Scale Development to Measure Employer Engagement

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Employer engagement, in existing literature, mostly refers to the engagement of the educational institutions in the corporate world; to benchmark their curricula and syllabi in-line with the employers' needs. This study has focused on the same construct with different relation; typically in the context of work-based learning providers and organizational practices. Although there has been theoretical discussions and calls to develop comprehensive measures for employer engagement, however, no contemporary measure for employer engagement exist to the context this study was carried out. The scope of this study covers the development of a new scale based on the guidelines to measure employer engagement specifically to the context of work based practices. The scale constitutes of 19 items that address, employer engagement based on 3 sub-dimensions. The scale was developed and validated through six phases beginning with the determination of valid dimensions / construct followed by generation of pool of items, assessing the content adequacy of the items and items refinement through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Reliability and validity of the scale are also tested.

Key words: *Employer Engagement, Scale Development, Measurement Scale, Analytic*

1. Introduction

Engagement is a positive, two-way, relationship between the employees and their organization (Chiumento, 2004). Both parties understand the need of one another, and mostly know how to support and assist to fulfill the needs of each other accordingly (Armstrong, 2006). They perceive it mutually beneficial and invest resources in their relation, therefore, the engaged employees and organizations may go extra miles for each other (Chiumento, 2004).

Employee engagement is a construct that has widely been studied in the HR domain. Ample research has been conducted to measure employee engagement. Employer Engagement, is a relatively new concept. Less work has been carried out on employer engagement and going through different studies (John, 2014) it is revealed that it is not possible to arrive at a single shared definition of employer engagement (O'Donoghue, 2014). The use of this term is generally restricted to policy discourse (Hughes, Macleod, & Maria, 2005), but this infrequently examines the specific question of 'engagement with whom?' Individuals from different disciplines may perceive the meaning of employer engagement differently, depending upon their role and responsibility.

The fundamental difference emerges from roles, responsibilities and school of thought of various disciplines. Individuals from educational institutions understood it as being about increasing and improving their own engagement with employers (Hughes, Macleod, & Maria, 2005). Similarly, (Common Wealth, 2013) name it as "Strategic Employer Engagement Model". Although theoretically, the concept of employer engagement might be applicable to a wider set of public policies and public issues (Berkel, Ingold, McGurk, Bredgaard, & Boselie, 2015) yet the perspective of this concept is indifferent.

Employer engagement is one of the parts of millennium development goals. Organizations like ILO (International Labor Organization) highlights global challenges and issues from time to time. Employer Engagement is one of those issues that is addressed at the global level. In response to the global issues and to cater millennium development goals; local governments and organizations develop their policies in line with those goals. Organizations strive hard to develop their policies, procedures and systems. The objective is to meet national policies, global challenges and to cope up with rivalry. Tan, et al., (2011) refers this to organizational innovation. In the race of obtaining competitive advantage and to become market leaders, human resource practices has been in the agenda of the organizations.

Since, very little research has been carried out to examine the engagement at the organizational level of analysis (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). The little research has inclined to be excessively naive in its conceptualization and operationalization of organizational-level engagement (Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, & Courtright, 2015). In this stance, the role of employer engagement, its antecedents and the mechanism that how organizational practices

are linked to firm practices has not been addressed (Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, & Courtright, 2015). This gap in knowledge leads to less understanding or few little judgments to conceptualize employer engagement; as it is still a relatively new concept in the management research literature (Rich, 2010). This lack of research on engagement regarding organizational level capabilities need exploration because it gives less information and knowledge about firms to achieve and sustain a high level of employer engagement. The objective of the study is twofold:

1. To determine the sub-dimensions that could cover the scope of the construct "Employer Engagement".
2. To develop a valid and reliable scale that could measure employer engagement at the organizational level, particularly in work based learning providers (Corporate Businesses).

This study contributes theoretically and empirically. Considering the studies of (Lepak, et al., 1999; Harter, et al., 2002; Barrick, et al., 2015; O'Donoghue, 2014 & John, 2014) and the scope covered in defining the engagement of employers (Barber, et al., 2004 & Rich, 2010); the study contributes in defining the naïve concept of what is employer engagement in corporate businesses? The earlier employer engagement was detailed with respect to the educational institutions and their engagement with the corporate world that only encompasses the selection of syllabi and curricula. This study expands the literature on how employer engagement could be used at the organizational level in the corporate businesses. Further, the study contributes in determining the dimensionality of the construct that covers the overall definition and scope of employer engagement at the organizational level. Moreover, the development of a valid and reliable scale that could measure Employer Engagement is another contribution of this study.

2. Literature Review

Employer engagement has been defined as "Active participation of employers in initiatives to promote the employability and labor market participation of the unemployed" (McGurk, 2014). It may be also be understood as, "A range of activities, initiatives and approaches which are best conceptualized as a continuum" (Web). A single, narrow definition of employer engagement might not encompass the full range of productive employer interactions with learning and might limit ambitions in extending useful work (O'Donoghue, 2014).

Scale development is an iterative, multi-method, qualitative, and quantitative process of item generation, refinement, evaluation, and selection (Alexandra & Frank J., 2015). The principles of content validation guide all stages of scale development, which include construct definition, item content generation, item development and evaluation, and psychometric testing. Following the definition of the domain and the facets of each targeted construct, item content may be generated through population and expert sampling. Items and scale elements are

evaluated and refined through the use of both expert review and psychometric evidence about item performance, internal consistency, factor structure, and multiple dimensions of validity (Alexandra & Frank J., 2015).

As discussed above, there is less understanding of the term Employer Engagement pertaining to the internal organization working mechanisms and operations. It has found to be a naïve topic while going through different studies. Previous literature seemingly less verbal in discussing this construct, i.e., there is less literature available for Employer Engagement. However, below mention are the reviews of sub dimensions of the stated topic extracted from the literature. The 11 sub-dimensions of Employer Engagement that consolidates it are as follows:

1. Pay & Compensation

Performance-based compensation is one of the dominant HR practices that firms use to evaluate and reward employees' efforts (Collins & D., 2003). Compensation based on performance has a positive effect on employees as well as the organizations. It is evident from studies that the performance-based compensation has a positive effect upon employee and organizational performance (Cardon & Stevens, 2004).

Barringer, et al., (2005) conducted a quantitative content analysis of 50 rapid-growth firms versus a group of 50 slow-growth firms and the results demonstrated that rapid-growth firms differentiated from the slow-growth firms respective to the employees' incentive policies. Performance based compensation and merit based promotion both are viewed as elements in organizational incentive systems that persuade and ensure individual performance and retention (Uen & Chien, 2004).

2. Training & Development

Training is the process of involving employees of the organization and improving their KSA (Knowledge, Skill and Abilities) to perform a specific task. Old and obsolete talents are updated using the trainings and new ones are developed accordingly. "Successful candidates placed on the jobs need training to perform their duties effectively" (Aswathappa, 2000). The prime concern and outcome of training is to provide skilled and willing workforce to the organization. In organizations, there are otherwise four distinct objectives lies at following levels like: Individual, Organizational, Functional, and Social (Kulkarni, 2013) proposed.

Skill development, knowledge development and education have a prominent and significant effect both on the short and long term indicators of organizational performance and personnel productivity and capacity building (Huselid, 1995).

3. Grievance Handling

Dissatisfaction of employees with the working environment, procedures and working facilities, etc. In organizations, the grievances usually arouse because of unclear explicit rules and regulations lay down by the companies (Hook, Rollinson, Foot, & Handley, 1996). Any stance or matter raised by employee to express dissatisfaction with management's behavior and an attempt to bring out changes (D'Cruz, 1999) in the organization as a result of any personal or collective arguments of the employees is called grievance. Another root cause of grievance of employees lies, according to (Ayadurai, 1996), is the disorders and uncertainty on provisions falling in the company's policy and the provisions' violation pertaining to terms and conditions of employment stated in collective agreement (Salamon, 2000). According to Meyer, (1994), an authentic grievance is a signal of erroneous behavior of the supervisor that has breach worker's right. Noe, et al., (2003) highlighted that too many grievances in the organization depict a severe problem while too few indicate a problem of another sort too.

4. Employee Welfare & Ergonomic

Employee Welfare: International Labor Office (ILO) in its report defined Employees Welfare as, "Such services and amenities which may be established or in vicinity of undertakings to enable the persons employed in them to perform their work in healthy, congenial surroundings and provided with amenities conducive to good health and high morale" (Singla & Goyal, 2015). Ergonomics means study of work. Ergonomics is treated under applied science phenomenon wherein it is dealt in designing the devices to be used at the workplace by the workers and working conditions of systems and physical environment conduciveness (Te-Hsin & Kleiner, 2001). There is a remarkable contribution of ergonomists in designing, planning and structuring the products, jobs and tasks in the industries (Kolgiri, Hiremath, & Bansode, 2016).

5. Job Security & Performance

Job security is tool that is used by HR practitioners to probe an environment of confidentiality among organization's employees. Practically, the company must pose a clear message for its employees that their jobs are secure. When employee starts feeling the same, their confidence and commitment towards the organizational success is increased. Those companies invest in ensuring job security that understands that securing employee's job will contribute to the company (Pfeffer, 1998). Perceived job security of full time employees was explored using psychological contract and social cognition theories.

6. *Performance Appraisal*

Performance evaluations have been conducted since the times of Aristotle (Frank, Landy, Sheldon, Zedeck, & Cleveland, 1983). The earliest formal employee performance evaluation program is thought to have originated in the United States military establishment shortly after the birth of the republic (Lopez, 1968).

The efficiency and effectiveness of performance appraisal exercise depends upon the ability to assess the performance of employees' in an accurate and fair manner. Christopher, et al., (2006) summarizes about including the present available information and the intrinsic motivational value as the necessary characteristic of the employees so as to get him involved in the performance appraisal process. Thurston, (2001) highlighted the specific characteristic related to performance appraisal and addressed the success and effectiveness of performance appraisal system. He said that employees' feedback is critical and important to the ensure successfulness and effectiveness of appraisal system. According to (Kinicki, Prussia, Bin, & McKee-Ryan, 2004), richness of feedback elucidate particular appraisal environment wherein timely, specific and frequent feedback is given by employees to the organizations about their jobs.

7. *Recruitment & Selection*

Recruitment is a process of identifying, attracting and seeking a pool of candidates out of which the suitable applicants can be selected by the organizations (Raymond, 2007). Recruitment is set of activities and practices exercised by the organizations with a primary objective and aim of attracting and identifying potential employees (Parry & H, 2009). Organizations need to become successful for which they depend upon human capital; therefore, recruiting and selecting right personnel into the service business is essential for success (Zheng, 2009). Currently, in the process of recruitment and selection, organizations are trying to find out methods that should not take more effort and time (Vyas, 2011). The methods of recruitment and selection in the organizations should interpret to its competitive advantages (Munyon, Summers Ferris, & Gerald, 2011).

8. *Diversity & Equality*

Diversity management may be defined as the planned and systematic arrangement of recruiting, rewarding, promoting and retaining a heterogeneous mix of employees by the organization (Ongori & Agolla, 2007). Diversity enhances effectiveness of the organization. Best personnel are attracted by the organizations who can best manage diversity and develop its experience in it (Carrell, Elbert, & Hatfield, 2000). To meet challenges at global and domestic level, organizations are accepting and practicing a number of initiatives at their workplaces.

It is understood by the organizations that managing diverse workforce effectively is essential to become successful. Simply having a diverse workforce is not necessary to get success. It is not mandatory for the organizations to enhance their performance mere by having increased diversity levels (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

9. Work Life Balance

Work life balance is a broad concept; it has been defined in different research studies using different dimensions in different ways. Studying women in diverse roles leads to the origin of the research on this topic. Work life balance was initially termed as work family conflict by (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964) and (Beutell & Greenhaus, 1985) define it as "a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect; i.e., participation in the work (family) role being made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role".

10. Strategic Implementation

Strategy researchers argue that firm's ability to create value leads to implementation of the strategic choices effectively (Child, 1972), (Cyert, 1963). According to resource management model, leaders usually combine available resources strategically to make capabilities and pull out the potential value contained within those resources (Sirmon, 2007). Hence, the capabilities are drawn out from structuring strategically, resource leveraging and bundling it up. According to (Child, 1972), the strategic choices theory claims that firms' leaders must have particularly defined strategic implementation objectives and they must be tracking the same along-with supreme monitoring. Any executive, team leader, strategic role player must play a vital role in not only formulating the organizational strategy but must be hands on with appropriate and effective implementation (Schendel, 1979).

11. Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was first defined by (Bowen, 1953) as the social obligation "to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable ion terms of the objectives and values of our society". Carroll, (1979) suggest CSR pyramid carrying four stages covering the heads like economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic obligations. Companies' reputation among the society in general and in the eyes of stakeholders is enhanced by using CSR as a strategic tool (McWilliams & Seigel, 2010). Awareness about the CSR activities and programs of the firms should be made public by using any media facility (McWilliams & Seigel, 2010). Corporate Social Responsibility has been defined under institutional theory. The institutional theory states that corporate social activities are not only voluntary activities, but it is a part of interface between business and society.

3. Research Methodology

The scale development, analysis and validation processes of Employer Engagement include six - 6 distinctive phases. These processes and phases are devised based on the work of (Churchill, 1979), (Hinkin, Tracey, & Enz, 1997), (Hinkin T. , 1995) and (Shockley, Ureksoy, Rodopman, Poteat, & Dullaghan, 2016).

Phase – I (Determining the Valid Dimensions / Constructs):

The first phase of the study includes the determination of the appropriate and valid construct (Churchill, 1979; Timothy, et al., 1997 & Shockley, et al., 2016) that should cover the maximum scope of Employer Engagement. In order to ensure this, Phase – I was divided into two steps. The first one includes the review of the literature and detailed study of Employer Engagement referring different studies so as to identify the trend, scope, nature and phenomena of the topic. We propose that the dimensions of the employer engagement must cover all the sections of the (Social Ecological Model - SEM) model in the picture.

Figure 1: Social Ecological Model

Phase – II (Generation of pool of items against each sub-dimension):

In Phase – II, the process of generating pool of items (Hinkin, Tracey, & Enz, 1997), (Churchill, 1979) and (Shockley, Ureksoy, Rodopman, Poteat, & Dullaghan, 2016) was carried out. Objective was to create such items that must wrap, swathe and cover the entire scope of the topic. To ensure this, an approach was developed where items against each dimension of Employer Engagement identified in Phase – I should be generated. From different studies, it was revealed that item generation process could either be inductive or deductive (Hinkin, Tracey, & Enz, 1997). Theoretical details and definitions of the construct are taken into account

while using the deductive scale development process, which then may be used as a guide for the item generation process (Schwab, 1980). Hence, we've followed the deductive approach as this seems to be the most suitable one for this study.

Based on a number of studies and relevant measurement scales (Table – 2), different available items pertaining to each dimension are explored and included in the pool. The original scales are not used as such; however, the version is adapted with reference to the construct and nature of the data required.

Table 1: Measurement Scales Sources

Sr. No	Sub-Dimension	In This study	Reference
1	Strategic Implementation& Welfare	Adapted	(Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, & Courtright, 2015)
2	Corporate Social Responsibility	Adapted	(Tomina Gabriela, ABRUDAN, GIURGIU, MESTER, & BUGNAR, 2014)
3	Pay & Compensation	Adapted	(Jerez-Gómez, Céspedes-Lorente, & Valle-Cabrera, 2005)
4	Appraisal	Adapted	(Hayley, FORTIN, & READ, 2016)
5	Ergonomics/Welfare/Safety	Adapted	(Kenneth, MacDermid, Amick, & Beaton, 2011)
6	Grievances Handing	Adapted	(Zulkiflee, Yahya, Faizal, & Noor, 2011)
7	Recruitment & Selection	Adapted	(Quinn, 2014)
8	Training & Development	Adapted	(Bayissa, Asfaw, & Argaw, 2015)
9	Job Security / Performance	Adapted	(Bustillo & Pedraza, 2005)
10	Work Life Balance	Adapted	(Yung-Tai & Chang, 2010)
11	Diversity & Equality	Adapted	(Northumbria, 2011)

We have collected a huge pool of 150 items (see Annex – II) against eleven dimensions of Employer Engagement in the initial pool generation exercise posing an average of around 14 questions per dimension.

Phase – III (Content Adequacy Assessment):

We have carried out the content adequacy assessment exercise twofold. First step was to identify the respondents, who, in this phase were the subject matter experts, again the same group as that of the Phase–I. The pool of 150 items collected against 11 dimensions of Employer Engagement was presented before the SMEs to have a review session for identifying redundancy, relevancy, categorization and sorting of the items accordingly. Out of 150 questions, 108 were left for further processing at the end of the step one.

Subsequently, in the second step, experts were engaged to carry out the activity further. Pool of 108 items were presented to again validate the items according to the definitions of the dimensions, find out irrelevancies, identify redundancies and to gauge the suitability and placement of the items under each dimension. At the end of this exercise, we successfully approached to a final pool of 71 items with a pleasant feeling that the normal respondent in the market could get easier and trouble-free understanding of the matter and language of the items.

Phase – IV (Questionnaire Administration)

The items so retained from the previous exercise are then presented before the appropriate sample. The purpose of this work is to know how the selected items depict the desired results and expectations pertaining to the sub dimensions of Employer Engagement.

Item Scaling

For each of 71 items, 5-point Likert-type scale considering the level of likelihood and happening probability is used (Sorrel, 2010). It is the scale anchor that is most commonly used with questionnaires in research surveys (Schmitt & Klimoski, 1991). The anchor defines five distinct choices each against a set number like:

Table 2: Likert Type Scale

Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Some Extent	Little Extent	Very Little Extent
1	2	3	4	5

Participants:

Before presenting the questionnaire to the population, it was decided that the participant should be a working paid employee of any organization. He/she must be at-least in middle or top management in the hierarchy of firm, must not be less than 18 years of age and preferably should hold confirm employment in any business organization of Pakistan.

Reliability Test – Cronbach's Alpha

Reliability refers to the consistency of the item-level errors within a single factor. Reliability means just what it sounds like: a "reliable" set of variables will consistently load on the same factor. The way to test reliability in an EFA is to compute Cronbach's alpha for each factor. The test shows the value of Cronbach's alpha as 0.972 for total number of items which is high enough from the minimum required and acceptable value of 0.7. However, (Churchill, 1979) stresses that the value of Cronbach's alpha should be on higher side to ensure the reliability.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

While developing a new scale there are two basic types of factor analyses that are used, the first one is termed as exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and the second one is known as confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In this study both the methods are used. Table 3 the best solution as it depicts the cumulative variance %age of 63.71 and with eigenvalue greater than 1.

Table 3: Three Factor Loadings Statistics							
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	8.405	44.239	44.239	8.405	44.239	44.239	6.808
2	2.178	11.462	55.700	2.178	11.462	55.700	6.243
3	1.522	8.013	63.713	1.522	8.013	63.713	5.273
4	.871	4.582	68.295				
5	.713	3.755	72.050				
6	.578	3.042	75.092				
7	.526	2.768	77.860				
8	.499	2.624	80.484				
9	.469	2.466	82.951				
10	.453	2.386	85.337				
11	.431	2.269	87.606				
12	.385	2.024	89.630				
13	.349	1.838	91.468				
14	.325	1.711	93.179				
15	.307	1.617	94.795				

16	.267	1.405	96.200			
17	.258	1.355	97.555			
18	.243	1.280	98.835			
19	.221	1.165	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						
a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.						

EFA was performed on 71 items which subsequently during the treatment 52 items were deleted and the final number reduces to 19 items. Three factor loading matrix is appended below which clearly shows the loadings with desired values of greater than 0.4, no double loadings and no negative loadings.

Table 4: Three Factor Loadings Pattern Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
TND4	.932		
TND5	.809		
TND7	.765		
TND2	.761		
TND6	.746		
TND3	.735		
TND8	.732		
TND11	.692		
Appr3		.820	
PayNComp5		.808	
Appr2		.805	
Appr1		.794	
Appr4		.783	
Appr5		.731	
WrkLyfBal2			.880
EmpWlfrErg2			.749
WrkLyfBal3			.747
EmpWlfrErg3			.680
WrkLyfBal4			.679

Matching parallel to the 3 factor loadings of the items with eigenvalues greater than 1, cumulative variance %age of above 60% and items with the higher extractions in communalities were retained for further examination of CFA.

Table 5: Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
PayNComp5	1.000	.604
Appr1	1.000	.674
Appr2	1.000	.691
Appr3	1.000	.689
Appr4	1.000	.646
Appr5	1.000	.660
TND2	1.000	.662
TND3	1.000	.593
TND4	1.000	.754
TND5	1.000	.673
TND6	1.000	.647
TND7	1.000	.582
TND8	1.000	.591
TND11	1.000	.501
WrkLyfBal2	1.000	.659
WrkLyfBal3	1.000	.689
WrkLyfBal4	1.000	.642
EmpWlfrErg2	1.000	.602
EmpWlfrErg3	1.000	.550
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Phase – VI (Confirmatory Factor Analysis):

Since, EFA is very useful for the assessment of the extent to which any set of items assess a specific set of scales yet a major weakness of this technique is that it is unable to gauge the goodness-of-fit of the residual and final factor structure (Hinkin, Tracey, & Enz, 1997) & (Long, 1983). Confirmatory Factor Analysis is executed using AMOS version 21 based on best fit of 35 items earlier exposed in EFA with 6 factor loading and each path parameters' regression coefficient of every first item is restricted to "1". To obtain the best values of factor loadings few items were deleted with low loadings and the test was re-performed. At very iteration, the model fit was observed as discussed above, along with the validity and correlations between the variables. Finally, the best fit model was obtained with minimum factor loading of 0.71 between the latent variable and observed variables.
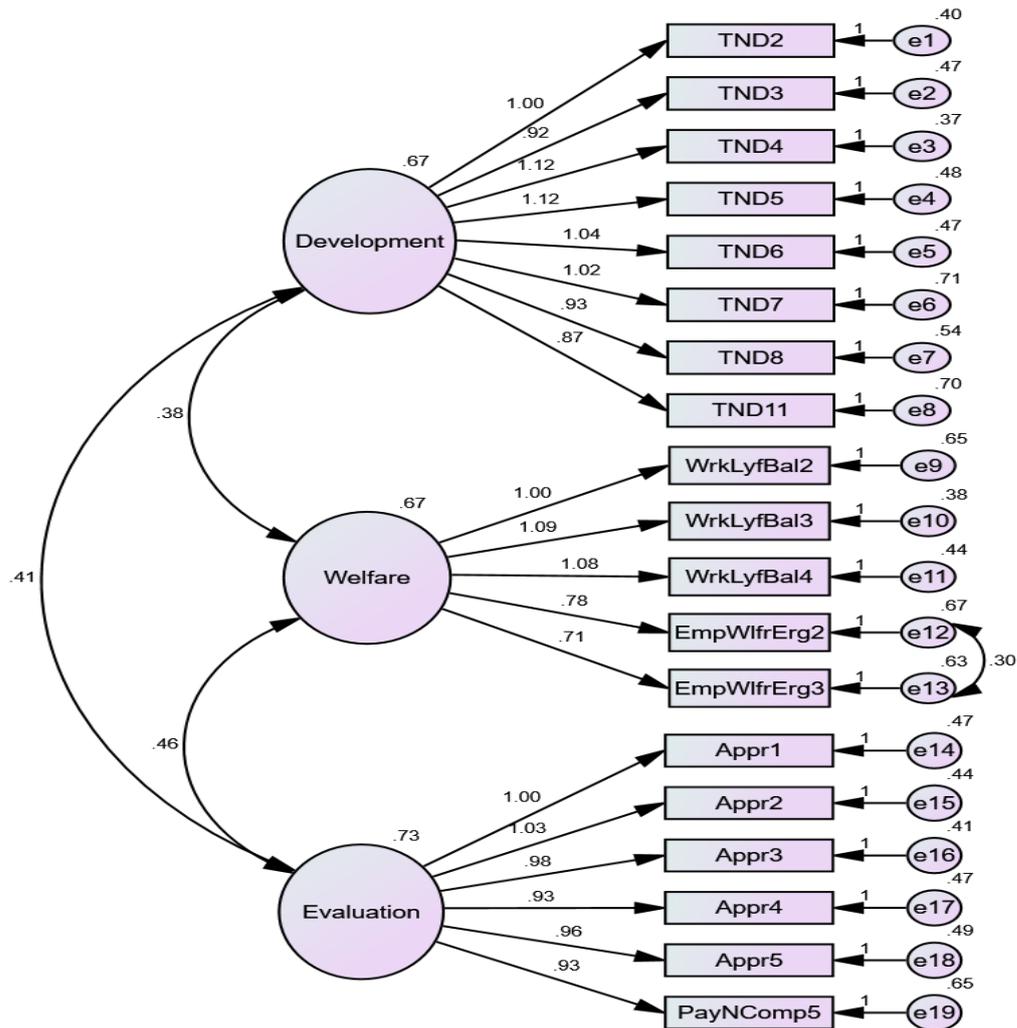
Figure 2: Standardized Factor Loadings: Measurement Model

Validity and Reliability Statistics

A primary goal of scale development is to create a valid measure of an underlying construct.

Validity

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is calculated to ensure the convergent validity of the scale. The value of AVE greater than 0.5 ensures the significance of the items in the measurement model. For each of the three latent variables the value of AVE is greater than 0.5 hence depicts no convergent validity concerns. For the best fit CR should be less than AVE should be less than MSV.

Table 6: Validity and Reliability Matrix

	CR	AVE	MSV	Max R(H)	Development	welfare	Evaluation
Development	0.913	0.568	0.346	0.918	**0.754**		
Welfare	0.837	0.511	0.429	0.945	0.566	**0.715**	
Evaluation	0.895	0.586	0.429	0.963	0.588	0.655	**0.766**

The final set of values in the table above shows that correlation values does not exceed 0.85 hence shows no discriminant validity concerns in the measurement model.

Reliability

In this study reliability is measured in two different phases. The first one was before running the Factor Analyses and the second was after running the factor analyses.

Pre - Factor Analyses

Before performing the factor analyses (EFA and CFA), internal reliability was tested through the measures of Cronbach's Alpha as suggested by (Churchill, 1979). The values obtained in the internal reliability of the scale was .972 which was more than the threshold value of .70

Post - Factor Analyses

Composite reliability (CR) was tested after the factor analyses have been performed. Composite reliability depicts the internal consistency of the latent variables. The table above shows the values quite higher than the threshold value, ensuring the internal consistency of the construct.

Table 7: Items Refinement Statistics

Total Items	Items Deleted	Remaining Items	Sub-Dimension	Reason to Delete	Responsible	Phase
150	42	108	11	Wrongly constructed, Double barreled, Irrelevant	SME (Subject Matter Experts)	Phase – II (A)
108	37	71	11	Redundant, Irrelevant, Misfit statements	Scholarly Students	Phase – II (B)
71	2	69	11	Reliability Coefficient – Cronbach's Alpha	Data Screening	Phase – V (A)
69	34	35	9	Poor Factor Loadings	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)	Phase – V (B)
35	11	24	7	Insignificance of Model Fit	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)	Phase – VI (A)
24	5	**19**	**3**	Validity and Reliability insignificance	Validity and Reliability Analysis	Phase – VI (B)

Discussion

The objective of the study was twofold; first, to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of Employer Engagement and identification of the sub-dimensions with reference to the work-based learning providers, and second objective was to develop a new valid and reliable scale. Since, less studies and literature are found. To accomplish this task we have covered the study in VI distinctive phases, each covering and justifying all the requisite parameters to develop a deeper understanding of the construct and development of the new scale. The results show us that Employer Engagement as per the definitions of the researchers "The active participation of employers in initiatives to promote the employability and labour market participation of the unemployed" (McGurk, 2014) does not exactly fit the concept. It does not only refer to the initiatives taken by the employers to promote the employability rather it goes a step ahead of this. A deep look at the result depicts that no item pertaining to the study was retained related to recruitment and selection. This draws our attention that recruitment and selection, placement and offering jobs does not explain employer engagement and this is their role which they are playing in the society. Further, it is the basic need of the employers to hire fresh and experienced staff to fulfill business needs of the organizations and earn profit. This theme of understanding is re-assured by the definition provided by common wealth "A concept which,

in addition to providing job opportunities for young people, enlists employers as partners in the process of preparing them for work

Employer engagement is a competitive advantage as far as the rivalry is concerned. In earlier era, Reference to strategic HRM theory: It is proposed that the strength of an employer's engagement may be explained by the organization's human resource (HR) architecture (Lepak and Snell 1999). The context of Lepak is quite close to the results of this study.

We end up with three measurement variables Development; covering items of Training and Development and factor loadings ranging from .87 to 1.12, Welfare; covering items related to Work Life Balance and Employee Welfare and Ergonomics sub-dimensions with factor loadings ranging from .71 to 1.09, followed with Evaluation that covers the items from Appraisal and Pay & Compensations sub-dimensions with factor loadings ranging from .93 to 1.03. All these items are highly significant and show a marvelous acceptance level. Explanation of the construct is significantly extended by the above 5 sub-dimensions. A closer look in the results shows that all these sub-dimensions fall under the category of Human Resource Practices that a company adopts and practice.

Development

Every firm's competitive advantage is continually threatened (D'Aveni, 1994; Ghemawat, 1991; Reed & DeFillipi, 1990). Firms always take necessary and crucial measures to mitigate the threats associated. As Bamey notes, "Although a firm's resources and capabilities have added value in the past, changes in customer tastes, industry structure, or technology can render them less valuable in the future."

Table 8: Items of 1st Latent Variable

	Development	CFA
Item #	**Item Description**	**Loading**
TND2	To what extent your organization ensures the existence & implementation of a well designed training policy?	1.00
TND3	To what extent your organization ensures that productivity of employees is enhanced through training to achieve organizational goals?	0.92
TND4	To what extent your organization ensures that well planned training programs are organized throughout the year?	1.12
TND5	To what extent your organization ensures that all employees are given adequate importance for getting nomination in training?	1.12
TND6	To what extent your organization ensures that employees in the organization participate in determining the training they need?	1.04

TND7	To what extent your organization ensures that TNA (Training Need Analysis) is conducted on annual basis?	1.02
TND8	To what extent your organization ensures that the content of the training programs are always relevant to the changing needs of jobs and business?	0.93
TND11	To what extent your organization ensures To what extent your organization ensures participation of employees in various seminars and workshops?	0.87

Welfare

In this study the domain of welfare is related to Work Life Balance, Employee Welfare related policies in the organizations and Ergonomics. The literature also proposes that an imbalance between work and non-work activities reduce psychological and physical well-being.

Table 9: Items of 2nd Latent Variable

	Welfare	CFA
Item #	**Item Description**	**Loading**
WrkLyfBal2	To what extent your organization ensures that working hours are practical and feasible?	1.00
WrkLyfBal3	To what extent your organization ensures that initiatives are taken to help manage work life of its employees?	1.09
WrkLyfBal4	To what extent your organization ensures that the work pressure is evenly distributed among all employees?	1.08
EmpWlfErg2	To what extent your organization ensures that proper time and money is spent on improving safety standards?	0.78
EmpWlfErg3	To what extent your organization ensures that unsafe working conditions are identified and improved promptly / immediately?	0.71

Evaluation

Appraising and compensating the employees has been addressed enormously in different researches. Studies depict the importance and relevance of these HR practices in the organizations. Practically, it is experienced that organizations do acquire the practice and policy of appraising its employees but exercise many fool practices.

Table 10: Items of 3rd Latent Variable

Item #	Evaluation	CFA
	Item Description	Loading
Appr1	To what extent your organization ensures the existence & implementation of fair and objective performance appraisal?	1.00
Appr2	To what extent your organization ensures that efforts put in by employees are fairly reflected in their annual appraisal?	1.03
Appr3	To what extent your organization ensures that views & perspectives of employees are considered while preparing the appraisal?	0.98
Appr4	To what extent your organization ensures that accurate information is used while doing an appraisal?	0.93
Appr5	To what extent your organization ensures that employees are treated with dignity and respect throughout the appraisal process?	0.96
PayNComp5	To what extent your organization ensures that the rewards and incentives are fairly distributed among all employees?	0.93

Significant loadings of the items show that the practice of appraisal is critical to the employees' satisfaction and an important tool to increase the organizational performance by increasing the commitment of the employees. The degree of engagement increases when the organizations support the staff for meeting their basic needs and prosperity accordingly as described by (Maslow, 1954).

Conclusion

An effort is made through this study to explore the possible understanding of the Employer Engagement as a new construct specifically in context of the work-based learning providers. Commencing with 11 sub-dimensions and finally approaching to 3. So, this study concludes that employer engagement basically encompass the HR practices with exclusive concentration on Development of the work force, intelligent and efficient management of the knowledge and skill set and preparing them proactively for the rapid changes to maintain the competitive advantage and cope the rivalry; enhance the working environment of the work place and support and assist the employees with Welfare policies and pay and compensation including rewards, incentives and other benefits to increase their commitment and loyalty with their organization as well as with their profession.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

Every research has limitations to the scope of work it carried in, so is this study. The time constraint was an issue. This study is carried out using convenience sampling, which could be

some other probability sampling. Since, the scale development is a critical task to carry, therefore, the non-probability sampling might have not covered the purpose. For any future study, it is extended that any probability sampling technique should be used.

Measures are adapted from existing studies and data is collected through surveys of the questionnaire. It is extended that interviews should also be included along with the practice performed in this study. This ways the deeper understanding of the respondents can be achieved and accumulated.

Author Contribution
All authors equally contributed to conception and design, acquisition of data at every phase, analysis and interpreting of results. They also drafted the manuscript according to their research skills. All authors approved the final manuscript to be published and agreement to be accountable for all the phases of study regarding accuracy or integrity of work.

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