benford and Snow, 2000). This *frame transformation* (Snow et al 1986) process was used to selectively reshape and communicate what organizations believed were misunderstandings in a new way.

Organizational representatives consistently projected a *Competent* organizational image to their key constituents – especially potential clients and investors. They did so by so by selectively downplaying some of the facts which had the potential of bringing out negative responses. During sales pitches with clients, organizational representatives noted that they rarely mentioned who would be undertaking the work or where the work would be carried out. As an upper management member of a social IT sourcing organization noted:

"We never bring up the fact that we work in rural areas upfront. Only at the end of the meeting do we mention in passing – oh by the way, we work out of rural centers."

Increasingly, the tag rural-BPO had become problematic for some organizations. Representatives of the

[2] Strategic disclosure is also discussed in bargaining literature (Lee and Ferguson 2010) and competition studies (Pachecho-De-Almeida and Zemsky 2010; Clarkson and Toh 2010).

lobby group echoed similar concerns about the rural BPO sector coming to being viewed as something to do with charity. Strategically, many rural BPOs began to re-position themselves as *Impact Sourcing Service Providers* (Monitor 2011). This move was also supported by the lobby group. As the representative of the lobby group noted:

"It may be just semantics, but it does help people get over the mind set of all things rural India being negative."

But this did not change the work which they did, or their organization's business model. In this manner, they concealed their initial label, by symbolically adopting another label.

Organizational representatives in addition to selectively concealing information also highlighted information which projected the organization in a positive light to add to their competent image. This strategy was employed during meetings with clients and investors and in communication material such as social networking sites and company websites. Excerpts from a corporate presentation of a social IT sourcing organization illustrate information of this variety:

"We are a new wave IT/BPO services company started by industry professionals"

"A Pioneer of the Distributed Delivery model"

Websites of other organizations highlighted positive aspects of the organization:

"Our services provide significant scope for maximizing business value through cost management, operational efficiency and innovation."

"Our leadership team brings a combined 100+ years of experience leading teams of IT professionals working at premier multinational companies."

In this manner, by strategically downplaying and highlighting selected information, social IT sourcing organizations projected a *Competent* image during their interactions with key audiences.

Frame Extension: Another problem associated with newness is the organization's lack of legitimacy. The legitimacy deficit hindered the prospects of garnering support from potential clients and investors. To overcome this, organizations tried to demonstrate the congruence between their values and beliefs and that of the audience's by promoting a *legitimate* image of the organization. To accomplish this, organizations again resorted to the strategy of selectively disclosing information which highlighted their closeness to existing BPO models. To accentuate the commercial logic, organizations consistently showed how their structures and processes are similar to those of urban based IT sourcing firms. In this manner, they extended the organizational frame to incorporate potential adherents through a show of structural and processual congruence (see Snow et al 1986). As a member of the upper management of a social IT sourcing organization noted:

We do not have certifications, but all our processes conform to industry standards in any urban BPO. For example, we have complied to the requirements of ISO 27001 standards [...] If the customer asks, we can always show, but we just don't have a certificate saying that.

A website of a social IT sourcing firm claims:

Although the work is carried on in a rural centre, there is no compromise on the quality front. We are committed to adhering to the same level of service provided by urban centers.

Social IT sourcing organizations, in this manner, strategically disclosed information which demonstrated their closeness to urban BPOs. The closeness was achieved in the process of adhering to existing values and interests of potential clients and investors. Thus, strategic disclosure was used both reactively and pro-actively with the goal of increasing acceptance of the new sourcing model and diminishing the attention which was created by the newness of the model.

Impression Management Strategies for Highlighting the Social Upliftment Orientation of the Hybrid Logic

Organizational representatives highlighted social upliftment aspects of the hybrid logic in their bid to satisfy the interests of audiences whose prime interest was in the promised social impact of social IT sourcing firms. Here too, frame alignment processes of Frame articulation and Frame transformation led to the creation and projection of images of being (1) a change agent and (2) a community partner in development. These images were operationalized by systematically ensuring *Social congruence* of organization's policies and activities with the local socio-cultural norms and values. These are discussed in detail below.

Frame Articulation: Organizations consistently played up the promise they held to transform the social and economic context of the communities they engaged. Through 'talk and conversations' and 'speech acts' organizations articulated and conveyed the message that social IT sourcing organizations were an agent of change. This idea was consistently expressed via channels such as community meetings, newspaper advertisements, university meetings and website communication. This discursive frame articulation process (Benford and Snow 2000) was especially used to appeal to audiences such as the local community where their centers were based and government agencies that held the promise of introducing favorable policies.

The local community represented an important audience whose impressions about the organization had to be managed by representatives. During community meetings, representatives stressed the organizational goals and objectives relevant to the community. As one centre manager of a social IT sourcing organization noted:

"We recognize them (the community) as an integral part of our success. Initially when we launched the centre, we distributed pamphlets and advertised in local newspapers telling them who we are [...] that we are here for their benefit. In our meetings with the community, we focus on how the youth do not have to migrate to the cities to look for jobs and women especially can get safe employment in our offices. We had a tough time convincing them and this was accomplished over a period of time."

These sentiments are also evident in the communication material on the website of these firms. This kind of communication was meant for a wider audience such as potential investors. For example, one company's website notes:

"Our business aims to leverage the potential of rural society in a manner that creates sustainable, professional and commercial capacity - in a way that does not destroy the rural social fabric."

CEO-founders whom we spoke with echoed similar sentiments. They were very keen on holistically developing the rural socio-economic ecosystem, but not at the cost of hampering local norms. As the CEO-founder of a rural BPO reflected:

"I don't want our business to bring the mall culture to villages. It will destroy the village life. This will have serious repercussions for us in the long run. Right now what distinguishes us from urban BPOs is our work force. I have worked for more than 20 years in urban BPOs. I find workers here more sincere and honest [...] they are committed to their jobs [...] Our attrition rates are also very low. If you go to the cities it is common to hear about how IT/ITES industry has affected local culture and there is a lot of animosity among people. In rural areas, the communities are smaller and stronger, if anything does not go down well, we will face the heat."

Organization representatives carefully built a case for social IT sourcing firms in their appeals to the community by projecting an image being a *socio economic change agent*. These speech acts were also complemented by actions. As a centre manager of a rural BPO noted:

"As you have probably noticed most of our employees are female. The ratio is on an average 3:1. In a way they were our key internal customers. Getting them to accept the idea of working in an environment like ours was challenging. More than the employees, we had to convince the parents that their daughters were safe in our offices. For this, we have made it a policy that no women will work late shifts – they all have to reach home before it is dark. We also let the parents come and visit the centre to see for themselves where their daughters work. It might seem strange, but you have to go by the local sentiments regarding sensitive issues."

Organizations recognized the importance of having policies which were congruent to local social and cultural norms. Deviation from these norms would have made it difficult for the organization to build a trusting relationship with community members. This was evident in their interactions with the community and the image projected through communication material on websites.

Frame transformation: Being new, organizations lacked reputation in the communities they were based in.

This was accented to a greater degree being located in rural areas. As a centre manager reflected:

"Here in villages and small towns, people are always suspicious of private enterprises coming up and claiming to help. Also, they are disillusioned by inefficient intervention programs of the government. They always look at you and your promises of change with suspicion."

This view was shared by most of our informants. They had initially setup centers but were unsuccessful in the recruiting process – they hardly got any applications. As a member of the upper management noted:

"We ran into problems initially. Despite all our recruiting efforts in local colleges, nobody was willing to join us. Then we figured there was something wrong with our model. Since we were new to the place, the community did not trust us at all. We had to change the way we did things."

Being private enterprises and making larger than life claims of bringing about change aroused the suspicions of community members. To counter negative connotations, social IT sourcing organizations had to drastically change their business models to address concerns arising from their reputation deficit.

"After the initial model failed, we decided to change our model by making it a partnership based model. In this model, we aligned with a well-known respected individual from the community who was willing to invest with us. We follow this model in all our centers now."

Aligning with leaders known to the community gave them the reputation they did not posses. They firmly projected the image of and established themselves as *community partners* sensitive to local expectations. In this manner, by correcting misunderstandings and transforming their models, they were able to overcome reputation hurdles. Now, they were being viewed more as a partner in community development than a profit seeking private enterprise. The overall goal of the strategy was to increase acceptance of the organization among the members of the community.

Both images – of a *change agent* and *community partner* were operationalized by strategically conforming to the existing social norms and values prevalent in rural and small town communities to ensure congruence. Organizations projected the image of being responsible change agents sensitive to local expectations. They complemented their 'talks and speech acts' with substantial actions. They also recognized the importance of building a trusting relationship and aligned with local leaders and organizations which the community trusted. The overall goal of social congruence was to increase the acceptance of the organization among the community members and building their reputation. Social congruence as a strategy was used both pro-actively and reactively to manage impressions of the community.

Discussion

Building on the analysis presented in the previous section, we now piece together a process model depicting the role of impression management strategies in enabling social IT sourcing organizations to improve their access to markets while fulfilling their social objectives. The overall model is presented in Figure 1 below.

Clearly, the emerging social IT sourcing logic was embedded with paradoxical logics (Du et al 2011) of *commerce* and *social upliftment,* the management of which presented a challenge to organizations (see Figure1 below). The balancing act of divergent orientations was vital to the sustainability of the organizations' business models (Battilana and Dorado 2010; Du et al 2011). Organizations were aware of the multi-fold expectations imposed by multiple audiences. As the CEO/co-founder of a social IT sourcing organization exclaimed *"We constantly try to manage our impressions with our stakeholders [...] end of the day, it is all about that!"* As other informants noted, potential clients and investors were particularly keen on the cost and quality of services provided whereas the employees and the community members viewed social IT sourcing organizations as a means to gainful employment and the ancillary benefits of holistic community development. Organizations were sensitive to these varied expectations of their audience and more importantly recognized that the expectations had to be addressed differently. Segregating the audience (see Figure 1 below) enabled them to address the nuances of different expectations differently.

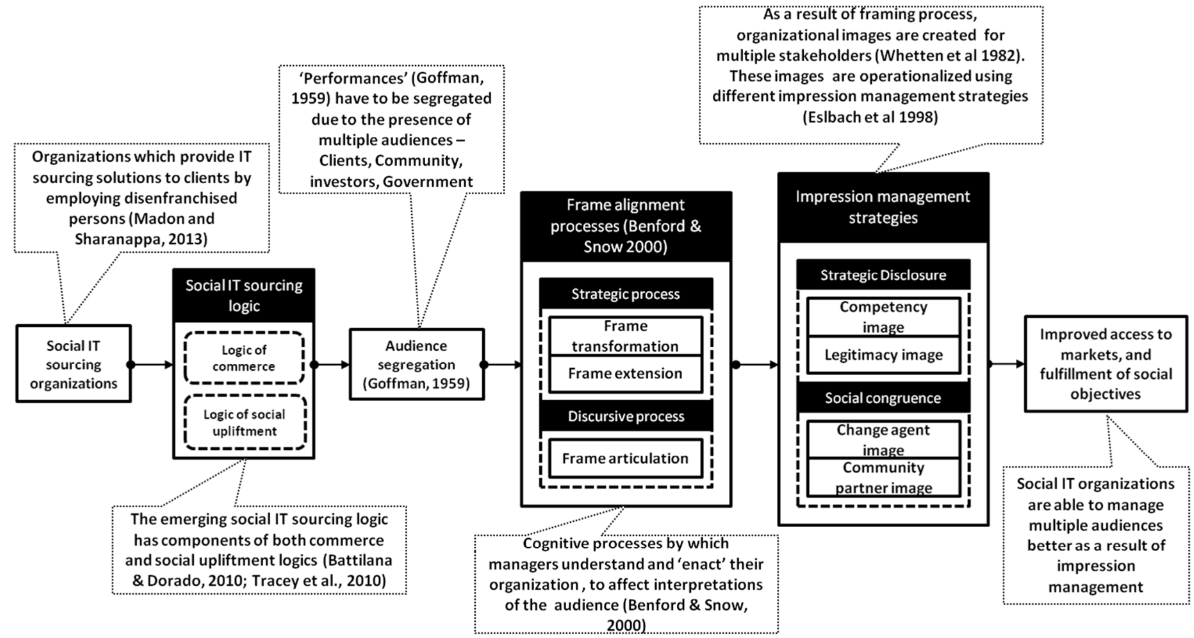

Figure 1. A process model of the role of impression management strategies in the establishment of new social IT sourcing organizations

Broadly, organizations used impression management strategies to manage expectations of multiple audiences. Strategies were used to avert future events (Elsbach et al 1998) or tackle existing threats (Elsbach and Sutton 1992; Arndt and Bigelow 2000) which had the potential to hamper organizational objectives. To influence their audiences, organizations first had to align the organizational frame with that of the audience. These frame alignment processes (Benford and Snow 2000) enabled organizations to set the ground to manage impressions. Frame alignment processes were either strategic or discursive in nature (see Figure 1 below). Organizations used *frame transformation* processes to counter threats arising from the newness of their models. By redefining existing meanings to fit a new paradigm, organizations were able to garner support of potential clients and community members.

In the context of nascent organizations, such as social IT sourcing organizations whose organizational templates and scripts are unknown and inaccessible to an external audience, frame transformation processes take prominence. Organizations may not be able to afford to rely on the hope that audiences will 'get' what their business model conveys. Ranging from giving symbolic cues, to making substantial efforts, organizations have to proactively influence and cajole audiences to view them in a light suitable to the organization's interest. To achieve this, frame transformation was used to re-position models for both sets of audiences – those who were interested in the commercial aspect, as well as those interested in the social upliftment aspect. In addition, organizations also employed *frame extension* mechanisms to appeal to 'fringe' audiences (see Snow et al 1986). Meaning, audiences who were aware of the nature of the organization, but whose immediate interests and values were not being currently addressed. By extending the organizational frame to incorporate interests of these audiences, social IT sourcing organizations were able to 'buy-in' their support. We would argue that frame extension processes occur periodically as and when audiences impose demands and would figure more frequently in the evolutionary path of the organization's model as it develops. We would point out on the other hand that frame transformation processes punctuates the evolutionary path less frequently, bringing about key changes which substantively reshapes an organization's path. Both frame transformation and frame extension were strategic processes – intended organizational actions to achieve a specific goal (Benford and Snow 2000). Organizations also employed discursive processes to influence their audiences – what Benford and Snow refer to as *frame articulation processes*. These were the 'talks and speech acts' which organizational representatives engaged in to discursively influence their audience. On the whole, frame transformation processes were used reactively – in response to a threat to the organization. Whereas, frame extension and frame articulation processes were used pro-actively.

Indeed, frame alignment processes were only a precursor to managing impressions of multiple audiences. The result of organizations enacting these processes was the generation organizational images which were conveyed to multiple audiences using specific impression management strategies (see Figure 1 above). Our analysis revealed two overarching impression management strategies – Strategic disclosure and Social congruence which organizational representatives used to influence audiences via frame alignment processes. Strategic disclosure was mainly used to highlight the commercial orientation to audiences. Here, disclosure does not necessarily imply that organizations 'hide' certain features. But in fact, representatives used strategic disclosure to lessen the 'cognitive burden' of the audience by highlighting what they thought was sufficient to garner support. Thus, strategic disclosure was used to convey the images of *Competency* and *Legitimacy* of social IT sourcing organizations (see Figure 1 above). Also, highlighting the social upliftment orientation, organizations used the strategy of social congruence to convey images of being a *change agent* and a c*ommunity partner* (see Figure 1 above). Social congruence as a strategy was used to convey to the notion that organizations were sensitive and committed to the realities of rural eco-system. Often, businesses fail when they fail to address local socio-cultural norms and values. Especially in collectivist cultures found in rural areas where 'cultural-tightness' is high (see Triandis 2004), these factors assume greater importance.

There is another dimension to the discourse on images and impression management strategies. Research suggests that organizational actions may be either *substantive* or *symbolic* (Gioia and Chittipeddi 2000; George et al 2006; Highhouse et al 2008). An example of substantive action is the illegitimate activities of social movement organization studied by Elsbach and Sutton mentioned earlier. Other more common examples may include organizations investing in human resources and infrastructure (Highhouse et al., 2008). Symbolic actions may refer to public relations campaigns, advertising and other rhetorical strategies (Highhouse et al 2008). The impression management strategies which were employed by social IT sourcing organizations encompassed both symbolic and substantive actions. More interestingly, symbolic actions were also backed up by substantive change. For instance, while employing the strategy of social congruence, representatives not only discursively appealed to the community members, but in addition implemented organization policies which 'walked the talk'. Impression management strategies thus encompass a whole gamut of both symbolic and substantive activities.

Contributions, Limitations and Future Research

We addressed our research questions through qualitative multiple case-studies of seven social IT sourcing organizations. We found that access to markets and fulfilling social objectives was not a straightforward task. By operationalizing relevant images to multiple audiences using impression management strategies, organizations were able to successfully balance their paradoxical orientations.

Our contributions to the phenomenon are as follows. First, our empirical study adds to the nascent field of social IT sourcing research which has so far received scant attention (Lacity et al 2011; Madon and Sharanappa 2013). Second, we found that establishing social IT sourcing organizations is not a straightforward task owing to their paradoxical orientations. This finding is contrary to existing popular perceptions in sourcing literature that extending cost-arbitrage will be sufficient to attract clients. As we have demonstrated, there are a host of processes underlying the acceptance of the social IT sourcing model. Our contributions to the theoretical lens are as follows. We broadly contributed to the literature on organizational level impression management, again a topic which has been scantly addressed (Bolino et al 2008). More specifically we introduced concepts of strategic disclosure and social congruence as OIM strategies. While these concepts have been used in other fields, we demonstrated their relevance to OIM research. We also contributed to the literature on frame alignment by examining the frame alignment processes in the context social IT sourcing organizations. More specifically, we highlighted the importance of frame transformation processes in the process of model establishment. Traditionally frame alignment has been used to study social movements; our study made use of this robust lens and demonstrated its wider applicability.

There are a few limitations of the study. First, while organizational impression management strategies are important in the process of establishing new social IT sourcing organizations, they are not the only route which organizations can and should take. However, OIM strategies are key part o the gamut of activities which such organizations have to employ in their bid to establish themselves. Secondly, while we would have preferred conducting in depth case studies of one or two social IT sourcing organizations, this wasn't possible as access was limited. Thirdly, the client perspective is not first hand, the impressions of clients were inferred through the retrospective accounts of our informants. Then again, this piece of research was intended be a vendor perspective of social IT sourcing. Nonetheless, firsthand accounts of experiences of external audience would have added more meaning. Lastly, the definition that we have employed for social IT sourcing firms is quite narrow. There are social IT sourcing vendor organizations which operate in urban contexts as well. Future research can broaden the scope of social IT sourcing research by including such organizations.

References

Accenture. "Exploring the value proposition for Impact Sourcing: A Buyer's perspective," http://www.accenture.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/Accenture-Exploring-Value- Proposition-Impact-Sourcing.pdf (accessed 14th December 2012).

Aldrich, H. E. and Fiol, C.M. 1994 "Fools rush in? The institutional context of industry creation," *Academy of Management Review* (19:4), pp. 645–670.

Arndt, M., and Bigelow, B. 2000. "Presenting structural innovation in an institutional environment: Hospitals' use of impression management," *Administrative Science Quarterly* (45), pp. 494-522.

Bahree, M. 2012 "IT Company Goes Knocking on Small Town Doors" http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2012/02/22/it-company-goes-knocking-on-small-town-doors/ (accessed August 8, 2012).

Bansal, P., and Kistruck, G. 2006. "Seeing is (not) believing: Managing the impressions of the firm's commitment to the natural environment," *Journal of Business Ethics* (67), pp. 165-180.

Benford, R. D. and D. A. Snow. 2000. "Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* (26), pp. 611–639.

Bolino, M.C., Kacmar, K.M., Turnley, W.H. and Gilstrap, J.B. 2008. "A Multi-level review of Impression Management Motives and Behaviors," *Journal of Management* (34:6), pp. 1080-1109.

Clarkson, G. and Toh, P.K. 2010. "'Keep out' signs: the role of deterrence in the competition for resources," *Strategic Management Journal* (31:11), pp. 1202-1225.

Datamark (2012) 10 Business Process Outsourcing Trends to Watch in 2012 http://www.datamark.net/blog/10-business-process-outsourcing-trends-to-watch-in-2012 (accessed August 1, 2012).

Du, W., Pan, S.L. and Zuo, M. 2013. "How to Balance Sustainability and Profitability in Technology Organizations: An Ambidextrous perspective," IEEE *Transactions on Engineering Management* (60:2), pp. 366-385.

Elsbach, K. D. 1994. "Managing organizational legitimacy in the California cattle industry: The construction and effectiveness of verbal accounts," *Administrative Science Quarterly* (39), pp. 57-88.

Elsbach, K. D., and Sutton, R. I. 1992. "Acquiring organizational legitimacy through illegitimate actions: A marriage of institutional and impression management theories," *Academy of Management Journal* (35), pp. 699-738.

Elsbach, K. D., Sutton, R. I., and Principe, K. E. 1998. "Averting expected challenges through anticipatory impression management: A study of hospital billing," *Organization Science* (9), pp. 68-86.

Fiss, P.C. and Zajac, E.J. 2006. "The symbolic management of strategic change: sensegiving via framing and decoupling," *Academy of Management Journal* (49:6), pp. 1173-1193.

Gartner. "Gartner Says Worldwide IT Outsourcing Market Grew 7.8 Percent in 2011" http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=2021215 (accessed August 10, 2012).

George, E., Chattopadhyay, P., Sitkin, S.B. and Barden, J. 2006. "Cognitive underpinnings of institutional persistence and change: A framing perspective," *Academy of Management Review* (31:2), pp. 347-365.

Gigaom. " Rural Sourcing: A trend to watch?" http://gigaom.com/collaboration/rural-sourcing- a-trend-to-watch/ (accessed August 1, 2012).

Gino, F. and Staats, B.R. "The Microwork Solution" http://hbr.org/2012/12/the-microwork-solution/ar/1 (accessed 20 August 2013).

Gioia, D. A., and Chittipeddi, K. 1991. "Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation," *Strategic Management Journal* (12), pp. 433–448.

Goffman, E. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Goffman, E. 1974. *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*, New York: Harper and Row.

Heeks, R. and Arun, S. 2010. "Social outsourcing as a development tool: the impact of outsourcing IT services to women's social enterprises in Kerala," *Journal of International Development* (22), pp. 441–454.

Highhouse, S., Brooks, M.E. and Gregarus, G. 2009. "An Organizational Impression Management Perspective on the Formation of Corporate Reputations," *Journal of Management* (35:6), pp. 1481-1493.

Klein, H. K. and Myers, M.D. 1999. "A Set of Principles for Conducting and Evaluating Interpretive Field Studies in Information Systems," *MIS Quarterly, Special Issue on Intensive Research* (23:1), pp. 67-93.

Lacity, M.C., Rottman, J. and Khan, S. 2010. "Field of dreams: building IT capabilities in rural America," *Strategic Outsourcing: An international journal* (3:3), pp. 169-191.

Lacity, M.C., Solomon, S., Yan, A. and Wilcocks, L.P. 2011. "Business process outsourcing studies: a critical review and research directions," Journal of Information Technology (26), pp. 221-258.

Leary, M.R. and Kowalski, R.M. 1990. "Impression Management: A literature review and two- component model," *Psychological Bulletin* (107), pp. 34-47.

Locke, K. (2001). Grounded theory in management research, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lounsbury, M., and E. T. Crumley (2007) New practice creation: An institutional perspective on innovation, *Organization Studies* 28(7) 993–1012.

Madon, S., and Sharanappa, S. 2013. "Social IT outsourcing and development: theorizing the linkage," *Information Systems Journal* (DOI: 10.1111/isj.12013), pp. 1-19.

Maguire, S., Hardy, C. and Lawrence, T.B. 2004. "Institutional Entrepreneurship in Emerging Fields: HIV/AIDS Treatment Advocacy in Canada," *Academy of Management Journal* (47:5), pp. 657-679.

Marcus, A. A., and Goodman, R. S. 1991. "Victims and shareholders: The dilemmas of presenting corporate policy during a crisis," *Academy of Management Journal* (34), pp. 281-305.

Mishra, P. (2009) Local outsourcing gains momentum in America http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/International-Business/US-firmsto-build-sustainable-rural-outsourcing-model/articleshow/4157832.cms (accessed July 29, 2012).

Mohamed, A. A., Gardner,W. L., and Paolillo, J. G. P. 1999. "A taxonomy of organizational impression management tactics," *Advances in Competitiveness Research* (7), pp. 108-130.

Pachecho-De-Almeida, G. and Zemsky, P.B. 2012. "Some like it free: Innovators' strategic use of disclosure to slow down competition," *Strategic Management Journal* (33:7), pp. 773-793.

Patton, M. Q. 2002. *Qualitative research & evaluation methods (3rd ed.)*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pfeffer, J., and Salancik, G.R. 1978. *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. New York: Harper & Row.

Ravasi, D., and Schultz, M. 2006. Responding to organizational identity threats: Exploring the role of organizational culture. Academy of Management Journal, 49: 433-458.

Reay, T., and Hinings, C.R. 2009. "Managing the rivalry of competing institutional logics," *Organization Studies* (30:6), pp. 629-652.

Rockefeller Foundation. "Digital Jobs: Defined" http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/our-work/current-work/digital-jobs-africa/digital-jobs-defined (accessed 29 August 2013)

Sandeep, M.S., and Ravishankar, M.N. 2013. "The other India - Emergence of rural sourcing," *Professional Outsourcing* (Spring (12)), pp. 14-20.

Snow, D.A., Rochford JR., E.B., Worden, S.K. and Benford, R.D. 1986. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," American *Sociological Review* (51:4), pp. 464-

481.

Siegel, P. A., and Brockner, J. 2005. "Individual and organizational consequences of CEO claimed handicapping: What's good for the CEO may not be so good for the firm," *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes* (96), pp. 1-22.

Stinchcombe, A. L. 1965. "Social structure and organizations" in *Handbook of Organizations*, J. G. March (ed.), Chicago: Rand-McNally, pp. 142–193.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory (2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Su, N. 2013. "Internationalization Strategies of Chinese IT Service Suppliers," *MIS Quarterly*, (37: 1) pp.175-200.

Tan, B.C.C., Pan, S.L. and Hackney, R. 2010. "The Strategic Implications of Web Technologies: A Process Model of How Web Technologies Enhance Organizational Performance," *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management* (57:2), pp. 181-197.

Tedeschi, J. T., and V. Melburg. 1984. "Impression management and influence in the organization," in *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, S. B. Bacharach and E. J. Lawler (eds.), Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, pp. 31-58.

Tracey, P., Phillips, N., and Jarvis, O. 2010. "Bridging institutional entrepreneurship and the creation of new organizational forms: A multilevel model," *Organization Science* 22(1): 60-80.

Triandis, H.C. 2004. "The many dimensions of culture," *Academy of Management Executive (*18:1), pp. 88-93.

Vaccaro, A. 2010. "To Pay or Not to Pay? Dynamic Transparency and the Fight Against the Mafia's Extortionists," *Journal of Business Ethics* (106:1), pp. 23-35.

Walsham, G. 1993. "Decentralization of IS in Developing Countries – Power to the People," *Journal of Information Technology* (8:2), pp. 74-81.

Walsham, G. 1995. "Interpretive Case Studies in Is Research: Nature and Method," *European Journal of Information Systems* (4:2), pp. 74-82.

Whetten, D. A., Lewis, D., and Mischel, L. J. 1992. "Towards an integrated model of organizational identity and member commitment," in the Proceedings of the Annual meeting of the Academy of Management, Las Vegas.

Yin, R. K. 2003. *Case study research, design and methods* (3rd ed.), Newbury Park: Sage Publications.